

ESSAYS ON EDUCATION QUALITY

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Cc: Grayzel, John A(EGAT/ED)
Subject: FYI - more on quality (what is "quality education")

Attachments - 12 individuals perspectives

These are shared with me and now you but for internal discussion ONLY

Martin perhaps TLT at its next meeting can spend a portion of the time discussing the POVs expressed in the attachments and how these POVs may/may not coincide with our own POV, i.e., it behooves USG/USAID/EGAT/ED to form a position statement of "quality education" that supports education-sector perspectives at all these levels

Each year the EFA Monitoring Report focuses on one of the six Dakar basic education goals.* The upcoming "EFA Monitoring Report" to be presented at EFA-related global meetings: (1) working group meeting - July 20-21/Paris, (2) IWGE - October 19-21/DC (under the title "Good governance in education"**), (3) high level group - early-mid Nov./Brasilia, and (4) FTI-global partnership (following HLG), and released following HLG-meeting, will be focused on the Dakar basic education goal:

"Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills."

This statement of "quality" can be interpreted broadly - including classroom/school, policy/system, and linking education to human capital needs of individuals, communities and countries, especially when "all aspects...achieved by all" let's one's mind consider the many variables influencing "quality of education" and "learning outcomes" - also interpreting value-laden words such as "excellence" and "recognized" (by whom) and the oft-variable perspective of "measurable."

(*Note while Brasilia is the 4th HLG meeting the report year one was simply an overview of EFA and in year 2 it focused on financing gaps not one of the six goals. Last years report focused on the "gender goal:")

"Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equity in education by 2015, with a focus on assuring girls' full and equitable access to and achievement in basic education of good quality"

** UNDP, in its policy paper on Governance for Sustainable Human Development (1997), defines *good governance* as the exercise of authority and control which "ensures that political, social and economic priorities are based on a broad consensus in society and that the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard in the decision-making over the allocation of resources". By this definition *good governance* implies assurances of participatory, transparent and accountable processes in order to be effective and equitable, and based on the rule of law.)

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EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005: Draft Outline

Towards Better Education for All

1. Understanding Quality

Discussion of the purposes and objectives of education is necessary in order to elucidate what makes for better quality. Its major purposes are:

- (1) The delivery of the human right to an education that brings at least literacy and numeracy
- (2) The creation of human skills and knowledge and enhancement of human productivity
- (3) The expansion of human choices and of human capabilities
- (4) The strengthening of human society by promoting citizenship, justice, equality, peace and national values

An education system that achieves some or all of these objectives is of a higher quality than one which does not.

2. Measuring Quality

Conceptual Framework:

The Chapter will begin by discussing alternative ways of modelling the determinants of educational quality. Amongst these, a framework comprising : 'Context – Inputs – Process – Outcomes', utilised in GMR 2002, is widely known and intuitively appealing. This will provide a structure for the analysis of quality in the report. However, competing frameworks will be examined and compared. In explaining the interaction of the constituents of the framework, the non-linear nature of the relationships between each of the items will be emphasised. A discussion of the relevance of this approach to non-school parts of education will be given. Alternative ways of measuring the impact of each element of the framework will be explored, as follows:

- *Context Indicators*

In what ways is context important? Contrasting aspects of education in poor and richer societies; context as provider of resource inputs, as generator of educational goals and standards, as consumer and as user of educational outputs; the political economy of education, and its influence on the possibilities of reform;

- *Input measures*

The coverage of school systems, teacher availability/deployment and material input availability are all key measures of the quality of inputs to education. Thus, pupil/teacher ratios; teacher qualifications; public and private expenditures on schooling; non-teacher expenditures; teachers' salaries; pupil/textbook ratios; and the extent of other school facilities are all input indicators which are relevant to the assessment of quality.

The prior characteristics of students can also be seen as 'inputs'. Taking account of these is important in the context of assessments of the 'value added' by education. Students themselves can also be seen as the key producers of learning. Examples will be provided, distinguishing between material, financial and human resource indicators.

- *Process measures*

Key aspects of performance can indicate the extent to which educational processes are more, or less effective. Thus, repetition, drop-out; survival/promotion rates (which also can be outcome proxies) are important indicators. In addition, curriculum choice and content; subject choices taken across genders and income groups; diversity of curriculum – eg sport; music; pupil gender ratios; teacher gender ratios; school-community links; teaching styles and approaches are each relevant for assessing key aspect of process, and have a strong bearing upon the third and fourth objectives of education mentioned in section 1. The extent to which inequalities (gender, ethnicity, disability, income groups, location) are reduced or exacerbated during the educational cycle provide important indicators of quality. Educational effectiveness research, and notions of 'good practice' each provide criteria for the selection of process indicators.

- *Outcome measures*

Assessments of student learning can be derived from test scores; classroom assessments; public examination results; national and international assessments. Do these provide good proxies for school quality and/or the quality of learning?

The outcomes of the system as a whole can be measured by promotion, completion and survival rates. However, also relevant is the extent to which school outcomes are able to meet economic and social needs for skills. Here labour market indicators, such as unemployment rates; wage differentials; skill shortages/surpluses are relevant indicators.

These may provide reasonable clues for cognitive outcomes, and their relationships to production in the economy (objectives 1 and 2), but they are less good proxies for objectives 3 and 4. Process measures may be better for some of those.

What will be the Near Future Goals of Education?

By William K. Cummings
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While Educators and Planners propose various reforms, the immutability of modern education is impressive (Cheng Kai-Ming, 2004). Still over the past several decades, there have been important shifts in the rhetoric of educational reform, orchestrated especially by transnational entities. Looking to the near future, two broad trends are likely to shape the near future of education: 1) the declining influence of the transnational entities that defined the educational agenda of the late twentieth century, and 2) the ongoing information revolution which is eroding confidence in modern education while at the same time providing hints of new possibilities on the horizon.

The Changing Political Economy

Education is a vast industry requiring extensive resources, and hence it depends heavily on the support of national and transnational agencies. Over the last century there were four major stages in the relations of these agencies. The first stage unfolded in the core nations of the modern era, France, Germany, the UK, the USA, Japan and Russia, as each of these nations carved out its niche in the age of nation-states. Education was harnessed to the goals of fostering the national identity of the respective core states and the loyalty of their citizens; and in the colonial empires of the core states education reinforced subjugation. There was no substantial transnational body independent of these great powers.

Following World War II, UNESCO was formed to promote education as a human right and as a resource for the national development of the large group of newly-independent states seeking to escape the shackles of colonialism. UNESCO generally advocated, for purposes of efficiency, a centralized educational system focused on promoting national integration.

The UNESCO approach was perhaps overly ambitious and under-funded; it also was insensitive to sub-national interests. Over the 80s, it was eclipsed by a new more decentralized design for education promoted by the international banks, most notably the World Bank. Basic literacy and skills (as contrasted with advanced education and knowledge creation/diffusion/utilization) were strong themes in the WB plan, with increasing attention to the roles of local actors. Schematically these stages can be compared as in Table 1.

But nations came to view these strategies as inefficient and inconsequential, especially in an era of shrinking national budgets. So from the early 90s, donors and nations came to focus on community-based schooling, where local actors might play both a greater role in formulating the goals of education and providing some of the resources for its operations. Additionally in many developing societies, renewed interest came to be focused on the development potential of indigenous knowledge creation.

Table 1 The Auspices of Education

	Multilateral-Centralized	Multilateral-Decentralized	Community Based
Period of Ascendance	1950-75	1975-1990	1990-2000
What are the Assumptions behind Educational Policy	Education is to promote national development	As nation is composed of distinctive ethnic groups, education should be responsive to the majority of the respective regions	Given the constraints governments have faced in reaching out, communities are looked to for educational initiatives
Who Decides on Ed. Goals	The Centralized State in Consultation with Donors	The State in Consultation with Local Governments and Donors	Local Communities
Who Funds	Central Governments with Donor Support	Central and Local Governments with Donor Support	Local communities provide a substantial sum, with some outside help
Who Decides Curriculum	The Central Government	The Central Government may define structure, with allowance for local content and local language for instruction	The Central Government may define goals, but local schools decide content and rely on local language for instruction
Who Decides on Educational Personnel	The Central Government	Local Governments following central regulations	Local Community possibly in collaboration with sponsor
Who Decides on Admissions	Local Officials, based on central regulations	Local Officials	School Head and Community

Yet during this same period of increasing recognition of sub-national actors, national actors especially in Eastern Europe and Africa came to face new challenges from these actors—often expressed through movements for autonomy and even independence. These challenges as often as not were accompanied by rebellious activities including violence and military conflict. These challenges tended to undermine the normal routines of society, including education. The continuity of the 1970s and 1980s came to be followed by increasing examples of discontinuity at the close of the 20th century.

Concerning goals, a review in 1982 of national educational plans identified five generic rationales for government support of education and 34 specific expected outcomes from educational. Reviewing a similar set of plans at turn of the 21st century, we find that many of the rationales persist (Reported in Table 2). At the same time there are several interesting changes:

- The 2001 list has a much greater sense of urgency—e.g. extend literacy is now replaced with eradicate illiteracy
- The 2001 list is more specific in identifying inequalities that education is asked to address—gender, regional, rural-urban, poverty, and historical injustices
- The 2001 list highlights a growing interest in technology both as an asset for learning and as a means for social development
- The 2001 list places a greater stress on values education including democracy, religiosity, and tolerance—but also the renewed stress on national unity and the need to counter extremism and terrorism

Behind these changes is a subtle dynamic. Transnational funding's proportion of educational funding steadily increased through at least the mid-90's and with it was increasing pressure on nations to accept transnational educational orthodoxies. But there were few clear signs that these orthodoxies were helping nations or their children.

One subtle break with the orthodoxy has been the clamor for more stress on indigenous higher education and research—rather than remain customers, increasing numbers of new nations feel they can or should be creators and sellers.

A second and potentially more profound break is the revived stress on nation-building. The world has been a scary place for many decades, but the international orthodoxy has largely ignored that reality. But with the turn of the century, leaders around the world are coming to recognize that transnational entity can neither be depended on to guarantee peace or to provide dependable support for national development efforts. The consequences of this new recognition are as yet unknown: A war of civilizations, a retreat to feudalism? Whatever the ultimate outcome, what is apparent in the near term is the tendency for nations and sub-nations to enhance their emphasis on autonomy and self-reliance, in an era when partners cannot be counted on. This leads to a return to old or rather revised nation-building rationales and an increasing stress on the role of education in supporting national defense and security. Goals such as quality and efficiency may be sacrificed by this inward shift.

Table 2 Summary of rationales for educational expenditures

Lewin 1982	28 National Reports published in 2001
<p>Nation-building rationales Develop and consolidate a national identity Promulgate a national language Promulgate a national ideology Promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance Reduce cultural and psychological dependency Strengthen local institutions Develop individual potential fully Localize expatriate manpower Ensure physical well-being and health</p>	<p>Nation-building rationales Reinforce national unity*** Acquire habits of hygiene and healthcare*** Increased awareness and appreciation of cultural/historical/linguistic identity***** Promote loyalty to national religion* Promote democracy***** Promote indigenous language* Counter extremism and terrorism* Modernize religious schools*</p>
<p>Manpower Development Rationales Increase the possession of general skills relevant to the development Increase the possession of skills relevant to the modern sector Provide agricultural development knowledge and skills Increase the prospects for self employment Extend literacy to increase productivity and innovation Develop non-formal education programs</p>	<p>Manpower Development Rationales Produce individuals to contribute towards development***** Establishing strong scientific and technological base** Preparing individuals for world of work**** Match manpower with labor market demands***** Provide labor flexibility and mobility* Promoting economic growth**** Modernize agricultural technology** Eradicate illiteracy*****</p>
<p>Socio Equity Rationales Equalize educational opportunities and reduce regional disparities in access Reduce income inequalities Reduce occupational differences between groups assuming from educational imbalances Provide basic education as a human right</p>	<p>Socio Equity Rationales Reduce gender inequalities***** Reduce regional inequalities*** Reduce urban/rural inequalities*** Correct historical injustices** Provide free basic education***** Reduce income poverty</p>
<p>Improving Efficiency of schooling rationales Reduce dropouts Reduce repetition rates Increase enrolments Improve cost effectiveness of teacher training Improve efficiency of plant utilization</p>	<p>Improving Efficiency of schooling rationales Centralize system management***** Transition to transnational (EU) model of education**</p>
<p>Improving Quality of schooling rationales Improve educational quality through curriculum development Improve quality through localizing examinations Improve teacher training Improve in-service professional development Improve resources available to teachers Enhance planning and research capabilities Increase private education standards</p>	<p>Improving Quality of schooling rationales Updating educational content***** Removal of dogma and ideology** Universal minimum requirements* Improve teachers' social status***** Launch new teaching technologies* Improve infrastructure***** Improve teacher training***** Decrease student/teacher ratio***</p>
	<p>Technology Rationales Keeping pace with technological advances**** Avoiding the digital divide* Using internet as education resource*** Students can learn at own pace as self-learners** Developing workers to compete in information age**** Upgrading technological infrastructure***</p>

Sources : Keith Lewin et al."Adjusting to the 1980's: Taking Stock of Educational Expenditure" in IDRC, *Financing Educational Expenditure*, 1982. 2001 UNESCO

The Potential of the Information Revolution

The modern school was a new educational innovation, replacing the former tradition of home schooling and self-study. Children were now placed in schools some distance from their homes where they trained teachers who taught them a prescribed curriculum organized in terms of sequential grades. Each new goal and related component of the modern school—the schoolhouse, the curriculum organized in grades and conveyed through textbooks, the trained teacher—while introduced to enhance learning, also added substantial costs. Over the reform-crazy 20th century, there has been a succession of innovations in the modern school, such as the increased role for local governments and communities evident in the last decade. Yet in an age of rising educational costs that are not matched with rising accomplishments, it is inevitable that critics question the value of the goals and components of the modern school, asking if some cannot be modified or even dispensed with. The information revolution opens up many new possibilities.

In the early decades of the modern era, the school was an exciting place for most children—or at least a more attractive option than working in the fields. In today's information society, the school encounters potential competition from many teachers, and often loses. Young people, especially as they reach their teens, frequently express boredom with their schooling. Yet these same young people have dreams of becoming successful adults with interesting careers and a full package of material possessions. To help children transition from youth to adulthood, some societies are beginning to organize internships in workplaces as an alternative to formal schooling. Germany perhaps pioneered in this regard with its unique program of industry-based vocational schools. This same principle could easily be applied to other occupational areas such as internships in commercial and industrial corporations, internships in museums and other aesthetic activities such as architectural firms or the music industry, internships in the media and sports and leisure organizations. Societies might propose to offer to every middle school graduate an opportunity over the next several years to participate in a minimum of three internships. Upon the completion of the internship phase, the young people would have a clearer sense of their occupational aspirations and a stronger determination to commit to the studies appropriate for realizing those aspirations. Boredom might be replaced by purposeful motivation. As these internships would benefit the host sites as much as the youth, the host sites would cover most of the costs---thus relieving the educational sector of many of the expenses currently devoted to high school education.

Teachers' salaries are the major expense of the modern school, and so any reduction of the modern school's dependence on teachers is likely to lead to a more affordable school. One vision possible in the cybernetic era is to shift a significant part of the teaching challenge over to computer-assisted technology such as the presentation of materials, the facilitation of exercises, the evaluation of student performance, and the analysis of student learning difficulties. Teachers might serve in a new role of coordinating these technical tasks, while intervening to introduce new concepts and to stimulate higher level thinking. Considerable technology is now being developed to accomplish these various tasks. Ironically this technology currently has its highest

applicability at the tertiary level for adult learners rather than at the primary level where the educational challenge is most pressing. The shift to educational technology also reduces the reliance on school buildings as a site for learning; students can complete most of their learning assignments at home or at a nearby computer center or learning station. Where good instructional technology is in place, teachers' contact hours are reduced and so are educational expenses.

In sum, there are ways to design education that reduce dependence on the modern props of school buildings, the uniform curriculum, textbooks, trained teachers, and one-time national examinations. Focusing on the goals of education as contrasted with the modern means is the key to the elaboration of these possibilities. Educational technology opens up many of these possibilities. Will the 21st century, drawing on the power of the cybernetic revolution, launch the third educational revolution?

A Cosmopolitan Education for the 21st Century

by

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"A Cosmopolitan Education for the 21st Century"

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Education is always a value-laden activity. Every curriculum and every mode of instruction embodies a judgment that *this* is important to learn and *this* is the way to teach it. A "value-neutral education" is literally impossible. The unavoidable presence of values in all educational work thus raises the question of which values ought to be given priority. I will argue here for a cosmopolitan, or internationalist, answer to that question. A brief sketch of our historical moment will provide the background I need to present this viewpoint.

Nobody alert to world events can fail to be impressed by the speed of global change. This acceleration of history began, in earnest, some two hundred years ago with the economic upheaval known as the Industrial Revolution, and with the simultaneous political earthquakes known as the American and French Revolutions. Their positive and negative effects can be seen everywhere. Values such as respect for the individual and respect for the distinctiveness of human cultures are here to stay, regardless of the fact that they continue to be tossed aside in various parts of the globe. Specific democratic regimes come and go, but not the democratic impulse. Countless economic initiatives arise and then collapse, but not the spirit of economic innovation. Cultural styles and products bloom and then wither, but behind them abides a passion to create.

Side by side with these fruits of the acceleration of history, however, are bewildering losses. The social, economic, and political tsunamis unleashed by revolution two hundred years ago have washed away many traditional modes of living around the globe, often leaving in their wake uncertain and confusing conditions. The relentless demand for financial profit, the press of population growth, and the instantaneous transfer of a stupendous amount of information, often trump stable forms of human association and with them a sense of control over life. The assault on human sensibilities from ever expanding modes of entertainment tramples underfoot contemplation, reflection, questioning, and sustained engagement with other people. Crucial human values, like much of the physical environment on the planet, suffer and degrade.

Neither the positive nor negative consequences of the acceleration of human history are going to disappear any time soon. Democratic practices, economic and cultural creativity, and more, will sprint alongside with political oppression, environmental decline, and the commercialization of values. But education in the 21st century can affect the course of the race. It can influence whether the headlong hurdle is toward cosmopolitan, humane, and conservationist ways of living together on the planet, or toward cultural

isolation and political, economic, and religious dogmatism. The chosen course will prove fateful for the human prospect. It may prove fatal if the turn is toward isolation and the shrill rejection of all that is "different from us," a tendency observable in east and west, north and south.

What kind of education for our time, and for that of our children and their children's children, can render more likely a worthy road for humanity to take? What kind of graduate – what kind of *person* – might we like to see emerge from such an education? How would the person talk, think, respond, and act, were we to meet him or her? I have taken us back two hundred years for a look at the context for these questions. Let me go back four hundred years for the beginning of an answer to them. Because of space limitations I will focus on developments in Europe, but a comparable tale could be told about other parts of the world at particular times.

Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries featured an astonishing flowering of painting, sculpture, philosophy, poetry, legal and political theory, and more. It was a period in which what we today would call internationalism blossomed as well. The religious strife that resulted from the Reformation had begun, but had not yet degenerated into the grim forms it would take in the 17th century, especially in what came to be called the Thirty Years War. Nationalism, although underway at the time, had not fully reared its head and taken hold of European political sensibilities. Indeed, "nations" such as England and France were still in formation. And it was a time when artists, thinkers, writers, poets, printers, and more, all wandered freely across borders and took up residence here, there, and everywhere, and helped to generate a new cosmopolitan attitude.

I say "attitude" rather than ideology because that is what it was. It was – and is -- an *orientation* or *outlook* on human life and on the arrangements that human beings create for dwelling together. It is an outlook that focuses on dignity, with that term's connotations of what links all human beings from a moral point of view, and on diversity, with that term's connotations of all that is distinctive and unique about individuals and cultures. I believe this orientation reaches its apogee, in this period four hundred years ago, in the essays of Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). It finds expression in the quotes from ancient Greek and Roman authors that Montaigne had etched into the beams of his library, one of which, translated freely from the Latin, says: "I am a human being, therefore nothing that is human is foreign to me." It takes form in the international, cosmopolitan viewpoint that Montaigne cultivates in his essays. He is credited not only for inventing the literary form we now call the essay, but also for being a combined ethnographer, philosopher, literary critic, social and political commentator, and much more. On the basis of a dazzling array of data on the human he gathers from around the world, Montaigne urges us to hold close in our minds and hearts two facts: that the diversity within each human being is as great and varied as the diversity between any two persons, and that the diversity within any human culture or society is as great and varied as the diversity between any two cultures or societies. He regards this immense diversity in the human tapestry, both within us and between us, to be not a problem that confounds an international or cosmopolitan impulse. On the contrary, it constitutes the source of a truly

endless educational opportunity, through which one constantly learns about others and oneself, and through which a human life becomes in essence *an ongoing educational event*. Montaigne raises the image that what it means to be human, in what we might call the fullest sense of that word, is to experience life educationally.

Historic cultures from around the globe feature comparable moments to what Europe saw in the 15th and 16th centuries, and comparable representative creators like Montaigne who advance a humane, outward-reaching attitude toward humanity and its prospect. I discern a profound lesson here, one that remains steady and sure despite the rushing, accelerating tide of change. The lesson is that humanity is in it together. The only positive, inhabitable response to our condition that can endure and that can promote general human flourishing is a commitment to a cosmopolitan, or internationalist, education.

That commitment does not require a wholesale transformation of elementary and secondary school curricula – a move that would, in any case, merely add to the acceleration of events. We should continue to teach children and youth the arts of mathematics, music, science, literature, dance, history, physical education, and more. We should continue to rely upon sound educational research to provide dynamic curricula and pedagogical method. This research should continue to draw its critical lenses from anthropology, economics, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, and interdisciplinary combinations of these and other scholarly frameworks. The tasks of research and of good educational practice are immense, exciting, and never-ending, and in themselves offers a site for genuinely international communication and cooperation.

But the commitment I have in mind resides more in the realm of values. As I stated at the beginning of this essay, every educational scheme ever invented by humanity is undergirded by values. It is those values, and not the schemes themselves, that give human beings their sense of meaning, their sense of purpose, and their sense of identity. Indeed, those values give people their underlying sense of what it means to *be here* on this planet in the first place.

The values that inform a cosmopolitan or internationalist outlook are plain to see, in part because they have been articulated for centuries in many parts of the world. They include respect for human rights, respect for the physical environment that makes life possible, and respect for reasoned debate rather than brute force to resolve problems. But these values do not emerge and endure without education. And the education I have in mind is not so much in *what* children and youth study – why $2 + 2 = 4$, what makes the Taj Mahal beautiful, the composition of water, and so forth – but *how* they learn these important things and *in what spirit*. Viewed from the point of view of the teacher, the question is not solely what she or he teaches but the *way* in which he or she teaches.

Here I want to draw upon a helpful distinction made by the cosmopolitan philosopher and educator John Dewey. Dewey talks about the difference between “moral ideas” and “ideas about morality.” Ideas about morality are things we might discuss

programmatically: the nature of justice, the meaning of rights, what ethical code of conduct ought to govern physicians, and so forth. Moral ideas, in contrast, are ideas of any sort that, as Dewey puts it, take effect *in* our conduct and influence what we do. Moral ideas are ideas of any sort that influence, constitute, or shape how we perceive and treat ourselves, others, and the world. In principle, a young child who has understood and taken in the fact that $2 + 2 = 4$ now has a moral idea. In other words, the child now lives his or her life in such a way that it honors or abides by the fact that $2 + 2$ is 4, not 5 or 3. Moreover, the child lives life in such a way that he or she acknowledges or presumes that others share this fact and govern their lives by it as well. If apples cost 25 cents each in the market and I give the grocer a dollar, I'll get four apples, not 3 or 5. Thus we have a way of dwelling together, the grocer and I, rather than existing apart. It may sound strange to think of a simple arithmetic fact as constituting a moral idea, but not if we remember, Dewey tells us, that the very concept "moral" points to our animating outlook or orientation toward one another and the world, an outlook that leads us to treat ourselves and others in particular ways.

I have touched on ideas about morality – ethical matters that we might talk *about* – and moral ideas, which comprise *all* those ideas, *all* those things we know and believe, that inform our actual conduct. What happens if we now speak of ideas *about* a cosmopolitan, internationalist outlook, as compared with cosmopolitan, internationalist *ideas*? I believe that one consequence will be a deepened and wondrous respect for the educational possibilities inherent in each and every action that takes place across the school day – in the classroom, in the hallways, on the playground, in the lunch room, and on the sports field. Each and every moment becomes, in germ, an opportunity to learn something about (1) the dynamics and importance of genuine human communication, (2) the generative and humane power of reflective thinking, (3) the meaning of intellectual responsibility, and (4) the endless possibilities of imaginative creativity regardless of the problem or subject matter at hand. Let me conclude this essay by touching briefly on each of these fundamentally cosmopolitan ideas that I believe should orient education in our century.

* *The dynamics and importance of genuine human communication.* Educators need to talk *with* their students rather than solely *at* them. Lectures and rote learning have their places with children and youth, but if that is their sole educational diet they will never learn how to communicate with people who do not grow up on the same fare. Save for unusual cases, they will never be able to understand those who are different from them. They will never be able to *conceive* the political and ethical promise that exists in our human diversity. Montaigne urges us to learn how to say: "I am a human being, therefore nothing that is human is foreign to me." And when Socrates was asked where he came from, he did not reply "From Athens," but "From the world." Both figures were remarkable communicators, able to listen to any person and to respond. Communication is a learned art, and it forms the core of the art of living cooperatively with other human beings. Educators can help children and youth learn to communicate by taking advantage of every opportunity for interaction that surfaces across the school day – a potentially vast and potent field for learning.

* *The generative and humane power of reflective thinking.* Communication means more than sharing information or data. Computers do that, but they do not communicate. Communication involves a dynamic give and take not just of information but of opinion, viewpoint, perspective, and judgment. Communication involves dialogue, not a string of monologues. Moreover, human beings have the ability to stand back from their ideas and values, and to contemplate and judge their substance and worth. They are able to solve problems systematically and carefully, relying on inquiry rather than on mere habit. These processes constitute reflective thinking. Like communication, reflective thinking is an acquired art and necessitates education. Indeed, it seems to require lifelong education, as many of us who are aging realize with chagrin when we discover opinions we are holding dogmatically and sometimes even spitefully. As with communication, reflective thinking can be learned across the entire curriculum and the entire span of the school day. With the guidance of a good teacher, any situation that requires students to "stop, look, and listen" can become a moment for learning how to think reflectively. A good teacher will also seize such moments to foster communication, through which children and youth learn to see that other people – "even" those very different from them – can also think reflectively. That perception supports human solidarity. If to be human means, in part, to think, then to see others as thinkers is to see them as human.

* *Intellectual responsibility.* To think reflectively involves more than mere musing or day-dreaming. It means taking something seriously enough to come to grips with it and understand it. At the same time, to communicate entails more than random sputterings. It means having something to say, or at least wanting to say something. Thus both thinking and communicating, in the richest sense of the terms, are *actions*. They reveal or express who we are as persons, and they effect others around us. To become aware of these facts is to develop intellectual responsibility. John Dewey offers a powerful view of the importance of intellectual responsibility as an educational outcome:

It would be much better to have fewer facts and truths in instruction -- that is, fewer things supposedly accepted, -- if a smaller number of situations could be intellectually worked out to the point where conviction meant something real -- some identification of the self with the type of conduct demanded by facts and foresight of results. The most permanent bad results of undue complication of school subjects and congestion of school studies and lessons [the cramming of our curricula mirror my remarks above about the acceleration of history] are not the worry, nervous strain, and superficial acquaintance that follow (serious as these are), but the failure to make clear what is involved in really knowing and believing a thing. Intellectual responsibility means severe standards in this regard. These standards can be built up only through practice in following up and acting upon the meaning of what is acquired.¹

Dewey provides us an image of a person who not only knows and believes things -- all persons already do that -- but who understands what it *means* to know and believe something. That condition implies a person able to stand back from,

and yet also embrace, particular ideas and aspirations. It describes a person who is intellectually and morally conscious of the world, and who appreciates the value, necessity, and consequences of both thinking and communicating.

* *Imaginative creativity.* Whether in science, sport, or philosophy, all modes of creativity involve imagination, else how could the child, youth, or adult envision possibilities and results? However, by placing the qualifier "imaginative" before the idea of creativity, I mean to emphasize how crucial the cultivation of imagination will continue to be in the 21st Century. Turned the other way around, by inserting the idea of creativity, rather than relying solely on the quality of imagination, I intend to underscore how indispensable human creativity will remain. The acceleration of history in our time can become an opportunity, rather than a source of bewilderment or oppression, if education equips persons to respond to it. That task requires cultivating imagination and creativity. As the tide of events repeatedly sweeps away customary ways of doing things, educated people can respond not out of fear but out of a steady imagination for the creative power of individuals and communities. Educated people can seize opportunities to expand communication that is marked by reflective thinking and intellectual responsibility. Writing in the immediate wake of the Industrial Revolution and the political revolutions that accompanied it, the poet Shelley urged humanity "to imagine what we know." He meant remembering to bring to life in ever dynamic ways our sense of human dignity, of human creativity, and of human possibility, and not to surrender these values to feelings of despair or fear. We *know* that life can constitute more than a bad dream, and education and its effects can render us awake enough to support the kind of world we would like to inhabit.

The education in attitude and orientation I have sketched in this essay will produce tensions. No educational scheme can avoid doing so if it is properly *educational* rather than merely rote or subservient to passing fashion. One overriding tension that will remain difficult to address is between the need for enculturation and socialization – consider the necessity for children and youth to learn their native language(s) – and education understood as a slow but steady journey into the cosmopolitan outlook I have been outlining. By definition, that journey reaches beyond the boundaries of any and all modes of enculturation, although it does not necessitate rejecting those forms of tuition. Nonetheless, the consequences of believing in the journey can be fateful. The Athenians put Socrates to death for challenging them to think seriously about the differences between mere socialization and education, or, better, between traditionalism and tradition -- between a blind, uncritical reverence for the past that admits of no questioning; and a critical respect for past, present, and future that regards questioning as a doorway into a broader, inviting world for all. The stakes are no less profound in the 21st century, and they are at issue in every society on the planet. It will require the courage, tenacity, skill, and goodwill of educators everywhere to help children and youth come into the world of humanity rather than to withdraw from it.

Endnote

ⁱ John Dewey, Democracy and Education. New York: The Free Press, 1997, pp. 178-179 (original work published in 1916).

QUALITY EDUCATION – WHAT IS IT AND WHO DECIDES?

George M. Ingram*

BRIEFING PAPER FOR A POLICY MAKER

SUMMARY

Mr. Secretary (Senator): You asked a simple, straightforward question as to what is meant by quality in the sixth EFA goal: *Improving all aspects of the quality of education.*

Unfortunately, there is no consensus or single answer. Quality is a relative term. The goal of quality education is pursued through a relentless process toward ever improving learning. It is evolutionary and cannot be short-circuited. It can be hastened or retarded, but not leapfrogged. Quality of education is a dynamic concept that varies depending on who asks the question, the nature of the circumstances and context, and what one views as the purpose of education, and it changes over time. Any answer starts with, "It depends..." The literature is rich with concepts of quality education and the components required to create a quality education. A principal conundrum is how to define and deliver quality education in difficult situations.

PURPOSE

The definition of quality depends on who is asked and one's view of the purpose of education. Among the various purposes of education are: nation building based on certain values or ideology or theology; preserving or changing traditional values and myths; achieving global economic competitiveness; gaining individual employment or economic security; maintaining family or community values; promoting world peace and human rights. It depends on the community at which you target the question: student, parent, school, community, nation, world:

- for the student, quality may be defined in terms of grades, how engaging the subject matter and instruction may be, or usefulness of the schooling to finding a job
- for the parent, quality may be defined in terms of maintaining certain values, contributing to family goals, securing employment
- for the school, quality may be defined in terms of success in graduating students, whether graduates move on to the next stage of schooling, or student scores on national achievement assessments
- for the community, quality may be defined in terms of community values, ranking of a school according to national tests, or sufficient number of graduates adequately educated and trained so as to attract investment
- for the nation, quality may be defined in terms of building a national consensus around a particular political philosophy or religion, maintaining or overcoming a particular perception of the nation's history, making the country competitive in the global economy

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- at the international level, the purpose may be promoting world peace and order and sense of world community

Kai-ming Cheng¹ makes a case, convincing to educated people concerned with modernizing their nation's economy and making it competitive at the global level, that today's education systems are outmoded as they were designed to fit an industrial model rather than today's knowledge-based society. In this new society, work has shifted from routinization to constant evolution in order to respond to customer needs. In the job market, creativity, design, innovation, teamwork, and continuous learning are valued, whereas most education systems produce compliance and are based on uniform standards. The argument is persuasive for an OECD nation or an Asian Tiger, but maybe not for a country that needs first to produce enough food—to make its farmers a little more efficient—to feed its citizens.

Similarly, Mohamed Charfi and Hamadi Redissi² make a persuasive case that education in Arab nations is outmoded. They suggest a prescription for joining the needs and teachings of liberalism and religion in a way that both inculcates religious values and beliefs but also reveals knowledge and truth. The result would appear to be improved, high quality learning, but not to someone who believes in a theocracy or a purely secular state.

NATION/GROUP DIFFERENCES

The purposes and expectations of education vary among governments, institutions, and different income and social groups. The government of a democratic nation will seek a vastly different national consensus and values through the education system than will the government of an autocratic or theocratic nation, and those differences can affect what is taught, how it is taught, and even who is taught. Many parents and students in a poor developing country are likely to have much different views of what they want from education than those in a rich nation, although the wealthy in both countries may have comparable views. The poor farmer in Bangladesh, the middle-class family in Paris, and the wealthy family in California will have vastly different needs and expectations for the education of their children. Even within a nation and community, the expectations of the rich and poor, the urban and rural, and the religious and secular, will differ.

CORE COMPETENCE

If there is a commonality that cuts across these differences, it is the concept that education should prepare a student to be a constructive, contributing member of society by delivering a minimum quality of competence in literacy, numeracy, life skills, and problem solving. A few education systems focus more heavily or solely on delivering religious content, but they are the exception. Many education systems also are expected to deliver values, but there is a wide range of differences in what those values should be.

ELEMENTS

There are various approaches to the issue of what is required to produce an education of quality. UNICEF and UNESCO³ identify five critical components:

- *learners* – who are healthy, well-nourished, ready to participate and learn
- *environments* – healthy, safe, protective, gender-sensitive, adequate resources
- *content* – relevant for acquisition of life skills and knowledge
- *processes* – trained teachers using child-centered pedagogy
- *outcomes* – knowledge, skills, and attitudes linked to national goals

To these five components, the Global Campaign for Education⁴ adds a sixth:

- *responsiveness* – to the diverse needs of children, accountability to parents

David Stephens⁵ offers a different approach to quality:

- *relevance* – to context, needs, and humanity
- *efficiency* – in setting and meeting standards
- *something special* – going beyond normal expectations
- *inclusion* – of all children, irrespective of gender, ability, or wealth

And a third approach is to use a context-input-process-outcome framework.⁶

Among specific elements that various analysts identify as important to quality education are: support and involvement of parents and community; language of instruction (mother tongue in early years); relevant curriculum content and learning materials; family environment, and preparation and health of students; process of teaching (child-centered teaching, active participation of students); safe, healthy, and gender-sensitive environment (e.g., for girls, latrines and women teachers); system to assess learning outcomes; effective management and governance (decentralization, local engagement, and accountability); school heads as instructional leaders; resources; access to opportunities that require basic education (secondary school, employment). And, above all, teachers—their preparation, support, training (pre- and in-service), compensation, morale, and commitment—are at the center of the learning process.

QUALITY IN RESOURCE-POOR ENVIRONMENTS

Definitions, analyses, and presentations on quality education most often are put in terms of what is required to produce quality education in ideal circumstances—strong political commitment, adequate resources, supportive and involved parents and community, trained teachers and systems to support them, healthy students, etc. In a seminal report in 2002, the World Bank⁷ identified key benchmarks based on an assessment of characteristics of developing countries with well-performing education systems:

- average teachers salary: 3.5 times per capita GNP
- pupil/teacher ratio: 40:1
- non-teacher salary proportion of recurrent spending: 33%
- average repetition rate: 10%
- education spending as a proportion of government budget: 14–18%
- primary education proportion of education spending: 50%

These common characteristics are the hallmarks of education systems that are succeeding in their task. But how do you maximize quality in less favorable circumstances?

Experience has taught us how to deal with less than ideal circumstances. Teachers and students can produce learning tools from locally available materials, and radio is a valuable mechanism for delivering training to remote areas. Meanwhile, the lack of adequately trained teachers in rural areas may be mitigated by recruiting locally and lowering qualification standards, then providing ongoing support and training.

However, missing is a systemic analysis of what would define quality education and how it would be maximized in a resource-poor environment—crowded classes, poorly trained and compensated teachers, inadequate materials, unengaged parents. For example, most discussions of quality education emphasize child-centered instruction and active student participation. But how realistic is that approach in a classroom of 80 or 100 students, crowded on narrow benches, without an aisle so the teacher cannot engage students in the middle of the classroom much less those at the back, and where she likely does not know their names? In such a situation, teachers have little opportunity to effectively engage students in active learning. So what methodologies would maximize the learning experience, particularly for a poorly trained teacher with minimal education?

Nor does the education literature discuss what quality education should mean for students outside the classroom. We know there are hard-to-reach and vulnerable populations—street children, rural dwellers, disabled children, HIV/AIDS orphans, dropouts, child laborers, night travelers in Uganda. Interventions are being attempted to reach these groups. But what are realistic, relevant goals; what type of learning is relevant for such groups; what is the education quality that should be sought?

¹Kai-ming Cheng. *Education for All, but for What*, paper prepared for the American Academy, September 2003.

² Mohamed Charfi and Hamadi Redissi. *Reforming Education in Arab Countries: Obstacles and Challenges*, paper prepared for the American Academy, August 2003.

³ UNICEF. *Defining Quality in Education*, working paper, June 2000; UNESCO. Draft paper for 2005 Global EFA Monitoring Report.

⁴ Global Campaign for Education. *A quality education for all: Priority actions for governments, donors and civil society*, briefing paper, May 2002.

⁵ David Stephens. *Quality of Basic Education*, paper prepared for UNESCO EFA Monitoring Report Team, November 2003.

⁶ UNESCO. *2002 EFA Global Monitoring Report*; draft outline for 2005 EFA Global Monitoring Report.

⁷ World Bank. *Education for Dynamic Economies: Action Plan to Accelerate Progress Towards Education for All (EFA)*, April 2002.

A NOTE OF REALITY FROM THOSE IN THE CLASSROOM.....

When I asked my niece, a teacher of young students in the Dominican Republic, what quality education is, she responded with a comprehensive picture of what a teacher contends with to create a quality learning environment:

“Teaching, learning, assessing, planning, motivation, social and emotional, hands-on, working together, managing and administering, seeing the big picture but also being able to see each person as an individual, and always being able to recognize what is valuable about what you already know but also learn new things every day.”

And, when she asked her customers—a fifth grade class—to define quality education, they said:

- to be a good person with people and not hurt others. Mutual respect.
- to be kind with kids and explain everything.
- teachers show me, tell me how I should do things like talk, and always say please. Having a good education is what gives you your reputation.
- teachers need to make students like the work they do by doing it in a fun way, then students want to work.
- to show kids to be responsible and good people.
- a way of being and acting. You can have it if your parents or teachers correct you in anything you are doing wrong or not properly.
- teachers teaching well.
- to show kids to be responsible.
- something to use when we are grown.
- listening and learning.
- being respectful with people.
- having good manners and showing respect to others and adults. It is doing what your parents tell you to do, not whatever you want.
- when you learn all you need to learn.
- to teach all kids good manners and make them know why education is important.
- getting taught in a way that everyone can understand the material.
- when teachers teach and respect students. Also when there is a role made for smaller kids.
- to be perfect boy or girl.

Quality Education: the Work of Optimists

by

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I've spent nearly four decades thinking about universal primary education. During that time, many of my views have held constant. I have always believed, for example, that education transforms society and that too few girls and members of marginalized or stigmatized groups have access to it. This lack of diversity erodes quality, because it limits education's potential to help students understand how the world really works—both locally and globally. Unfortunately, I also still believe that education often does little to respond to the challenge of preparing individuals in the four performance areas that lie at the heart of quality education: sustaining a livelihood; protecting the environment; being a good family member; and practicing enlightened citizenship. But, in this brief essay, I will primarily address how my thinking has evolved—specifically, what has changed in my approach to quality education and why.

The source of much of this transformation has to do with how I have come to view poverty and the role of education in reducing it. Let's think of just one young girl living, as more than a billion people do, on less than \$1 a day. To truly imagine this girl, we must name her. So, let's now focus on Gabi's life as a ten-year old in her West African village. Gabi has experienced loss this year; her baby brother died. She frequently labors at least 14 hours on such grueling tasks as hauling water, searching for firewood, harvesting yams, marketing vegetables grown in the family's small garden, and struggling to care for a younger sibling who is very sick. Often, Gabi herself is tired and hungry; she seldom passes a week without some sort of physical pain or dull ache from an unnamed and untreated illness.

Gabi wanted to study, but the school nearest her home (some five kilometers away) offers only the first three primary grades. The teacher is all too often absent and, when she is present, teaches in a language that no one in Gabi's family can speak. Gabi's parents, who have been engaged in a lifelong struggle for survival, didn't think the sacrifice they would have to make to send Gabi to school was justified. They also doubt that Gabi has the stamina to walk ten kilometers each day for an education. And they're concerned for her safety along a road where violent acts have occasionally been reported. So, the harsh necessities of Gabi's life have forced her to enter the informal labor force at a very early age.

Gabi doesn't live in poverty. Poverty was *done* to Gabi. I say "done," because forces well beyond Gabi's control placed her exactly where she is. She's unschooled because little or no suitable schooling was available. She's often sick because adequate health services and clean water aren't available. She's poor because the land her family works is poor, and there are no agricultural extension workers to help them eke out a better living from it. For Gabi, the traditional escape routes from poverty—training, credit, schools, health care, and a facilitative environment conducive to personal betterment—are totally inaccessible. Gabi lives in a canyon that's sealed at the pass.

It's easy to blame Gabi's plight on policy gone awry. Her government should have allocated its resources differently. The debt crisis should have been handled differently. Cash crops should have been introduced differently. Precious land resources should have been managed differently. But, in the final analysis, Gabi is not a centerpiece at some policy-level banquet. Her needs can't be dismissed by mouthing policy platitudes. Even if she's a composite character, she's real.

When we talk about quality education, we must reframe the issue and ask, “What kind of education does Gabi need?” What kind of education would best equip *her* to confront and change those conditions that keep her and her family ensnared in the poverty trap?

Here’s how I would answer these questions. Gabi’s education must prepare her to engage in the four most basic tasks of citizens who live in communities where sustainable development is underway: creating a livelihood; protecting the environment; making common cause with others who seek to build a better life; and, living in a family that provides appropriate support and nurturance for *all* its members. In order for Gabi to carry out these tasks she will need the instrumental skills of reading, writing and basic computation as well as content-driven knowledge in the natural sciences, social studies, health, and nutrition. But Gabi’s education must also focus on values, processes and attitudes. I’d like to address three of these which I deem absolutely essential to “quality education.”

Metacognitive skills that contribute to the transfer of knowledge and to the solution of novel problems. *Metacognitive instruction* addresses the abilities of learners to plan, classify, think divergently, identify assumptions, recognize misleading information, and generate questions. *Metacognition* refers to an individual's ability to think about thinking. It involves being consciously aware of one's role as a problem solver and describes an ability to monitor and control one's mental processing. It is distinct from such other cognitive skills as demonstration of effective memory, the ability to perform defined tasks, or the use of generic strategies for solving new problems (such as outlining a chapter in a textbook in order to bolster comprehension). The individual who exemplifies strong metacognition is one who uses knowledge acquired in one content area (estimation skills in math, for example) to solve a problem in an entirely different area (for example, drawing inferences about the local ecosystem).

In addition to the ability to predict the results of one's own problem-solving actions, basic metacognitive development includes skills that enable individuals to check the results of their own actions, to track their progress toward a solution, and to gauge the reasonableness of their actions and solutions against some larger reality.

We are living in a world where the pace of change is ever-accelerating. Gabi will encounter many novel, never-before-seen problems over the course of her lifetime. If her life hasn’t yet been touched by globalization—and that’s highly unlikely—it soon will be. Her ability to deal successfully with the unknown is directly linked to the metacognitive competencies she will develop over the course of her schooling.

Skills that prepare learners to avail themselves of development opportunities. Allow me to introduce the term “*participation opportunity*” which represents a potential *productive* interaction in which individuals can engage. Participation opportunities allow Gabi and others to contribute to the development of their nation, community, and family.

Participation opportunities span the course of a person's life cycle and evolve accordingly. They include the chance to go to school; secure a livelihood; influence political or civic affairs; promote family development; and protect the environment. Such opportunities also encompass the chance to partake in agricultural extension activities, cultural events, or entrepreneurial behavior. *Accessed participation opportunities* describe those participation opportunities that individuals actually utilize. As such, they represent a subset of the *available participation opportunities* found in any particular setting. The notion of *accessed participation opportunity* is a modern-day analogue to the old saw, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." A citizen may encounter a participation opportunity, but choose to ignore it. Or, a participation opportunity may be present in the environment but unknown to the individual.

The education that Gabi needs will prepare her to recognize existing participation opportunities. It will also predispose her to access these opportunities throughout the course of her lifetime. And, perhaps most importantly, Gabi's *quality* education will help her to *create* participation opportunities for herself, her family, and members of her community. The key to poverty reduction lies in an ever-growing inventory of participation opportunities that are created and accessed by citizens over the course of their lifetimes. That is why the idea of participation opportunity access and creation is so central to the notion of quality education.

Processes that add to the store of social capital in the community. Social capital refers to the relations—formal and informal—which bring people together to take action. The oxygen that sustains social capital is trust which, together with a cluster of shared attitudes, values and rules, lead to a common sense of mutual (or civic) responsibility.

It is social capital that makes society more than a mere collection of individuals. Indeed, social capital is the glue that holds a society's institutions and citizens together. Specifically, the combination of trust and a willingness to cooperate is what allows people to form self-help groups and associations. Social capital, thus, is a resource that facilitates the realization of shared goals in a functional society. Seen in this light, it is also an indispensable asset for individuals who want to lift themselves out of poverty through collective action that includes the seeking of redress when fundamental rights (including the right to a quality education) are denied.

Education can build social capital only when five basic conditions are met: (1) parents and community members come together to play a significant role in all aspects of the education enterprise; (2) learners create deeply meaningful linkages between what they study in school and the reality of their local community; (3) social inter-action is fully integrated into all aspects of learning; (4) teachers model respect for all learners; and (5) the schoolhouse becomes a magnet for *all* children in a community regardless of gender, linguistic background, family income, religion, or physical disabilities.

There is an enormous body of literature that prescribes quite clearly what we need to do in order to attract under-represented groups of students to our classrooms. Often, those nations that have not made the investments needed to enroll all children plead cost constraints. A new consciousness needs to be forged; the cost of *not* engaging every child in schooling may be far higher (in terms of lost social capital which econometricians can express in monetary terms) than the relatively modest investments needed to achieve universal basic education.

I used to think of education as a self-contained system. The challenge, I thought, was to ensure that each component of this system functioned at the highest possible level. Consequently, I worked alongside many gifted professionals to secure improvements in the basic conditions of teaching and learning. The goal was to improve the system's efficiency. More graduates, fewer drop-outs, less disparity, and greater content mastery would be the hallmarks of these efficiency improvements. Curricular reform, teacher training, advances in educational technology and initiatives aimed at improving children's active learning capacity (e.g., school health and nutrition programs) would comprise the menu of interventions.

But now, with hindsight and perhaps even that touch of wisdom that comes with the passage of time, I see our challenges in a very different light. Quality education can be defined as the successful transmission of skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that enable learners to dramatically surpass the full range of limitations imposed by the circumstances of their birth. Narrow preconceptions about others as well as an inappropriate sense of one's place in the world exemplify limitations of birth that transcend family income.

Education, then, becomes the labor of optimists. Seen in this light, the work of achieving quality education is a noble pursuit that engages all of humankind in the perennial quest for elevation. It is a journey as much as a destination.

THE GOALS OF UNIVERSAL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: REVIVING THE SPIRIT OF SOCRATES

By Kishore Mahbubani¹

Deeply embedded in the inner recesses of most Western minds is the belief that the 21st Century will essentially be a continuation of the 19th and 20th Centuries. The Eurocentric world view which has dominated global thinking will continue. Hence, in the world of education, the standard Western "toolbox" with minor modification, will continue to serve mankind well. The West believes (with some justification) that this Western "toolbox" is a gift by the West to the rest of mankind. Hence, the more widely this gift is shared, the better the world will be. The confidence of the Western spirit of enlightenment continues to infuse Western ideas of education.

But the 21st Century is more likely to be a troubled century. Several new historical forces will come into play. 500 years of Western domination of the world, although not Western supremacy, is likely to come to an end. Several other hitherto dormant or passive civilizations will emerge and play a greater role in determining the course of world history. Unfortunately, conflict along civilizational lines is a real possibility. Several early warning signals have surfaced, including 9/11. Huge pools of poverty will remain in many corners of the world. To top it all, the world will shrink even more. All six billion inhabitants of the

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earth (probably nine billion by 2050) will have to learn to live together in these troubled times in a shrinking village.

With so many new forces of world history being unleashed, it seems both naive and even dangerous to proceed on "auto-pilot" in determining educational goals for mankind in the 21st Century. The standard Western "toolbox" of education, which has served both the West and indeed much of mankind, will have to be re-examined to see how it will need to be modified to meet the new needs of mankind. For example, one key goal of education is to both civilize humanity and prevent conflict. The current standard "toolbox" may not have enough tools to achieve this. But other items in this toolbox, like the science and mathematics components, will probably remain eternally valid and universally applicable. The key goal of this essay is to stimulate Western educational thinkers to re-examine this valuable Western "toolbox" that they have generously shared with mankind (and from which I have personally benefited even though I lived on the opposite side of the world).

The answer may well be that "context" will determine which set of tools to include in the educational "toolbox" to be delivered in different parts of the world. The standard tools of science and mathematics education may well remain the same. But some items, like literature and history, will have to be culturally and regionally specific. The huge challenge for the 21st Century will be to weave in some "universal" elements that will remind children all over the world that they belong to a single common humanity. V S Naipaul once suggested in his celebrated essay on "The Universal Western Civilization" that universal westernization of the world would achieve this. This historical conceit

has now gone. But one key stream of Western civilization, the spirit of Socrates, could well provide some key universal threads to weave humanity together. This is what this essay will try to advocate.

The first civilization that is likely to emerge to challenge Western intellectual domination of the world could well be the Chinese civilization. The surprise should not be that this is happening. The surprise is that this should be happening so late, when for most of the previous two millennia Chinese civilization has been on par if not ahead of much of the rest of the world. Despite having suffered over 150 years of national trauma since the Opium Wars of the mid-nineteenth century, the Chinese have never lost their cultural confidence. They have studied with great intensity all aspects of Western civilization, especially its science and technology. Soon, if it has not already happened, Chinese universities could soon be on par with Western universities in their mastery of science and technology. There is also a huge hunger to learn English but, unlike the Japanese intellectuals at the beginning of the 20th Century, Chinese intellectuals do not believe that they will have to Westernize themselves to succeed.

Hence, as the Chinese economy and society continue to grow and flourish in the 21st Century (although there will be many bumps on the road along the way), the Chinese will rediscover their deep cultural roots. There will be a huge pride in being Chinese. Already Chinese nationalism has become a major political force in China. Any politician in China who ignores the new Chinese pride does so at his own peril. The real challenge for educationists in China will be to balance this natural tendency to celebrate the huge cultural wealth of Chinese civilization with an equally strong message to Chinese children that they

belong to a single common humanity. This challenge is greater in China because it has traditionally been an insular society. China has always perceived itself to be "The Middle Kingdom". Hence, when it is successful, China expects the rest of the world to come to its doorstep. It does not expect to go out and learn about the rest of the world. Indeed, the last Chinese dynasty that was open and cosmopolitan was the Tang Dynasty of the 9th Century AD, probably the greatest Chinese dynasty. The question for China's educationalists therefore is: how does China revive the cosmopolitan spirit of the Tang Dynasty?

Each Chinese child should therefore be taught that while Chinese history and culture are rich resources, Chinese civilization is but one rich stream among the many rich streams in human civilization. The traditional cultural insularity of China will have to be overcome through the content of the education provided to Chinese children. When Chinese children learn about the many great thinkers in Chinese history, from Confucius to Lao Tse, they should also simultaneously learn about great Western thinkers, especially Socrates. They could also be taught that perhaps one reason why China fell centuries behind the West in development was because of its huge emphasis on rote-learning. The West, by contrast, had bottled the spirit of Socrates in its culture and had consistently promoted a culture of questioning and critical reasoning. Chinese educationists, if they searched hard enough, could surely find some impish Chinese philosophers from earlier days who asked questions as critically as Socrates did. Hence if critical reasoning and questioning could be woven into the Chinese educational system, the next generation of Chinese is likely to be more cosmopolitan, less nationalistic. It would be a huge contribution to world history if Western and Chinese civilizations could grow and flourish without conflict.

The same spirit of Socrates needs to be infused into another equally insular civilization: Islamic civilization. Like Chinese civilization, Islamic civilization had its heyday a thousand years ago during the era of the great Caliphates. Like the Tang Dynasty, these Caliphates were open and cosmopolitan. Indeed, these Islamic Caliphates did Western civilization a great favour by preserving the real fruits of Greek and Roman civilizations (after these two great civilizations declined) and then passing back their rich fruits to the West. Despite this enormous contribution that the Islamic world made to human civilization, probably fewer than one per cent of the 1.2 billion Muslims living in the world today are aware of this contribution. (And it is equally troubling that few in the West are aware of this contribution.)

Traditional Islamic education has suffered from the same handicap as traditional Chinese education: an emphasis on rote learning. Just as China will have to rise up to the challenge of the 21st Century by introducing a heavier emphasis on questioning and critical reasoning in its educational system, the Islamic world will have to do the same. But the challenge of doing this will be greater in the Islamic world. The prevailing mood in China is one of confidence and pride; the prevailing mood in the Islamic world is one of anger and humiliation. This does not provide the most fertile soil for introducing new concepts and ideas, even though the need there is even greater.

One asset here is the rich diversity of the Islamic world. The 1.2 billion Muslims worship one religion but they belong to many different cultures. Each has its own dynamic. Some need more help. The Arab world is the heartland of Islam but it now faces the greatest development challenges, as documented in the Arab Human Development Reports

prepared by UNDP in 2002 and 2003. Today, Finland, with a population of 5.5 million, produces more than the 280 million people of the Arab world. Only 1.6% of the Arab population has Internet access, compared with 68% of in the UK and 79% in the US. I have taken these statistics from a speech given by Daniel Rose entitled "Fighting Alligators vs. Draining the Swamp". In it, he also dispenses the same advice: reconnect the Arab world with "the Golden Age of the Abbassid caliphate, when Muslim scientists, philosophers, artists and educators sparkled in one of the great cultural flowerings of all time". Mr Rose adds "Then Muslims remembered that the Prophet said 'The ink of scientists is equal to the blood of martyrs'; then Muslim thinkers were proud of their familiarity with the best of the world's cultures; then it was taken for granted that science and knowledge belonged to all mankind and that intellectuals' borrowing and lending benefited everyone. What the Muslims had once it can have again".

This vital reconnection between the Islamic world of today with the glorious Islamic era cannot be done by a Western educational toolbox. The Muslims will have to create one of their own. It will have to include a study of the best practices of Western science and technology. On the historical and literary fronts, their textbooks will have to speak about the glorious era when the Islamic world was open and receptive to the best ideas of the world. Undoubtedly, as in China, there were many Islamic philosophers who studied and imbibed the spirit of Socrates. The writing of these Islamic philosophers should become standard fare in Islamic textbooks so that the educational habits of questioning and critical reasoning, so vital for any child in the 21st Century, are seen to have equally strong Islamic roots as Western roots.

Introducing these habits of questioning and critical reasoning may be more difficult in the African context. It is no secret that African societies are among the most demoralized in the world today. As a prominent African Foreign Minister told me in private, the problem in Africa is that there is no clear national success story that other Africans can use as a model, in the way that Japan's early success inspired the Asian people. Personally, I will never forget a visit I made to a primary school classroom in Liberia in April 2001. There were over 60 students per class, with students pressed tightly together on crowded benches. Liberia was then ravaged by conflict. I could see hope shining out of these children's eyes. I asked myself then that if I had to honestly tell these children what lay in store for them, what hope could I have given them?

This is the challenge every African teacher faces as he walks into a classroom: how does he make the young African children dream great dreams of the future when the present often looks so foreboding. The answer has to be that young African children, while they should have access to all the basic skills of literary and science and mathematics that are the critical bricks of any educational system, should also be equipped with skills that will equip them to cope with the difficult working environment that they will face. To do otherwise would be cruel. An emphasis on practical vocational skills in vocations that will grow in Africa's economies will equip their children to face the future more confidently. Most Africans I speak to are acutely aware that most leading OECD statesmen will make passionate speeches about the need to end poverty in Africa. Yet, as the cotton farmers of West Africa and Uganda have discovered, the cotton subsidies of America will continue to depress global cotton prices and impoverish them. These subsidies will also

continue as long as American politicians will have to be elected. Hence, if some deep pools of African poverty are not likely to be reduced soon, how should their children be taught to enable them to cope better with poverty?

At the same time, it is important to remove many blatant prejudices that exist in many minds about Africans. In a 2001 interview with the Mail and Guardian of Johannesburg, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa said:

"Many whites, I wouldn't say all, have a particular stereotype of black people. They would deny it, but it's true. They see black people as lazy, basically dishonest, thieving, corrupt. 'They can't really govern any country. Look at what's happened in the rest of Africa'. That would be the argument."
(New York Times, Page A3, 27 April 2004)

In the current intellectual environment in the West, it is often deemed to be politically incorrect to suggest that the results of educational reform will depend on the cultural or regional context. Fortunately, in one of the first few essays written for the UBASE project, Emily Hannum and Claudia Buchmann noted the following in their concluding paragraph of their essay entitled "The Consequences of Global Education Expansion". They said:

"... A final contributor to contradictory findings, and an important caveat even in areas where consistent results have emerged, is the point that educational impacts are sensitive to context. The human capital perspective

implicitly in much of the research on educational investments is inherently individualistic, assuming that education will offer the same enabling capacities to individuals regardless of the contexts in which they function. This perspective often fails to acknowledge that within the global economy, within nations, within local communities, and within school systems, social structures shape and constrain the impact of rising education.

... Reasonable forecasts of the consequences of extending basic and secondary education to the world's most disadvantaged populations need to consider the social structures in which these expansions will occur."

The real challenge of promoting universal primary and secondary education in the 21st Century is that the goals of these educational systems have to be both contextually appropriate and also promote global understanding. Another dangerous assumption to make is that rising educational levels will naturally generate both greater understanding and harmony between different cultures and regions. In the short run, if education only promotes cultural and national chauvinism, the effect of education could be greater global divisiveness and friction. Very little in human history suggests that harmony is a natural condition between different cultures and civilizations.

Since all the different cultures and civilizations (which were once at least separated by geography) will now have to live in close proximity in a shrinking global village, all educational systems must try to figure out how to promote more cross-cultural understanding. One key step that

needs to be taken is to introduce greater awareness of all major civilizations in the classroom. Non-European languages have to be taught more widely. Today, in the United States, one million children learn French, a language spoken by 80 million people. By contrast, only 40,000 American children are learning Mandarin, a language spoken by 1.2 billion people. This reveals the classical problem in educational systems. It takes a long time to develop a consensus on what needs to be taught and it takes even longer to train the teachers to teach any new subjects. Hence, most of the time most of the educational systems are teaching directions and contents which were more valid for a previous era of world history. Training enough American teachers to teach Mandarin to one million American children could conceivably take decades but the impact of a successful and confident China on America will not take decades. One key challenge for all educationists in the 21st Century is how to promote change faster.

In the 21st Century, we are more likely to see the acceleration of history, rather than the end of history. There is not very much in most educational systems that will help prepare most of mankind for the obvious new challenge that we face. There is therefore a real urgency to revisit traditional assumptions about the key goals of primary and secondary education systems worldwide. Most of the time the prevailing assumption has been that a wider spread of the conventional Western "toolbox" of education will do the trick of both preparing mankind for new challenges and preventing conflict as different societies interact more closely with each other. The key purpose of this essay is to alert educational policymakers that if we enter the 21st Century on auto-pilot using existing conventional wisdom, we may be delivering a prescription for both misunderstanding and disharmony. If so, future historians will

ask why we did not see so clearly when the 21st Century began that a new world was clearly being born. If Socrates were alive today, would he be so complacent with conventional wisdom?

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Goals of Universal Primary and Secondary Education

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*Commentary submitted for workshop at American Academy of Arts and Sciences,
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Education of high quality for all children should be framed within the perspective of what we at Facing History and Ourselves have called “head and heart”. It is an education which balances cognitive understanding and acquisition of the skills to learn the lessons of the past with the capacity for empathy, courage and compassion that marks the determination to stand up for human rights in the present and future. Our students are at heart moral philosophers, seeking to express themselves in productive ways, so that they can both engage with and shape the worlds they inhabit. In order to be participants in society, students need the habits, skills, and knowledge that will allow them to discover who they are, what they believe, and how to make an impact. For our democracy to thrive and for it to be truly compassionate, equitable, and just, young people need help developing their burgeoning moral philosophy – their unique voices – in complex, academically rigorous, and personal ways

Students come to us with already formed notions of prejudice and tolerance. As they move through childhood and adolescence; their issues take deep hold: overarching interest in individual and group identity; and concern with acceptance or rejection, conformity or non-conformity, labeling, ostracism, loyalty, fairness and peer group pressure. So our pedagogy must speak to newly discovered ideas of subjectivity, competing truths and differing perspectives, along with a growing capacity to think hypothetically and inclination to find personal meaning in newly introduced phenomena. We must teach students to make distinctions among events and to grasp similar issues without making facile comparisons and imperfect parallels. In order to make sense of the present and future, students need an opportunity to find meaning in the past. They can be trusted to examine history in all of its complexities, including its legacies of prejudice and discrimination, resilience and courage. This trust encourages young people, and their teachers, to

develop a voice in the conversations of their peers, as well as in the critical discussions and debates of their community and nation.

We enter a century, marked at its opening, by events of incredible violence and horror, where racism, antisemitism and genocide are on a frightening increase. The impact of extremist and absolutist thinking, dogma and state-sanctioned hatred has been made painfully and tragically clear. The echoes of the history that we teach at Facing History continue to resound in the ongoing inclination of leaders and followers to define groups that are different as "the other" making them vulnerable to prejudice, de-humanization, hatred and violence.

The 20th Century provided extraordinary evidence of how leaders could use ancient myths and misinformation in conjunction with propaganda techniques to unleash ethnic hatred and cause neighbor to turn against neighbor and to see "difference" as alien and threatening. Its legacies - humiliation, dehumanization, discrimination, and mass murder, fuel confrontations among people all over the world; just as other pieces of those legacies, embodying courage, compassion, dissent and resilience, offer hope for cooperation and understanding. As we look ahead to the 21st century, we need to move beyond memory and legacy and ask how those perspectives can lead to prevention. The challenge for democracies is to sustain civil society within a global context. More than anything else, and especially as we engage emerging educational systems in countries like South Africa, Rwanda and Northern Ireland which are confronting legacies of collective violence, we need to teach our students to grapple with complexity and uncertainty. And we must do so in ways that not only recognize an ethical imperative to make informed choices but also reject polemics that pit choosing absolutist dogma against becoming mired in helpless relativism.

Examining difficult and complex issues of human behavior in critical moments in past and present requires careful thinking and reflection. Master teachers employ effective strategies to encourage students to listen, to take another's perspective, to understand differing points of view and to undertake intellectual risks in their analysis and discussion. Meaningful intellectual growth is a process of confronting imbalance and dissonance as students grapple with new ideas and different perspectives that contradict unexamined premises, so these teachers carefully challenge generalizations and push for clear distinctions in language and explication. Building upon the increasing ability to think hypothetically and imagine options, they stretch the historical imagination by urging delineation of what might have been done, choices that could have been made and alternative scenarios that could have come about.

There is no question that students need to learn more about the pluralism and diversity of a more complex world and their religious and secular roots. The world is interconnected, and the choices people have made over time have been informed by how they have interpreted all aspects of the world. Our own classrooms reflect increasing diversity and as many as fifty different languages may

be spoken by students within a particular school. Our goals must include promoting moral reasoning and interpersonal understanding among students through encouraging personal involvement, self-reflection and prosocial awareness. We know that unless curriculum and pedagogy illuminates individual lives, choices and narratives, it will have little meaning to students for their futures. At the same time, our pedagogy must help students become more global and give them tools and concepts to build bridges and relationships for global understanding and participation.

Democracies are fragile enterprises, and can only remain vital through the active, thoughtful and responsible participation of its citizens. Education for democracy means encouraging students to recognize that participation can make a difference and is integral to the ethical choices and decisions that we all face. Now, more than ever, we must teach those students that such participation, including judgments of right and wrong, needs to be informed, as opposed to constrained by history.

Our hope is for a world dedicated to civil and human rights, justice, compassion, and equality. Our goal must be for every one of the inhabitants of that world to have the skills, knowledge, and resources to make him or her obliged and able to listen and respond to others. It starts at home, in the local community – even in the school itself. But that is not enough. The world we envision demands that every person feels obligated to their neighbor and to the stranger, alike. One must not merely mind one's own garden. In a humanistic democracy, we must be knowledgeable of and active in the affairs of the world.

Education and the Globalization Paradigm: Some Initial Reactions to

M. Charfi, H. Redissi and K. Cheng

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Draft - Not for Quotation or Distribution

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The thoughtful essays by M. Charfi, H. Redissi and K. Cheng offer an excellent point of departure to examine how education responds to change. Over the last two decades the emergence of multiple nodes of economic, cultural and demographic integration has stimulated debate among scholars in the social sciences and humanities, policy experts, and informed citizens alike. Globalism and globalization are terms, it seems, in everyone's lips. From terrorism to the environment, from HIV-AIDS to SARS, from free trade to protectionism, from population growth to poverty, globalization is either blamed as culprit or is invoked as the solution to the big problems of the new millennium. It seems now obvious that the major problems of the future will no longer be contained within the boundaries and the paradigms of the 20th century nation state. Nation states are indeed reacting, sometimes regrouping in fundamental ways around supra national lines, sometimes withdrawing from global spaces, sometimes doing both at the same time. Europe marches on in its path of integration - much of it is now *de jure* an internally borderless space sharing growing common policy frameworks and even a common currency. The North American region following NAFTA continues to integrate economically and culturally - if not in terms of the borders that police and control human flows. In Asia, likewise the two giants, China and India, seem to be placing their bets on globalization as the new Camino Real - the royal road to development and wealth is now the global highway.

Globalization is both a cause and a consequence of these new formations. It is a paradoxical regime. Coastal China's integration in the world economy may turn out to be one of the great experiments in poverty reduction in human history - according to some China cut the poverty rate in East Asia by half in just a decade. On the other hand, Latin Americans continue to move against the free trade market regime that came to define the 'Washington consensus' - electing in Brazil, for example, the first ever President who is a former metal worker, union activist, with an 8th grade education. Brazil's neighborhood to the South, Argentina the country that was the breadbasket of the world just two generations ago, and the country that over the last decade became a laboratory for cutting edge free-market reforms went over the edge - from bread basket-to-basket case in fast forward. North and South, East and West globalization, it seems, is touching every corner of the earth.

My reflections on the essays by M. Charfi, H. Redissi and K. Cheng are structured around the following idea: the forces of globalization are challenging education systems worldwide. The fortunes, identities, opportunities and constraints of children growing up in Tunis, Texas, or Tel Aviv will be linked to processes in economy, society, and culture that are increasingly global in scope. Yet to date NO MAJOR RESEARCH AGENDA HAS BEEN DEVELOPED to examine IN A SYSTEMATIC WAY how globalization is impacting K-12 education. While globalization has generated a great deal of debate in economic and policy circles, other IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS of the phenomenon remain virtual *terra incognita*. Education is at the heart of the continent of the unknown.

Globalization is first and foremost about change and movement. Its emerging regime - mobile capital, mobile production and distribution, mobile populations, and mobile cultures - is now transforming nations, cultures, and religions in ways unimaginable just a few decades ago. Globalization is structured by three powerful synergetic vectors of change that have been in the making for several centuries - as John H. Coatsworth remind us in his excellent chapter in *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*, pp. 38-55: These are: 1) the post-nationalization of production and distribution of goods and services - fueled by growing levels of international trade, foreign direct investment, and capital market flows (see David Bloom' chapter in *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*, pp.56-77); 2) the emergence of borderless information and communication technologies that place a premium on knowledge intensive work (see the chapters by Sherry Turkle pp. 97-113, Antonio Battro pp. 78-96, Henry Jenkins pp. 114-140, and Sunaina Maira pp. 203-234 all in *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*), and 3) ever growing, indeed uncontainable waves of world-wide migration (see Carola Suárez-Orozco pp. 173-202 in *Globalization: Culture and Education in the New Millennium*) with attendant cultural changes re-linking global cities to the developing world in new and unprecedented ways. .

The globalization of capital and of information is rapidly and irrevocably transforming the nature of learning, thought, identity, work, the interpersonal patterning of social relations, and the structures of desire. But there is also a new, somewhat amorphous and eclectic, but unmistakable anti-globalization ethos -- ubiquitously named, articulated, and performed in varied contexts from Seattle to Genoa, from Karachi to Porto Allegre. While disparate ideological frameworks animate its participants, globalization's foes seem to articulate a message patterned by a common grammar: the global project, especially global capitalism (embodied by multinational corporations) and global migration (embodied by growing numbers of people form the poor south migrating to the rich north), is de-stabilizing, disorienting, and threatening to large numbers of people the world over. In countries who find themselves in what Charfi and Redissi call "between tradition and modernity" the globalization paradigm has

become the elephant in the room: how can cultural values, the ethos and eidos of a society be maintained while everything else is changing, as K. Cheng reminds us, with dizzying speed.

For some, globalization raises new and troubling questions about social justice - from child labor in Pakistan to sweatshops in Central America to the role of the Third World in managing the toxic high tech waste problems of the First World (Markoff, 2002). For others, globalization's main threats are to cultural meaning systems, world-views, the realm of the sacred, and systems of livelihood.

While many are vocal in articulating and performing anti-globalization discourses and rituals of resistance, big and small, globalization nevertheless has its own undeniable appeal. Thus we come to globalization's greatest paradox: *as it continues to penetrate the local cultural imaginaries of poor countries, even as it destabilizes local economies, livelihoods, and identities, it stimulates structures of desire and consumption fantasies that in many simply cannot be met by local economies.* Globalization's promise, delivered via global media representations and transnational messages and discourses generates a powerful convergence, perhaps for the first time in human history, on folk models of status attainment - now more than ever articulated as a project of consumption structured around a homogenized standard of living embodying and promising to satisfy modernity's libidinal logic. Globalization's paradoxical power is that at once it manufactures dystopia and utopia. But for millions of people, now participants in a new global media, globalization's hope is to be realized elsewhere, as migrants. A humorous vignette makes a point opinion polls in the third world have long noted. When the new President of Argentina goes to a school and asked children when they grow up what they want to become, an otherwise shy girl raises her hand and replies: "Mr. President, when I grow up I want to be a foreigner."

Globalization forms the general backdrop for any understanding of new worldwide cultural and human flows. Immigration is perhaps the most astonishing example. At the turn of the Millennium there are an estimated 175 million transnational immigrants and refugees displaced from their homelands. One in 20 Londoners today is an asylum seeker, Leicester in England will soon be the first city in Europe where "whites" will be a minority, Frankfurt is about 30 percent immigrant, Rotterdam is 45 percent immigrant, Amsterdam will be 50 percent immigrant by 2015. Sweden with a million immigrants (out of a total population of 9 million) has an immigration rate (11.4) percent of the population that is higher than the US rate (10.4%). China alone has over 100 million internal immigrants - who are for all practical purposes not unlike international migrants in other settings. The US now has the largest number of immigrants in history (over 34 million people are immigrants - about the size of the entire Canadian population! - and if you add the US born first generation the total number is over 55 million!) In NYC today half of all children live in immigrant headed households. In Los

Angeles, 70 percent of all children in schools come from Latino homes, the vast majority of them immigrants or the children of immigrants. Nation-wide immigrant children are the fastest growing sector of the US child population.

Globalization has increased human flows in a variety of ways. First, as Saskia Sassen has argued, transnational capital flows tend to stimulate human and cultural flows: where capital flows, immigrants tend to follow. Second, the new information and communication technologies tend to stimulate flows because they encourage new tastes, new standards of consumption and new life-style choices that simply cannot be met by local economies and livelihood. Third, the affordability of mass transportation has put the migration option within the reach of millions who heretofore could not do so - in the year 2000, approximately 1.5 billion airline tickets were sold. Fourth, globalization has stimulated new migration because it has produced uneven results.

Globalization and massive migrations are changing the ways we experience national identities and cultural belonging. The personal, social, and cultural consequences are staggering. At the beginning of the twentieth century, W.E.B. DuBois had announced that the color line would draw the social agenda for the United States. Now, at the beginning of the twenty first century, that line is complicated by the precarious borders between countries and inside them, among peoples and cultures whose differences are obvious, just as they are unstable and sometimes volatile. These external and internal borders are increasingly becoming noisy and conflictive areas where cultural communication and miscommunication play out in schools, communities, places of work and places of worship. Globalization decisively unmakes the once powerful imagined isomorphic fit between culture, language, territory, and the nation (the *volk* in von Herder's terminology). It is nearly banal to observe that today Dominican culture is thriving in New York City - where roughly one in six Dominicans now lives, just as Kurdish culture - including what are to some troubling kinship and marriage patterns -- is found in Sweden where half of all immigrants are Muslims.

The unmaking of the powerful Herderian fit upsets the symbolic order of the nation, interrupts taken for granted social practices, reshapes political processes, engenders new cultural attitudes, and channels the new anxieties of long-term citizens. It has a democratizing potential (Hirshman and Sommer) but the potential for conflict is equally obvious. Globalization means that foreign languages, foreign social practices (sometimes deeply destabilizing practices to liberal democracies such as female genital mutilation), and cultural models (such as marriage before legal adulthood), that generate anxieties and threaten the cultural imaginary of the nation. But at the same time (and here is another of the contradictions of globalization), the immigrants that carry with them what to many are inassimilable differences are needed. They are summoned to do the unpleasant jobs that over

time have become culturally coded as "immigrant jobs" (the Japanese call them the "3 k jobs" for the Japanese words for "dirty, dangerous, and demanding jobs"). Indeed, Western Europe faces one of the most delicious of paradoxes: while post-fascist anti-immigrant sentiment continues to grow according to Europe's leading demographer Massimo Livi-Bacci approximately 50 million new immigrant workers will need to be recruited over the next few decades to deal with the Continent's peculiar demographic predicament - below replacement fertility rates. Japan, long held as the exception to the North American and Northern European predilection for immigrant labor, will soon face its own predicament—regardless of cultural resistance to immigration, immigrants will be needed, and in large numbers, to deal with Japan's aging population problem.

Globalization generates new dualities, pluralism, and hybrids that nation states at this point in history have difficulty managing. We need better conceptual and empirical understanding of these dualities and hybrids. Bilingualism, dual citizenship, and transnational circular movements suggest that immigrant experiences and belongings can no longer most profitably be seen through the lens of the unilinear assimilation continuum articulated and deployed to examine previous generations of immigrants to the US. Given America's "exceptionalist" and longstanding isolationist tradition, it may seem counterintuitive to re-imagine our country as a crossroads of recent immigrants who do not assimilate seamlessly, and also as a leading member of a world community whose crises and demands, we learned on September 11 affect us at home in urgent and irrevocable ways. But in our big cities, and many small ones, foreign languages, habits, and sensibilities are part of today's cityscapes. Newcomers learn to live every day life with divided linguistic and cultural identifications, and natives learn to expect it in others. As our social science colleagues will remind us during the week, and already acknowledged by the U.S. Census Bureau as the way many Americans identify themselves, multiple cultural or ethnic belongings nevertheless cause unease in the American landscape. *Indeed, globalization suggests that this multiple mooring is increasingly the common experience for many peoples in the world.* Neither the one-to-one practically tribal identity between nation and language that we had imagined to be natural in romantic ideology, nor the Enlightenment fantasy of a single universal logic and language describes most people's experience, either today or during the formative national period.

Globalization necessitates a careful rethinking of education most broadly conceived because the experiences, identities, opportunities, and outcomes of children growing up today will be increasingly linked to post-national, borderless, global process in economy, society, and culture. I agree with Professor K. Cheng that education systems tied to the formation of nation-state citizens, workers (and I would add consumers) bounded to local economies, local social systems, and local cultural meaning making systems at the expense of neglecting

globalization's emerging regime are likely to become redundant. Too much of what we call education today is ALREADY happening outside formal institution spaces (see Suárez-Orozco and Gardner, 2004)

As Professors Charfi and Refissi suggest all social systems are predicated on the need to impart values, morals, skills, and competencies to the next generation. Globalization, I SUSPECT, is selecting for the emergence of instrumental and interpersonal competencies - structured by higher order cognitive and symbolic skills and social sensibilities which will be required of children who will grow up to thrive in the increasingly borderless societies of the 21st Century. These competencies, I think, include 1) the habits mind and higher order cognitive skills fostering autonomy and creativity of thought and the capacity to work with others on complex problems that often cut across disciplinary boundaries; 2) new forms of transcultural understanding; 3) the development of hybrid identities indexed by the ability to navigate across discontinuous or incommensurable linguistic and epistemic systems. Children growing up today will need to develop - arguably more than in any generation in human history -- the higher order cognitive and interpersonal skills to learn, to work, to love, and to live with others, which are increasingly likely to be of very different racial, religious, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds. Globalization will place a great premium on transcultural understandings -- *ergo* new forms of transcultural empathy and intelligence will be at a premium for survival and success in the 21st century. Taken together these competencies and sensibilities will be at the foundation of the leading, most decent and just, cultural democracies of the 21st century.

While there is a new powerful centripetal field necessitating that every girl and boy growing up today in Tunis, Texas or Tel Aviv acquire isomorphic skills, competencies, and sensibilities to proactively and successfully engage globalization's new regime, there are equally powerful centrifugal forces at play when it comes to globalization and the domain of expressive culture.

While arguably the vast majority of parents in the world want similar higher order skills for the children, everyone recoils at the thought of a homogenous global culture - especially when it comes to the expressive qualities of culture and the habits of self that constitute the cultural part of every human identity. It is globalization's threats to the particularistic qualities of local cultures, most specifically religious identities, values, and world-views that might help us explain and perhaps understand the recent fury globalization has generated in the streets the world over.

Building upon the Charfi and Redissi argument, I would like to claim that globalization is implicated in the manufacturing of dystopia when it threatens and undermines the realm of

values, worldviews, ethos or the cultural patterning of interpersonal relations, and especially, the domain of the sacred. Because globalization is predicated on homogenization—of labor markets, of consumer tastes, of ideas about *the good live as a material project*, our understanding defense of difference becomes more important than ever. (A UNESCO study claims that about half of the world's 6,000 languages are "dying" and likely to disappear). Societies that nurture in today's boys and girls the emergence of the instrumental skills, competencies and interpersonal sensitivities needed to engage and thrive globally while NOT subverting or undermining and indeed strengthening the expressive domains of local cultures - languages, values, worldviews, and, the realm of the sacred-- will have the edge in globalization's new regime.

Globalization, then, can be broadly defined as processes of change that tend to de-territorialize important economic, social, and cultural dynamics from their traditional moorings in nation-states. FOUR powerful vectors of change implicated in the emergence of the new global spaces that direct repercussions for K-12 education:

- 1) We shall need to examine more systematically the skills and sensibilities that are both required *and* conditioned by new computer-based information technologies. A. Battro (2004) has claimed that a human "digital intelligence" proceeds from a binary logic (the type of binary logic Levi-Strauss found so appealing because it was universal), but imply the capacity to manipulate various symbol systems and place a premium on knowledge intensive work; Sherry Turkle (2004) has already alerted us of the limitations, missed opportunities, unanticipated paradoxes and areas of concerns as she reflects on the "new fellowship of the microchip."
- 2) We shall need better conceptual and empirical work new media, information and communication technologies spread cultural models—often generated from and based on the United States—around the world; these both attract and repel those from other cultural and religious traditions. We must examine more closely the implications of new research (see inter alia J. Watson, 2004) rejecting the claim that globalization is a mimetic process of repetition engendering cultural homogeneity and uniformity. Most interesting is his analysis of how allocthonous cultural materials are metabolized as they penetrate new cultural spaces. Global formations Watson claims are given local meanings, saturated with local knowledge and local epistemologies. Eating a big Mac in China, as Professor Watson showed in his brilliant book, is a very different cultural experience than eating a burger in Boston - food for thought. Carl von Sydow's idea of the oicotype might be highly relevant here too: cultural borrowing often takes place when cultural facts or artifacts are

"changed to fit culturally the preferred pattern in quite different cultural settings"
(Dundes, 65, p. 220).

- 3) We shall need better conceptual and empirical work on the post-nationalization of production and distribution of goods and services, predicated on direct foreign investment, transnational capital flows, and diminishing costs of transportation and communication. These undermine the classical nation-state model and reward those who can work comfortably and rapidly with people and products from around the world. Professor K. Cheng's work makes important headway into this problem.
- 4) We shall better conceptual an empirical work on migratory flows that are unprecedented in scale. These engender, *inter alia*, transitory populations in schools and throw together individuals speaking numerous languages and reflecting diverse cultural traditions engendering new identities and ways of belonging. How would reforming education in Arab countries be relevant to the 7 million Muslims being educated in Europe today? At a time when Tunisian, Algerian, and Moroccan economy and society are deeply dependent on the diasporic citizens pursuing their fortunes as immigrants and refugees in Europe, how do we rethink education in the so-called sending countries?

Taken together these four currents constitute the central tendencies of today's globalization -- a process, albeit, centuries in the making. Scholars of education concerned with how globalization is transforming education and what education must do to remain relevant must, I think, remain attentive to the following domains of inquiry:

The claim that globalization rewards the emergence of certain cognitive and interpersonal skills. The skills required for problem finding, problem solving, articulating an argument and deploying verifiable facts or artifacts to substantiate it, learning to learn, working and networking with others who are increasingly likely to be from different national, linguistic, religious, and racial backgrounds should, I think, be of particular interest to anyone interested in education for globalization. GLOBALIZATION may well privilege those individuals who are cognitively flexible and are capable of establishing many weak ties, rather than the strong deep ties that were honored in centuries past.

Moreover, while disciplinary grounding remains important, many of globalization's "big problems" - terrorism, infectious diseases, the degradation of the environment, unprecedented refugee and illegal migration flows etc.-- are no longer best understood within the confines of single disciplines. Their solutions call forth interdisciplinary thinking and collaboration. These skills, competencies, habits of mind, and sensibilities will be required of YOUNG PERSONS who hope to be able to engage globalization's new challenges regardless of national origin or cultural upbringing. This is the so-called convergence hypothesis: *globalization is deterritorializing the skills and competencies it shall reward therefore generating a powerful convergence on what STUDENTS THE WORLD OVER will need to know.*

The claim that local understandings, definitions and attitudes towards globalization matter more today than ever. It is increasingly obvious that in many corners of the world, especially in countries "between tradition and modernity" (Charfi and Redissi, 2004) the winds of anti-globalization continue to blow strong. While everyone agrees that we must understand the sources of these reactions to globalization, there is little empirical understanding or theoretical framing of the conditions that generate and perpetuate anti-globalization attitudes and practices. When is globalization locally perceived as an opportunity or as a threat? Are the skills, habits of mind, and interpersonal sensibilities needed to thrive under globalization seen as compatible and easily integrated into local cultural structures, narratives, and rituals? Or, are these seen as incompatible and threatening to locally meaningful cultural and historical models and social practices? How are the media and popular culture implicated in the making of attitudes and perceptions towards globalization? What are the processes by which global formations are given local meanings - positive, neutral, negative, or mixed? What is the role of "localization" - the emergence of local isomorphs of global forms—in facilitating or impeding global understandings? Are new hybrid cultural practices (blending local meaning and global formations) facilitating or impeding the global challenge? What role do the media and popular culture play in the making of the global-local nexus? WHILE THE FOCUS OF THIS LINE OF WORK WILL FALL ON INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH EDUCATION, I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONSTRUE EDUCATION QUITE BROADLY TO INCLUDE A RANGE OF STAKEHOLDERS.

As the chapters by M. Charfi, H. Redissi, and K. Change suggest, globalization will continue to be a powerful vector of worldwide change. We need better understanding of how education will be transformed by globalization and how it, in turn, can shape and manage the course or courses of globalization. We need a major research agenda to examine how education most broadly defined can best prepare children to engage globalization's emerging regime. We need better theoretical understandings of globalization's multiple faces - economic, social, and cultural. We need more dialogue between scholars, practitioners and policy makers.

QUALITY EDUCATION—A UNESCO PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

There is a need for a new approach to understanding the quality of education. This is because the current understanding is no longer functional. In addition, in many instances the education that is offered is no longer pertinent to the societies in which we live. Underpinning this wish to reconsider “what is quality” is a desire to focus on learning.

What drives the goals of education today?¹

Traditionally the quality of education has been an internal affair, the responsibility of the educational authorities at governmental and institutional levels. Today, however, the quality of education is no longer the exclusive preserve of educational authorities and professionals. Ministries other than the Ministry of Education are taking an interest. The same is true for NGOs, businesses, and the general public—all putting different pressures on education. The ramifications of this extend far beyond the walls of individual ministries or educational institutions. To explain why this is occurring and why the quality of education has become a more “high profile” issue, it is necessary to take several key factors into account.

First the growing importance of the quality of education cannot be divorced from the heightened salience of education policy and education reform within the whole range of public policy, mainly because of the acknowledged linkages between education and economic performance, participation in the global economy, and the building of knowledge societies. Much concern about the quality of education derives from the

¹ This portion of the paper is taken from the annotated agenda of the Ministerial Round Table of Ministers of Education, UNESCO, Paris, 4-5 October 2003, which was prepared by the author and Mark Richmond.

belief that poor quality will frustrate efforts to use education as an effective lever of economic growth and development in this age of accelerating globalisation.

Second, the nature of the problem has been redefined. Traditional approaches to the quality of education have often relied upon “proxy” measures such as increases in financing and other inputs in the level of educational provision. While clearly not irrelevant or unhelpful, such outlays may not prove decisive when another criterion for defining and measuring the quality of education is used, namely, measurable educational outcomes (knowledge, competencies, skills, and behaviours). Governments and citizens are increasingly concerned about the discrepancy between outlays and outcomes—what is learned, and this necessarily raises further questions about “what works?” in teaching/learning processes.

Third, such questions are fuelling a growing trend towards greater government interest in and use of evidence through which student learning attainment may be monitored both nationally and cross-nationally. This interest has two important dimensions. The first is whether students are learning the right things to lead a decent life in a fast-changing world. The second is closely related. Monitoring of student performance over time and in comparative perspective, including across national boundaries, can provide information vital for assessing how well or how badly education systems are preparing young people for future adult roles as creative, thinking citizens who can sustain themselves and contribute to the well-being of their families, communities, and societies.

Fourth, such information is becoming more politically sensitive as it points to the unevenness of quality both within and between education systems. Quality levels vary widely from one education system to another and, within a single education system, there may be sharp variations in quality, e.g. between public and private schools, e.g. between urban and rural schools, e.g. between education for the majority and education for minorities, immigrants, the marginalized, etc. Even in the same classrooms boys and girls can have significantly different learning experiences. The unevenness of quality is a critical issue facing education systems and is particularly important in regard to the widening education gap between countries, the tasks of development, and the effects of internal disparities on social cohesion.

Fifth, the growing diversification of societies, largely as a result of migration, urbanisation and cultural change, joined with increased sensitivity to the national, regional, gender, cultural, ethnic, and religious bases of individual and group identity, is placing fresh demands upon education systems and is challenging assumptions about the purpose and functions of education. Issues concerning the quality of education cannot be separated from these developments, which have an impact on the learning environment provided by schools. Problems of discrimination, racism, and violence within schools affect learning opportunities and learning achievement.

Sixth, and directly related to the point above, are questions that point to the fundamental purposes of education. Disparity in educational quality often mirrors other disparities, which many view as directly tied to the fulfilment of human and other rights. Thus education is being asked to become one tool, of many, that can build societies based on peace, equality, and democratic practice.

“Quality education” as a dynamic concept

These different pressures have resulted in the concept of quality education coming to the fore as learners, parents and communities, educators, leaders, and nations acknowledge that what is learned and how learning occurs is as important as access to education. The age-old problems that have plagued educational quality remain, and are further complicated by new challenges such as the role of education in relation to peace and security and the HIV/AIDS pandemic, for example.

One difficulty is that while most people understand intuitively what they mean by “quality of education” there may not be a common understanding of the term. This is especially true now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, when education is increasingly understood to be more than “reading, writing, and arithmetic” and extends to the “expanded vision” of education as articulated at the Jomtien Conference on Education for All in 1990 and re-affirmed at the Dakar World Education Forum in 2000².

Comment: Insert foot note to the Dakar Framework etc here

The understanding of what constitutes a quality education is evolving. The conventional definition remains important to understanding quality education. It includes literacy, numeracy, and life skills, and is linked directly to such critical components as teachers, content, methodologies, curriculum, examination systems, policy, planning, and management and administration. Basic academics remain essential.

There is a demand, however, for education to reflect upon its relevance to the modern world. While in the past much of the emphasis on education related to cognitive understanding and development, now there is a need to also address the social and other dimensions of learning. Education is expected to make a contribution to addressing sustainable human development, peace and security, universal values, informed decision-making, and the quality of life at individual, family, societal, and global levels.

The relationships between access and quality

There is a common misunderstanding that access to education must always precede attention to quality. This is not the case. There is evidence that, in some cases, learners are not taking advantage of school places even when they are available, and in other cases, learners drop out when what they are learning is not relevant to their current or future needs—students “vote with their feet”. The following points are now clear.

Educational access and quality are distinct concepts. These two concepts are intricately linked, especially when supply and demand are considered. And, while quality is impossible without access, access without quality is often meaningless to those for whom access is made possible.

² UNESCO. “The Dakar Framework for Action. Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments”. UNESCO, Paris, 2000.

Rights-based education as the conceptual underpinning of quality education

UNESCO promotes quality education as a human right and supports a rights-based approach to the implementation of all educational activities. There are three important aspects of education as a human right:

- Participation in quality education in itself;
- The practise of human rights in education; and
- Education as a right that facilitates the fulfillment of other rights.

Our work is based on a number of international instruments³ that identify education as a human right. Several of these international instruments indicate the desired nature, or quality of this education. When we look at these instruments together and interpret them we go far beyond single articles to a web of commitments that speak to the depth and breadth of how we must begin to understand educational quality.

Interpretation of the various instruments with regard to quality education must be embedded within the overall current local and world contexts and expectations of education. That is, education must be placed and understood in terms of the larger context. A quality education must reflect learning in relation to the learner as individual, family and community member, and part of a world society.

A quality education understands the past, is relevant to the present, and has a view to the future. Quality education relates to knowledge building and the skillful application of all forms of knowledge by unique individuals who function both independently and in relation to others. A quality education reflects the dynamic nature of culture and languages, the value of the individual in relation to the larger context, and the importance of living in a way that promotes equality in the present and fosters a sustainable future.

Framing quality education in relation to the modern world

Our primary concern is learning and, therefore, the relationship between the learner and the teacher is critical. But, the inputs, processes, and environments that surround and foster, or hamper, learning are key as well. These can be seen as affecting learning at two levels. At the **level of the learner** in her or his learning environment and at the **level of the system** that creates and supports the learning experience. Each of these two levels can be divided into five dimensions. These 10 dimensions of a quality education will be summarised below and are illustrated in the following figure. Learning is at the centre, and it is surrounded by two levels. The inner one is that of the learner and the outer one of the learning system. Both of these levels operate within a specific context, which can vary considerably from location to location.⁴

The learner level

³ Including the first human rights convention.

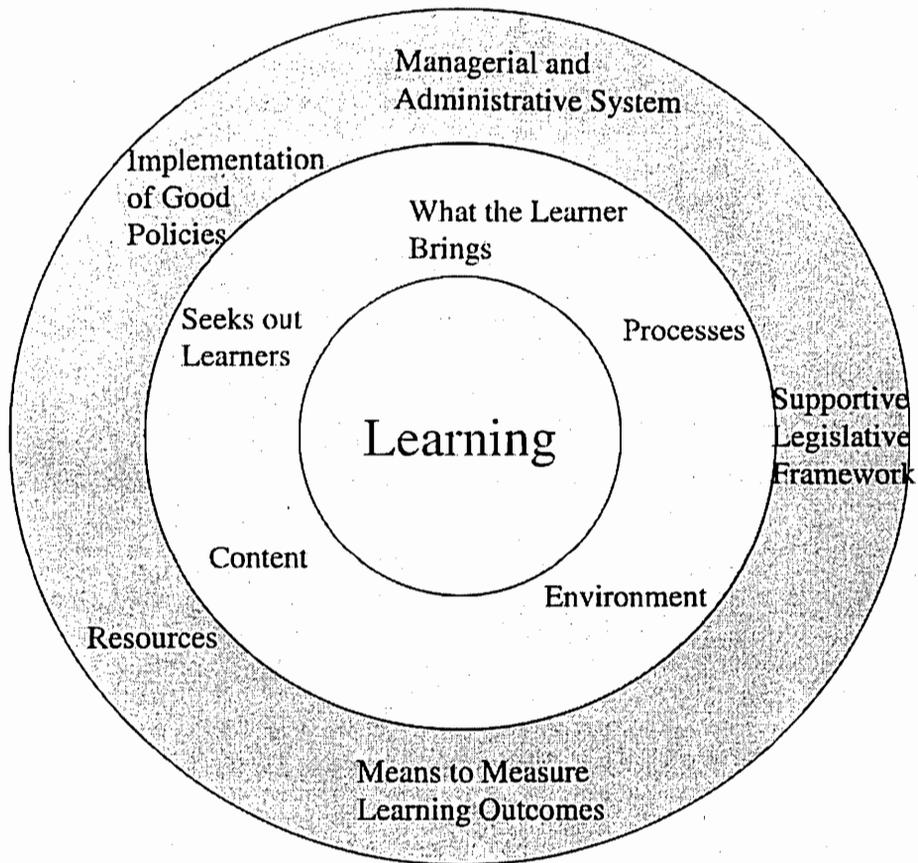
⁴ Acknowledgement is given to Patricia Russell and Marianne Weeks for the electronic artwork.

UNESCO is concerned about five key dimensions of quality education at the level of the learner from a rights perspective.

Seeking out learners. Education must be available without discrimination. This underscores the UNESCO commitment to reach out to those that have been traditionally unreached including, the poor, girls, working children, children in emergencies, the disabled, and those with nomadic lifestyles. But it is not merely a concern with quantity. Learners have a right to a quality education that will serve as the basis for lifelong learning.

Thus, a quality education actively seeks out learners and assists them to learn using a wide range of modalities, recognizing that learning is linked to experience, language and cultural practices, gifts, traits, the external environment, and interests. We learn

Figure 1. A Quality Education – A Framework



in different ways, each emphasizing different senses and abilities. A quality education is one that welcomes the learner and can adapt to meet learning needs. It is inclusive. A quality education strives to ensure that all learners, regardless of sex, age, language, religion, and ethnicity, for example, are reached—that they have the possibility of participating in and learning from organised learning activities.

What the learner brings. What the learner brings to her or his own learning and to that of a group is extremely important. It can vary from work skills, to traumatic experiences, to excellent early childhood development opportunities, to illness or hunger, for example.

A quality education has to consider the learner as an active participant and a central part of educational efforts. Learners bring to their learning, and to that of the group in which they participate, a large diversity of experiences, characteristics, skills and conditions reflecting both their prior and current situation and presenting obstacles as well as opportunities for the way in which they learn.

All of these characteristics determine how a learner learns, behaves in class, interacts with the group and teacher and how s/he interprets the knowledge presented. A quality education, therefore has to recognize, and actively respond to, and take advantage of the diversity of learners.

Content: Content is well understood as a component of quality, but this needs to be re-examined in light of the changes that have occurred in the world. Much of what is taught world-wide may be less relevant to learners. There is a need for relevant curricula and materials for literacy, numeracy, and “facts and skills for life”, which include education on rights, gender equality, respect for the earth and other life forms, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, peace, and respect for and appreciation of diversity.

Equitable access to sufficient educational materials has long been recognized as essential for learning. Low cost materials can facilitate learning as well as expensive ones. But the materials themselves need to be reviewed in light of what they convey about rights, obligations, and responsibilities in ways similar to their review to determine what they denote or connote with respect to gender, stereotyping, and religion, for example.

Processes. Processes of education are a frequently overlooked aspect of quality. How learners are enabled to frame and solve problems, how different learners in the same group are treated, how teachers and administrators are treated and behave, and how families and communities are engaged in education are all processes that affect the quality of education. Differential treatment of children puts forward the notion at an early age that some people do not have the same rights as others, and this must not be tolerated.

Quality educational processes require well-trained teachers able to use learner-centred teaching and learning methods, and life skills approaches. As a result, even the term “learner-centred” must be reconstructed to address issues of disparity and discrimination with regard to culture, language, and gender, for example.

How knowledge, skills, and values are transmitted is as important a part of curriculum as *what* about these is learned. Because, in fact, the process is part of "what" is learned. Within the learning environment learners must be able to express their views, thoughts, and ideas--to participate fully, associate freely, and feel comfortable about who they are, where they come from, their sex, and what they believe in. They need to be given dignity. Without these facilitating processes in place, learners will not develop the self-esteem that is essential for decision-making throughout life. Educational processes can also help learners develop a sense of self discipline that will help them pursue their goals throughout their lifetimes.⁵

Learning environment.

Evidence is mounting that the learning environment must also be considered part of educational quality. There must be adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities accessible to all, and, if possible, health and nutrition services in the vicinity. School policies and their implementation must promote physical and mental health, safety, and security. While the physical environment is better understood, the psycho-social one, which is at least as important, deserves serious attention so that practices such as gender discrimination, bullying, corporal punishment, and forced work are eliminated.

Lack of safety and security may be very obvious in terms of physical dangers, such as beatings or rape. But more insidious are the invisible forms of harassment and violence that are often exerted. Recent research has put the spotlight on violence in education, particularly gender-based violence. Violence in all its forms, any action with the intention of causing emotional or physical harm to a person, will clearly affect learning. The perpetrators may often be other students, but can also include teachers and school administrators. The particular vulnerability of girls with regard to the range of violence they may experience must continue to be highlighted.

The system level

UNESCO is concerned about five important dimensions of quality education at the system level from a rights perspective

Managerial and administrative structure and processes. The structure and organization of education usually serves as the "philosophical underpinning" for what occurs throughout the system, whether in the university, the school, or the curriculum development unit of a ministry of education, for example. A quality education requires a system that supports effective learning.

Education systems exhibit a culture of their own. This is often a culture that reflects (perhaps necessarily) the dominant culture of the nation or a region in the nation. In

⁵ In relation to the processes and content of education as they relate to EFA, UNESCO is also engaged in an activity to assist countries better monitor progress in achievement of "life skills". It has developed a draft position paper, "Life skills: The bridge to human capabilities", which uses the four pillars of education from the Delors Commission to frame life skills. The development of this paper was led by Anna-Maria Hoffman, supported by Parul Bakhshi, Shigeru Aoyagi, Sayeeda Rahman and Miki Nozawa. A March 2004 inter-agency meeting on the topic (Draft "Final Report of Inter-Agency Working Group on Life Skills in EFA") accepted the Delors frame and emphasised the importance of focussing on a life-skills approach, which emphasises linking process with content and desired learning outcomes.

some cases it still reflects an imposed culture. Knowledge of the cultural norms and practices in operation in a particular educational context or situation facilitate the "negotiation" of that situation in both obvious and subtle ways.

Education must be structured and organized such that it is learner-centred. Currently there are very few institutions and/or bureaucracies that are learner-centred. Where learners are working in non-hazardous labour, the structure and organization of education must take this into account. Timetables must also be flexible enough to be able to keep children at risk from dropping out or otherwise losing their right to education.

The education system must be fair and transparent to all those in it. Rules and regulations need to be clear, with responsibilities and related procedures well articulated and implemented. Teachers need to be facilitated in their work by a managerial and administrative system that is designed to foster improved learning outcomes.

Well run schools include a space for bringing difficult issues into the open, a key first step to addressing them. Education must be "approachable" by parents and communities. They must feel positive and comfortable about their appropriate roles in the educational process. This will not occur without an "enabling" structure and organization of the education system at all levels.

It is clear that the structure, organization, and management of education play an important role in providing the checks and balances that are necessary in any system. This means that involved institutions, such as teacher training colleges and research institutes, are also key in educational activities that are consistent with a quality education. Yet, in the final analysis, the system cannot be separated from the human element, from the people who operate it and interpret its rules on a daily basis.

Implementation of good policies Typically ministries of education set policies, however, they may not be widely known and understood by all, particularly at the classroom level. Therefore, a helpful starting point is to raise awareness among administrators, teachers and students about these policies. The next step is to ensure that there are mechanisms to implement and enforce the policies, since it is pointless to have rules and procedures if they are not observed.

Some of the more successful efforts to promote, implement and enforce good policies are those that have built the broad involvement of teachers and students in setting and respecting them. All school policies need to be consistent with national laws and legislation, which should also be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure relevancy.

Education is not independent of the rest of society, nor of policies that are developed and implemented elsewhere in the country. For example, a quality education would require coherent and supportive policies in areas such as "responsible" media, health education, youth, early childhood development, and lifelong learning opportunities.

Appropriate legislative framework. Legislation is essential for ensuring that the principles agreed to that are contained in the concept of the right to education can, in fact, be put into action on a daily basis in a sustained way. As with policies, both

education legislation and other related legislation must be in place, understood by the general public as well as experts, and implemented.

There must be an enabling legislative framework that does more than pay lip service to the right to education, defined broadly. It must facilitate these necessary changes in the education system, both at the macro and micro levels. Clearly, a quality education must be accessible to all children. This means it must be expanded in most cases to ensure that there are sufficient places. Legislation needs to address the obligations of provision of education (defined broadly to include both access and quality), resource allocations (human, time and financial), and the overall expectations of the system.

It is important to obligate the *state*, the trustee of the nation, to provide education for all. Too often, compulsory education is seen as a legal framework that places parents and children, especially females, in the negative role of criminal or victim.

Other legislation is critical as well, however. For example, the Convention on the Rights of the Child indicates that children under 15 years of age must not have their learning diverted due to involvement in hostilities. Similarly, international law also states the minimum age for full time work and both labour and education law must be consistent with these agreements.

In many instances there is a need for compensatory action to ensure equality of opportunity—that is, equity concerns. Current data, and practise in an increasing number of countries, suggests that there might be a very strong case for affirmative action, initiated legally, for ensuring educational opportunities for those negatively affected by discrimination

Resources. A quality education requires resources, recognizing the full range that can be brought to bear in support of education. Resources are not only financial but consist of human and time resources as well.

It is clear that while some countries have been able to reorient budgets to emphasise education as a key engine for national development and a means to build democratic societies, others are not in circumstances where this is possible. Allocating resources to support quality education requires a long-term view. For example, international law calls for free compulsory education. It is recognized that this might not be possible immediately especially as universality is not yet a reality in many countries, but plans must be put in place and immediate action initiated toward this end. In the short-run, it is essential that any costs of education be distributed equitably.

Measurement of learning outcomes. This paper began by stressing the importance of learning. Thus, it is only appropriate that the last of the 10 dimensions of quality come full circle and address learning outcomes. In this regard, the quest for a better understanding of what is wanted from a quality education has expanded significantly the desired learning outcomes. The following simple classification of the main types of learning outcomes to be pursued may be helpful:

- Knowledge: the essential cognitive achievements that all learners should reach (including literacy, numeracy, core subject knowledge);

- Values: solidarity, gender equality, tolerance, mutual understanding, respect for human rights, non-violence, respect for human life and dignity;
- Skills or competencies: a secure command of how to solve problems, to experiment, to work in teams, to live together and interact with those who are different and to learn how to learn; and
- Behaviours: the willingness to put into practise what has been learned.

Our ability to measure learning achievement varies considerably in relation to the kinds of outcomes that are being measured. There are many indicators of learning achievement (or their proxies) already in use. There is a number of systems in place that measure learning achievement and use the results for the implementation and assessment of educational policies, programmes and practices.

Using the simple classification above, it is apparent that more effort has gone into addressing knowledge and competencies and less into values and behaviours.⁶ This points to the need for additional work. The evolving understanding of the various dimensions of quality suggests that some of the commonly used indicators might need to be reconsidered as well.

It is possible to monitor the quality of education, although it will take, in some instances, a re-thinking of what it is that we really should be measuring, how to balance qualitative and quantitative measures, and how to translate some qualitative measures into quantitative ones that can be meaningfully compared.

It is clear that while cross-national comparisons are important, they are not the only ones on which countries need to focus. In fact, in some instances, cross-country comparisons might not be the most immediate need.

Conclusion

Does this set the bar high? Emphatically yes! But this approach allows education systems the flexibility to determine the ways and means they will use to approach the bar. Education systems and their processes cannot be expected to change overnight. To think so is unrealistic. A vision of quality that takes into account its various dimensions sets the standard. Teachers, schools, communities, systems, and nations are the ones responsible for determining how this vision should be interpreted and, incrementally, put in place.

Mary Joy Pigozzi, PhD
30 Apr. 04

⁶ A number of mechanisms exist to measure learning outcomes. Some of the better known are TIMMS, PISA, SACMEQ and the IEA cross national studies, and national studies such as the UNESCO MLA project, which attempts to measure life skills as well as numeracy and literacy, and MLL in India and ABCs in Bangladesh. Most of these focus on cognitive achievement, although a variety of efforts is underway to measure values, skills, and behaviours.

DRAFT

Goals Of Universal Primary And Secondary Education

An Essay Requested by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Introduction

The need for definition of the purpose of education of children is important for any country, and even more so for the support of advocacy for universal access. Kai-ming Cheng argues for it at length in his paper titled "Education For All, But For What?" in the context of changing societal needs, pedagogical methods, and electronic access to the increasing pool of global knowledge. Mohamed Charfi and Hamadi Redissi, in their paper titled "Reforming Education In Arab Countries: Obstacles And Challenges", trace in detail the origins and the political and religious forces that support the heavy emphasis on the teaching of Islam in Arab countries resulting in conflict at the level of the students between secular ideals and religious doctrines. Their paper reports on examination of the purpose of the emphasis on religion that led successfully to constructive changes in education in Tunisia, resulting in broadening of the curriculum to incorporate values of tolerance and moderation in the context of human civilisation and social and scientific development while maintaining the national and Islamic identity of the learners. Both papers were prepared in 2003 for the project on Universal Basic and Secondary Education of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

As the two papers show, reflection on the goals of universal primary and secondary education leads naturally to critical, specific questions concerning the content, processes for implementation, effectiveness and quality of education. I have attempted a generic approach to identify the purposes of education, believing that clarity of general purposes might serve as a useful guide for the definition of specific objectives of education at various stages. The objectives could then lead to definition of the relevant curricular content and the appropriate processes of implementation in specific socioeconomic and political conditions. A further aspect of the generic approach is the consideration of learning as a continuum, beginning with development of the ability to learn. A case-history is given as a sample of the views held by a recipient of education; while this account does not represent a cross-section of opinion, it provides an opportunity for discussion on aspects of matters that are relevant to the purpose of education.

Case History – Outcome of 10 Years of Education

At the doorstep of a mud-plastered wooden hut some 8000 feet above sea-level on the beautiful pine-forested mountain called Mushkpuri in the Hazara District of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, my wife and I met Iqbal, a handsome, bright 17 year old lad who was attending to his bullock. He greeted us warmly. Responding to our curiosity about his life, he affirmed that he had attended school regularly for 10 years at the nearby town of Nathiagali, some three and a half miles up the valley, along the road that skirted the mountainside about 700 feet below his home, and possessed the Secondary School Certificate. We were impressed by his determination: walking 7 miles or more daily in the summer sun and rain being difficult enough but the trudge in the winter snow and ice was unimaginable. He quickly brushed aside our admiration of his achievement and asked, "What use is the Certificate?" Taken aback, my wife commented that at least he could read the newspaper. "What use is that?" He paused and added, "You come from Karachi; you can help me to find a job". "What job would you like?" I asked. "Anything in the forestry", was the instant reply. "But that is a government establishment and the salary will be very low", said I. "Who looks at the salary? Hundreds of thousands of Rupees are made here", he

responded. I advised him to submit an application for the job that interested him. With pragmatic wisdom he said, "Nothing happens without an approach."

Iqbal's candour demonstrated that by the age of 17 years his ability to learn, confidence, forthright communication, and adaptability were well developed. He had learnt to read and write but did not give these attributes or any others that might have been acquired at school much importance. He had also learnt that the Secondary School Certificate had no value; merit had no meaning; in order to be employed one had to befriend an influential person; and employment in a government civil service was the desired goal after school. Moreover, skills and ability did not matter; one depended for one's living not on salary for work done but on bribes, utilising the authority of government regulations for opportunities to extort bribes.

The preface to the national curriculum states that the objectives are framed by the national education policy, 1998-2010. "Purposeful learning competencies aim to provide the learners skills for continuing education, civilized behaviour and attitude to become useful and peaceful citizens. The objective is also to provide them with the skills for economic development. The curriculum has been made more representative and responsive to the ideology of Pakistan and social needs. We still believe that curriculum development is a continuous process and can be made more responsive." Iqbal further demonstrated the difference between the curricular intent and the knowledge, attitudes and skills that mattered for survival.

We believe that education bestows many advantages on the recipients, important among them being the economic and health related as well as good citizenship, and for that reason strive for universal access to it. However, since education is an instrument of planned change of behaviour, its purpose in the context of universal application deserves careful thought. Surely, the enormous potential of education to influence behaviour is the reason for national, political, and religious concern about its content and effectiveness.

Being mindful of the powerful influence of the operating environment, as Iqbal illustrated so well, I have attempted a generic approach to the definition of the purposes of basic and secondary education. Since beliefs originate from a base of knowledge, it is necessary to consider the nature of the base, from the perspective of the competence required for economic sustenance of individuals and their dependents and maturity acquired through growth of knowledge and experience, as well as factors that condition individuals' decisions and actions.

Learning Ability

At the foundation of knowledge and behaviour lies the ability to learn, a property of the brain that is present at birth and becomes established through usage very early in childhood, mainly in the first three years of life. Careful observation of very young children shows that acquisition of the ability to learn must not be taken for granted. Memory, another inherent property of the brain and as a critical repository of experience, serves as an integral but not the only essential component of learning. It is not impaired except by injury or disease of the brain. Establishment of learning ability, however, is critically dependent upon perception of the environment through all modalities of sensation, driven by curiosity, which is another inherent attribute. Sensory perceptions are processed by association with past experience and thought, resulting in concepts that represent a level of understanding that is subsequently modified with further experience. This progressive conceptual development is very

vulnerable to lack of a stimulating environment, curtailment of activity, and poor social interaction, in addition to malnutrition and chronic illness. Potentially, all of these factors can be influenced favourably by appropriate child nurture.

Failure of nurture compromises the ability of a child to attain his or her full genetic potential for mental development. The fact that late removal of congenital cataracts results in permanent blindness despite intact visual pathways indicates that high order neural structures and related functional abilities are established by stages in response to sensory perception during critical finite periods of development of the brain. Inadequate development during the initial stage results in persistent loss of the function; in the case of learning ability, the resulting limitation may be considered analogous to physical stunting that persists through life.

The emphasis on child nurture does not deny the influence of genetic inheritance. However, the fact that the proportion of children with delayed psychomotor development increased and normal development decreased with age in the first three years of life, as shown by the data from a recent study of children in underprivileged communities given in the Table¹ below, indicates the magnitude and progression of adverse environmental influences on development of the nervous system. Moreover, the proportions of children with stunting, wasting and delayed psychomotor development were significantly greater in rural than urban communities.

Psychomotor Development				
Age	N	Normal (%)	Delayed (%)	Accelerated (%)
First Year	454	77	14	9
Second Year	454	62	22	16
Third Year	336	54	37	9
Overall	1244	65	23	12

The critical importance of development of the ability to learn during early childhood, well before school-age, presents a broader view of learning than implied by consideration of education alone as the chief determinant of learning.

From the broader perspective, the well developed ability to learn and be curious, to gain access to knowledge and evaluate information, and to communicate one's thoughts verbally and in writing are cardinal functional attributes reflecting conceptual learning from perception and thought.

Social interaction promotes learning and behaviour through approval and disapproval and leads to conformity with the societal norm. This social learning can be exploited readily by

¹ Bilal Iqbal (2003), data from a study of the social environment and child growth and development in urban and rural Sindh. The Aga Khan University Human Development Programme and Department of Community Health Sciences.

indoctrination and example when individuals do not have the ability to exercise thought in order to evaluate the significance and outcome of such learning.

Multiple factors modulate an individual's knowledge, which in turn influences behaviour; prominent among them are moral reasoning, social and economic status in society, and beliefs derived from religious teaching, tradition and culture. Each factor can be a strong or weak modulator.

Emotion strongly influences beliefs and behaviour but deserves separate consideration because it powerfully affects all processes of knowledge acquisition and use; including memory, perception and development of concept, social learning, decision and behaviour.

Purposes of Education

From the foregoing considerations I would state the general purposes of education as follows.

(a) For basic education: to extend the nurture of learning ability through new experiences of perception and thought; to express thought through verbal and written language and images; to experience the application of knowledge and skills; to experience the range and perfection of physical activity; to participate in teamwork; to socialise with confidence; to build self-esteem.

(b) For secondary education: to establish one's national and religious identity; to understand the biological, reproductive, physical and psychological constituents of health; to apply mathematics; to acquire the appropriate knowledge and skills for electronic access to information, engagement in economic productivity, continual learning, and survival.

(c) For all stages of education: to apply moral reasoning; to acquire a broad range of knowledge about the physical world as a part of the universe; to understand the unusual phenomenon of life, its history and precarious sustenance in an ecosystem; to appreciate the constancy of human biology and the diversity of civilization and culture; to understand the existence of the spiritual constituent of human thought and the diversity of its expression; to express creativity.

In addition, the following purposes of education, stated as more specific attitudes and skills of individuals, are complementary and relevant to societal development and behaviour. They are complementary also to the guidance parents provide to their children in order to raise them as respectable citizens of the home and society. The additional purposes include the following: to understand the critical responsibility of parents for child nurture and promotion of health, learning ability and responsible behaviour of the next generation; to identify the basic causes of problems as a pre-requisite for solutions; to understand and critically evaluate knowledge and assess its impact before adoption at the stage of decision-making; to communicate thought accurately, respectfully and constructively; to learn from experience, based on thoughtful reflection; to be tolerant of diversity; always to be honest, disciplined, and accountable.

Educational Assessment

Recommendations on the purposes of education would be incomplete without expression of alarm concerning evaluation of the attainment of educational objectives. Sadly, it is not generally understood that evaluation facilitates learning; instead, the associated certification and the candidates' scores achieved in examinations for the secondary school certificate are viewed by parents, institutions of higher learning and the public as the indicators of effective education. Inevitably the stakes in the examinations are high for the candidates and all

concerned, including the school teachers and parents. Essentially, education and the knowledge and skills acquired by the learners are determined by the nature of the examinations. When the examinations test mainly information contained in prescribed textbooks, generations of "educated" youth enter the job-market and higher education without comprehension of knowledge and the ability to apply it, and devoid of any capacity for reasoning. No significant change in education can be expected without reliable assessment of the learners' attainment of curricular objectives. Valid and reliable assessment should be a component of the system that determines the quality of education, since the assessment will complement review of the human, learning and physical resources supporting learning as well as the educational plan.

Conditions Beyond The Scope Of Education

I have emphasised the importance of learning ability because it is the basis of adaptation to change in circumstances and growth of knowledge, and equips one with the basis for seeking opportunities for being productive. This critical faculty is acquired in early childhood and serves an individual for a lifetime. Returning to the case-study, Iqbal had the ability to learn but little or no capacity for reasoning, otherwise he would have been concerned that the corrupt practices of society were unethical, not to be emulated. He was unconcerned about the serious, deleterious impact of illegal destruction of trees on life in the scarce woodlands of the country and eventually on the environment generally. Having identified the deficiencies in his education, I should point out that many other conditions of life imposed limitations that were beyond the scope of education; for instance, there were no jobs except occasionally in government service, and it was true that selection generally was not based on merit.

It is necessary to consider whether the purposes outlined above can be achieved by formal education alone. The government of Pakistan sees its national curriculum as a means of developing a cohesive society by reason of the country's religious ideology. In the Northern Areas of Pakistan, the terrain consists of high mountains and valleys that are sparsely inhabited by hardy people living in harsh physical conditions, characterised by extreme cold in the winters, landslides, and earthquakes, compounded periodically by violence due to sectarian differences although all are Muslims. The Secretary of Education of the Northern Areas expressed his desire for a significant impact of higher education on society through respect for pluralism, diversity and tolerance but recognised that his ideal "demands improvement of human conditions" and a supportive value system in society. Change in the human condition depends on coordinated and effective multi-sector development; education is a critical component of development but its impact on society will depend upon broad, coordinated changes in social welfare.

Signals Of Hope

The national curriculum of Pakistan, like other curricula, is concerned with prescription of the methods of achieving the purposes of education, through appropriate experience, content of knowledge, and practices as well as facilitation of learning, and requires separate consideration. The government's recognition that curriculum development is a continuous process and can be made more responsive to need is encouraging and provides good reason to examine closely the purposes of education.

Further hope stems from the Presidential Order of November 2002 that established the examination board of the Aga Khan University (AKU-EB), the first non-governmental

institution authorised to examine candidates for the secondary school certificate (Grade 10) and higher secondary certificate (Grade 12), based on the national curriculum. The purpose of the AKU-EB is to set examples of high quality examinations that will test comprehension and application of knowledge. The effect on the abilities and attitudes of the learners who choose the option of taking the AKU-EB examinations and the influence of the examination system on education will not be known with confidence for about 10 years. Such is the latency between implementation of change in education and evidence of its effect, whereas governments and the public want rapid results.

Conclusion

Universal effective education is a worthy but complex goal. Among the complexities, in addition to many formidable ones associated with various aspects of education, are the political, financial, physical and human resource issues and the enormous school-age population. Beyond the scope of education is the problem of employment. On the one hand, effectively educated human resources are needed for economic growth of the country, and on the other, disillusionment sets in when the proportion of the educated unemployed grows as a result of the growth in the population and low investment in development.

I have adopted a generic approach to the definition of the goals of primary and secondary education. Such a view avoids the clutter of many important thorny details which are of concern at a later stage of curricular definition and implementation, on the one hand, and brings into focus the importance of nurturing learning ability, which requires serious attention to development in infancy and early childhood. No investment in education alone will reverse the long-term effects of limited mental development.

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REFORMING EDUCATION IN ARAB COUNTRIES:

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES

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Educational institutions occupy a pivotal place in the social system, linking childhood and adulthood, the domestic and the political, the private and the public. In modern democratic states, the education offered by public schools promotes the values of liberty and equality without ratifying the moral convictions held by any specific religious group. In many modern Arab countries, by contrast, the state is not neutral and neither is the education it offers its citizens: instead of simply promoting the values of liberty and equality, the public schools also endorse the moral authority of Islam.

Most Arab states uphold an outdated and conservative vision of the role of religion in educational institutions. As a result of their educational policies, such states generate chronic cognitive dissonance among students, who are exposed to the secular ideals promoted by many political leaders as well as the religious doctrines promulgated by their Islamic teachers. An ambivalent and divided citizenry becomes a chronic source of potential political crisis at home, and of terrorism abroad.

Under the circumstances, a reform of basic education is absolutely urgent in order to modernize Arab states. The goal is to stop schools from aggravating the contradictions between moral communities and liberalizing regimes, and between historical religion and civil religion. Public schools in Arab states need to instill, instead, the value of tolerance and the skills needed to read sacred texts with an open mind. The Tunisian example shows that reform is possible – on condition that a political will for reform can be cultivated by the leaders of Arab and Muslim states.

I. ARAB COUNTRIES BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Since the 19th century, when the Muslims entered the Modern Age, recurrent efforts have been made to reconcile Islam, revised and reinterpreted, to modern conceptions of law and the state. These efforts have oscillated between attempts to impose a stringent secularism (as in Egypt under Nasser and Iran under the Shah) and equally strenuous efforts to protect the political authority traditionally exercised by religious institutions (as in Saudi Arabia and in Iran after the Revolution). One consequence of these oscillations it that many Arab and Muslim states today are neither wholly totally traditional nor wholly secular, but rather marked by “a distorted duality” (Sharabi, Hisham, 1988, Fr. Trans., 1996, 23-28) or a “fundamental breach” (Shayegan, 1989, 65-79), which has ultimately produced “composite formulae, if not failures” (Badie, 1986, 177).

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A. The Political Context

Currently, Arab countries are divided into monarchies and republics. Of the eight monarchies (Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia), four can be described as constitutional monarchies by the criterion that the government is the result of parliamentary elections, even if the king takes precedence over the parliament. These four are Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, and Kuwait. The other monarchies have no legislatures, but at best consultative bodies whose members are named by the king.

All Arab countries have constitutions except Saudi Arabia and Libya. The former has a law decreed by the king (who has legislative power) in 1926 that governs public power and a 1958 regulation about the functioning of the council of ministers, both recently confirmed by a 1992 "fundamental charter". In Libya, a 1977 resolution of the "General Congress of the People" takes the place of a constitution.

With the exception of Turkey (which is not an Arab country), the constitutions of Islamic states are not secular, either according to the stringent French model or according to the more lenient American model, which forbids the state to favor any religion while it accords religious freedom to all. The constitutions of most Arab states rather grant an important place to the Islamic sacred law (*sharia*), even as they adopt, at least formally, some principles of secularism.

In the first place, either the state religion is Islam – or else the *sharia* is the principal source of legislation. In many cases, constitutions simply state that Islam is the religion of the state.¹ In other cases, the state proclaims itself as Islamic.²

An avowedly Islamic state such as Saudi Arabia is supposed to apply the *sharia*. By contrast, in country like Tunisia where the state religion is Islam, there is no such expectation. This is because Islam is not the same as the *sharia*. It is larger and susceptible to diverse interpretations, not to mention the fact that the state reserves the right to proclaim norms that do not conform to the letter of the *sharia*.

In countries where the state religion is Islam, the fundamental principle is often popular sovereignty, the free elaboration of the law by those elected by the people, and the independence of the law in relation to the *sharia*. Even when the law is inspired by classic Muslim texts, legislators elected by citizens impose it. In many countries that uphold Islam as a state religion, the law as a result does not conform to the *sharia*. This is true for penal legislation in most Arab countries. In such countries, judges, in the absence of an express disposition dictating recourse to the *sharia*, uphold the laws passed by the representatives of the people (Charfi, Mohamed, 1987).

Unfortunately, in countries where the state has proclaimed itself Islamic, the constitution often stipulates that all laws must be in conformity with the letter of the *sharia*. The clearest example is Saudi Arabia. The law of 1926 governing public powers states in article 6 that "legal norms should be in conformity with the Book of God, with the *sunna* [tradition] of the Prophet, and with the conduct of companions and the first pious generations." More recently, in 1992, the kingdom decreed a "fundamental charter" proclaiming that "the constitution is the book of God and the *sunna* of the Prophet."³ Other

¹ Jordan, 1952 constitution (art. 2); Tunisia, 1959 constitution (art. 1); Iraq, 1968 constitution (art. 4); Algeria, 1996 constitution, (art. 2); Morocco, 1996 constitution (art. 6); Mauritania, 1991 constitution (art. 5).

² Bahrain, 1973 constitution (art. 2); Preamble to the Moroccan constitution; Mauritania (art. 1).

³ Fundamental Charter of 1 March 1992 (art. 7).

constitutions indicate in varying fashions that the *sharia* itself is a "principal [or major] source" of legislation.⁴ Apart from the Koran, Libya does not recognize the three other sources of the *sharia* (the tradition of the Prophet, consensus, and the analogical reasoning of legal scholars). "The Holy Koran is the law" is the sole principle governing the country (the second clause of the 1977 resolution).

In many Arab states, accession to high office is conditional upon the candidate's belonging to the Islamic religion. In cases where the constitution does not expressly stipulate it, this condition can be deduced from the general statement of the Islamic character of the State. Only the 1926 Lebanese constitution and the 1992 one of Djibouti are silent on the religion of both the state and the head of state.

Different Arab states regulate religious beliefs and practices in different ways. Some charge a Religious Ministry with overseeing worship, while others appoint a *Mufti*, a functionary with religious competence, who is charged with furnishing religious *responsa* (consultations), or supervising a house of *ifta* (consultation). Some states have simply taken over the hiring of preachers and of prayer *imams*, the financing of charitable associations and institutions of religious education, and the massive construction of mosques. Throughout the Arab world, states sanction the use of the Islamic calendar alongside the universal calendar; guarantee the commemoration of religious festivals; and organize competitions of a religious character (Koranic litanies). They also insure that public places close during the month of fasting, prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages during this same month, and prescribe the broadcasting of the Friday prayer on state radio and television.

At the same time, the constitutions of many Arab states do accept the organic and functional separation of powers and the separation between governmental and administrative authorities. Three constitutions declare in their preambles the state's adherence to international treaties on the rights of man.⁵ Still, it is often stipulated that the conditions for the exercise of these liberties should not threaten public order, national interest, and morality.

Most Arab Muslim countries with the exception of some Gulf States hold periodic elections. Even if these elections rarely have real democratic value because they are not organized in an honest, transparent, and regular fashion (due to the existence of a single party or a dominant party supported by the administration), the formal existence of a parliament that supposedly represents the people means that legislative power has been, officially and actually, removed from the *ulema* (or clerics), and entrusted to representatives of the people.

B. The State and Education

While the other countries of the world prepare their children to enter a complex and heterogeneous society, most Muslim countries continue to prepare young people for a life of religious purity. Unfortunately there are few exhaustive studies on the status of religion in Arab public schools. Numerical data are skimpy, monographs on particular countries uneven, and analyses of the content of school textbooks fragmentary. We know little about average years of schooling, rates of literacy, or the disparities in education between rich and poor, men and women.

⁴ Kuwait: 1962 constitution (art. 2: one of the principal sources); United Arab Emirates: 1971 constitution of union (art. 7); Egypt: 1971 constitution (art. 2 as revised in 1980); Qatar: 1970 constitution (art. 1); Syria: 1973 constitution (art. 3: Islamic law is the principal source); Oman: 1996 constitution (art. 2); Yemen: 1994 constitution (art. 3: of all legislation). This is also the case in a non-Arab country, Iran: 1979 constitution (art. 2: divine sovereignty).

⁵ Djibouti, Morocco, and Mauritania.

Three Arab Muslim universities have survived since the Middle Ages: Zeitouna in Tunisia, Al Azhar in Egypt, and Qarawiyin in Morocco. Various reforms of these universities were initiated in the 19th century, but they all failed. More recently, these same universities have formed secularized and modern subsidiaries that teach the natural sciences and humanities in a way that is still imbued with religion.

Most modern Arab schools make the teaching of Islam a central part of their curriculum. It is hard to say how many hours of teaching devoted to Islam, due to the fact that it is taught in all disciplines. Moreover, one has to take into account the para-scholastic influence of the *Kouteb* (private Koranic pre-schools) and of private Koranic schools that are operating in practically all Islamic countries from Afghanistan to Morocco. Several studies of public education (Nucho, ed., 1993; Rugh, 2001, 396-414; Salloum, 1995) suggest that the number of hours devoted purely to religious instruction is high from the first to the twelfth year of education: "In Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan and Kuwait, for example, an average of about 10% of total class is devoted to it. In Saudi Arabia it consumes 32% of class time for grades 1 to 3, 30% in grades 7 to 9, and then 15% or more for grades 10 to 12. The figures for Qatar are 17-20% in grades 1 to 6, 14% in grades 7 to 10, then 8-11% in grades 11 and 12" (Rugh, 2002).⁶

Much of this teaching turns out to be *contrary* to human rights. The civil war between Muslims and non-Muslims in Sudan that has dragged on for many years probably explains (without justifying) the lengthy passages on *jihad* in the schoolbooks of that country, where one finds an apology for this violence alongside the frequent reminder of the legal rules concerning it.⁷ Egyptian books speak of tolerance but add that Islam is the only true religion.⁸ The legal principle of "enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong" [3:104]^{*} is used to explain that struggling against evil can go on in both word and action, thus indirectly inciting the violence that Islamists commit against the state and persons.⁹ (Abu Zayd, 1992, 104).

In still other Arab textbooks, women always have a position inferior to men. Mother is in the kitchen while father is in the library.¹⁰ This situation is not only a social fact but also a religious rule. A Yemeni schoolbook pushes the duty to obey even farther, stressing a rule invented by the *fiqh* (Islamic law) that a woman's submission to God is unacceptable if it is not accompanied by submission to her husband; a woman's prayer is even inadmissible when

⁶ In comparison, in France since 1996, history courses are divided into "six historical moments" of which Christianity is one: the secondary level course (*la seconde* = 5th year) includes a map of the Mediterranean in the 12th century as the crossroads of three civilizations (Christianity, the Byzantine Empire, and Islam); in *sixième* (= first year of secondary), Mohammed and Islam are covered; in *cinquième* (= second year of secondary), the life of Jesus. In literature, the *sixième* deals with the Bible (*Le Monde*, 7/11/2002).

⁷ See in particular, *Islamic Education*, 3rd year, middle level, pp. 8, 15, 37, 40, and 5th year, p. 83, etc.

⁸ *Islamic Education*, 2nd year, middle level, p. 40.

^{*} trans.note: This is the Everyman translation of the Koran by Marmaduke Pickthall; the French translation is "to command the good and avoid the evil"—rather different in connotations. **Translation of the Koran by A. Yusuf Ali (1983). Maryland : Amana Corp. What is right includes right conduct and what is wrong is broader than indecency". The legal principle belonging to Islamic law, but grounded on the Koran, reports only a part of the verse which is however much longer (3 : 104) as a personal or a collective duty.**

⁹ IADH, report on Egypt, p. 39.

¹⁰ Egyptian reader, 1st primary year, p. 28 & 30.

her husband is discontented with her.¹¹ Similarly, Moroccan school textbooks, modeled on those of other Muslim countries, teach all the corporal punishments ordered in the *sharia*, from whipping to stoning (supported by justifications for them).¹² They also assert¹³ that freedom is permitted only on condition that the *sharia* is not questioned, and as long as reason and the critical spirit are not employed for the criticism of the *sharia* rules.¹⁴ In most Arab countries, an apologetic presentation of the history of Islam is found not only in religious classes but also in language instruction. For example, a Moroccan book called *Rules of the Arabic Language*¹⁵ exalts the Caliph “Harûn al-Rashid¹⁶” to the status of a just and virtuous prince”—whereas the reality is much more nuanced, to say the least.

As a whole, most textbooks are meant to encourage students to live in an “Islamic ambiance.” For example, the Moroccan book of Arabic readings used in the 6th year of primary school, supposedly a language and not a religious book, takes as themes for the opening lessons: 1. Koranic verses; 2. Prophet’s *hadiths* (sayings); 3. “I am Muslim”; 4. Islam and consultation; 5. Koranic verses; 6. the most worthy faster, etc.¹⁷ A Moroccan survey of 865 young boys and girls from the urban middle class confirms the impact of such readings : 69 per cent assert believing in magic; 75,8 per cent in superstition; 79 per cent trust only family; and for the most part think that “Islam enjoins freedom, justice, fraternity and equality” while “capitalism cultivates hate, exploitation and segregation”; and in communist system, people “are deprived from freedom and live in horror and repression” (Bourqia and al-, 2000).

Under pressure from traditionalists, each Arab country has witnessed a manipulation of the education system. As a result, throughout the Arab world, many elements of education are incompatible with human rights and the liberal values of the modern democratic state.

II. TOWARDS A REFORM OF EDUCATION IN ARAB COUNTRIES

To prepare students better to assume the duties of citizenship in a world that every day becomes more cosmopolitan, a certain number of reforms seem to us essential.

¹¹ Islamic Education, middle level, 3rd year, p. 37.

¹² Islamic Education, 2nd secondary year, 1996 edition, p. 85 ff.

¹³ Islamic Education, 9th primary year, 1996 edition, p. 65.

¹⁴ Moroccan book *Islamic Thought and Philosophy*, 1996.

¹⁵ Basic education, 8th year, p. 175.

¹⁶ Harûn al-Rashid was the 5th caliph (786-809) of the Abbassid dynasty (750-1258), the former one was Omayyad dynasty (661-750). The previous period was well-known as just and pious rule of the four companions (332-661) of the prophet (622-632).

¹⁷ One could fill dozens of pages with examples of this kind from the Moroccan *Language Lessons* (in Arabic) from the 5th year of basic education, a grammar book that gives a rule and follows it with a text that illustrates it. The themes of these illustrations are not chosen at random. One finds on page 3 the suffering of the first Muslims persecuted in Mecca, on page 38 Mecca, on page 41 the necessity of being a good Muslim, page 59 the conduct of Omar the Second Caliph, page 78 Muslims of science throughout history, page 84 the Prophet’s conduct, page 85 Muslim Andalusia, page 91 Baghdad in the era of the Abbassids Yes, page 103 a prayer, page 136 Ramadan, page 139 Muslims obeying the Koran, page 140 the Prophet...

A Forging Communal Ties in an Age of Globalization

To use the expression of Aristotle and of Ibn Khaldoun, man is a "social being by nature." He needs to feel he belongs to a group larger than himself. At the same time, man has a consciousness of himself, for as Locke pointed out, consciousness is a matter of identity that subsists. (Locke, [1694] Fr. edit. 1983, Book. II, chap. XXVII § 10-19). The consciousness that one has of belonging should be neither illusory nor antagonistic: for disillusionment will demoralize; and conflict pushes people to violence. Belonging should, as much as possible, approach reality and correspond to truth.

In these conditions, what are the markers and emblems of an Arab and Islamic identity that is compatible with the rights and duties of democratic citizenship? And by what process of identification does the student feel Arab and Muslim?

It is extremely difficult to answer these questions. Even if one had a correct answer, one might truly hesitate, when it comes to education, between revealing the truth to students and inculcating the founding myths of the community. There is surely an age at which education deconstructs the myths and helps historical truth to triumph. But at what age? Plato in the *Republic* concedes that one should teach children the city's fables and myths, after which one initiates them into true discourse. For us, the ideal would be to gradually educate them in the relativity of things: teach them that identity is far from stable, static, and permanent, but rather is fragile, fluctuating and transient.

Unfortunately, for the whole Muslim world and especially for the Arab world, this way of seeing things poses problems. For obvious political reasons, pan-Islamic and pan-Arab identities have been diffused in schools as if such identities were indisputable, permanent, trans-historic, and transnational. This creates a grave tension between truth and history, identity and change, national and transnational identities. Three issues loom large in Arab schools today: How to teach students about their identities as Muslims; as Arabs; and as Arab-speaking language users.

1. Islamic Unity

While it is true that one can find more or less common markers of Islamic identity, it is no less true that Islamic unity is a chimera. It is manifestly illusory to hope someday to reunite within the same political entity countries as different and alien to each other as, for example, Afghanistan and Senegal, both part of the Organization of Islamic Conference, an international organization created in 1972 (Rabat-Morocco), founded on the criterion of one single condition, i.e. allegiance to Islam that gathers together 57 countries otherwise divided by ethnicity, language, and culture. A diversity that precludes transnational identity also affects the principle of trans-historic identity. The expression "*Umma*," community of believers, which once referred to the small number of the faithful around the Prophet in Medina (622 CE), can today no longer have a relevant political implication. In medieval times, this *Umma*, supposedly represented by the Caliphate at Damascus (661-750) and then Baghdad (750-1258), willingly compromised with dynasties and autonomous regional powers, starting in the 9th century in the Middle East, the Maghreb, and Andalusia. These powers emancipated themselves, either *de facto* and by the sword, or *de jure* and through tacit agreement, from the control of the central caliphate. This fact has been historically recognized. In the 11th century, Mawerdi proposed a distinction between "*the emirate of conquest*" (*imarat al-istila*) and "*the emirate of attribution*" (*imarat al-istikfa*), precisely to differentiate provinces that had freed themselves through violence from those that had been freed through a gentlemen's agreement between the caliph and a warlord (Mawerdi, 1982, 59-70). Now that nation-states are constituted on the basis of territorial contiguity, there remains

only faith to unite Muslims, as it does Jews, Christians, and the followers of other, non-monotheistic, religions, all spread among internationally sovereign countries.

In truth, Islam is a religion and not truly an identity, since many countries are Muslim without sharing a single identity—unless you reduce cultural and national identity to religion as identified by immutable traits. In short, *it is absolutely necessary to teach students that Islam is neither a homeland nor a nationalism and that it has changed over history.*

2. Arab Unity

Something similar applies to the idea of Arab unity. With the creation of the **Ba'ath** Party in 1941 by a group of revolutionaries gathered around Michel Aflaq, and again with Nasser's accession to power in Egypt on a pan-Arab platform in 1952, Arab unity became a key political goal in many parts of the Arab world. But unity has proved elusive. Ba'athism and Nasserism failed to forge an alliance in the late Fifties, and the Ba'ath states of Iraq and Syria became bitter regional rivals. The Gulf War of 1991 revealed Arab unity to be a fiction, an ideology that has masked the reality of authoritarian power founded on *raison d'etat*.

In fact, the Arab world is made up of sovereign nations, some completely constituted, others in the process of formation. These nations have separate interests. Under the circumstances, even the most enthusiastic partisans of Arab unity have to admit that such a goal is remote.

In other words, it is necessary to teach students that the really imperative goal is multiform Arab cooperation and the modernization of nation-states whose independent existence is no longer subject to dispute.

Does this mean that one must banish the teaching of Arab identity from Arab schools? Surely not. Teachers cannot erase the feeling of belonging to a wider ethnic community. What education should do is suggest to the student by means of concrete examples how culture is constructed, and how its meaning varies throughout history.

The history of classical Islam is from this viewpoint rich in lessons. Its "medieval identity", a source of pride, is the result of the mixing of various influences: Persian literature, Greek wisdom, the transmission of the divine word, and the translation of the Ancients that Muslims owed to the Jews and the Christians. Medieval authors like Tawhidi and Miskawayh eulogized this mixing. In an unequalled humanist vein, they sought in it what the Greeks called "*the excellent man*" and what classical Arabs called "*the perfect man*" (*al-insan ak-kamil*).

3. Language

In all Arab countries, teaching is done essentially in Arabic and secondarily, depending on the country and the discipline, in English or in French. Some countries do this out of necessity, in order to have access to the sciences, and other by cultural choice, so as to know foreign cultures. In fact, language is more than a tool; it is a means of knowing oneself and others.

Nevertheless, language being somehow linked with identity, the question of the place of Arabic is often charged with passion, especially because in certain Arab countries, mathematics, physics and the natural sciences are taught in a foreign language. Some complain of the marginalization of Arabic, and others fear that if scientific disciplines are taught in Arabic, it will lower the level of teaching. In order to remove some heat from the debate, one must definitively assert both the privileged place of Arabic as a national language and recognize the important place of foreign languages as a fundamental means of knowing

the world. Happily, apart from “fundamentalists” of a single language (whether Arabic or foreign), the consensus on this point is established.

B Between Islamic Tradition and Civil Religion

The teaching of religion poses real problems. First, should one teach Islam at school, or proclaim the neutrality of the state in this respect and leave to parents’ discretion the issue of whether to teach their children themselves or send them to private religious schools? Secondly, if the public schools choose to teach Islam, how should they go about doing so? The answer to the first question is sociological and the second is intellectual or philosophical.

1. Should public schools teach Islam?

Our preference would be for the public school to desist from teaching the precepts and dogmas of Islam. But this solution seems to suit societies that have accomplished the historical process of secularization. Such societies have passed from the “mechanical solidarity” derived from similitude to the “organic solidarity” derived from the division of labor (Durkheim, 1994 b), or from a “community” defined by solidarity to a “society” defined by competing interests. (Weber, 1994 a, 65)

Most Arab societies, unfortunately, have not completed the historical process of secularization: they are “societies of the Book,” still in transition.

Two extreme cases demonstrate the difficult relation between public education and religious education: Turkey and the **Indian school of Dar Uloom of Deoband Yes**¹⁸.

In choosing a secularism enshrined in the constitution and guarded by the military, Turkey has ceded teaching of religion to private schools. Between 1982 and 1992, 5,000 Koranic schools were created in Turkey, as opposed to 270 secular ones. On the recommendation of the Council of Security, entrusted with watching over Turkey’s secular constitution, the teaching of religion became obligatory in public schools.¹⁹ The result: Turkey has been caught up in the **Islamization** of a portion of the elite formed in these schools, helping to create support for the **Party of Justice and Development** of Recept Tayyip Erdogan, which won the legislative elections of November 2002.

The school of Deoband meanwhile contributed to the advent of the Taliban. **After Indian independence, private religious schools were left untouched by the secular state.** When Pakistan separated from India in 1947, Abdul **Haq**, a former student of Deoband, founded a school of similar religious tendencies near Peshawar on the border of Afghanistan. This is where the Taliban would learn the most retrograde Islam--which they would apply in Afghanistan.

As a result, **the 100,000 private *madrasa* (religious schools) that exist in modern day India have become subject to suspicion. And in Pakistan, after having been integrated in the formal educational system in 1980/1981, some 20,000 religious *madrasa*, supported by public money coming through zakat funds set up by the government in 1980 (about ten per cent of the alms collected by public agencies are devoted to religious education) are becoming subject to scrutiny. After September 11th, General Musharaf called for a new reform, in order to increase control over the clergy as a part of the war against terrorism (Malik, 2002, 20-21).** This is to say that, whether or not the state takes charge of religious education, in practice both pre-school institutions (the family) and post-school ones (the social milieu, custom, religious parties, private schools) have a tendency to

¹⁸ A private **religious** school created in 1867 in northern India in the state of Uttar Pradesh by the holy man Muhammed Qacim Nanautawi, ten years after the closing of the schools by the British in 1857.

¹⁹ Jéro. Mario (2002). “The pressing shadow of the Army,” *Le Monde, Dossier*, 15/16 December.

compensate for any weakness of the secularized state. This is what happens in the immigrant Muslim communities in the West: although they go to public schools, the children of the second generation are deeply attached to their traditional religion as interpreted by non-professionals or traditionalist **jurists or ulemas**.

Hence our answer to the first question: *it is prudent and reasonable for Arab states to take charge of religious education; indeed, experience shows that it is dangerous and counter-productive for the public school to abandon religious education to other social actors.*

2. How should Islam be taught?

Within the religious domain we propose making the following distinctions: worship, dogmas, virtues, and social relations. This fourfold distinction is governed by two principles: the principle of respect that liberalism owes to *all* religions and the principle of tolerance applied to the reading of Scripture. In effect, liberalism is not “indifferent.” Inasmuch as it accepts cultural, religious, and metaphysical pluralism and the diversity of interpretations, so it promotes a liberal approach to understanding Scripture. This is what Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, and Kant accomplished in the West. And this is what certain Muslim intellectuals (of whom we will speak in a later section of this essay) are trying to do in the Arab world today. A liberalism “modified” for an Islamic context allows reconciliation between the universal claims of liberalism and the culture of Islam, between the requirements of modernity and the teaching of Islamic tradition.

a. Worship

As concerns worship. Islam rests on five pillars: the profession of faith, prayer, fasting, **mandatory alms** and pilgrimage to Mecca. These are “personal duties,” private obligations (*fardh 'yan*) that every Muslim should render, *ut singuli*, as a sign of obedience, strictly in relation to God. *It would be normal to continue teaching them in classic fashion.*

b. Dogma

The same is true of the metaphysical aspects and questions of dogma (belief in God, his kingdom, purgatory, eternal bliss...). Public education is charged with teaching them in a traditional way, while advancing (as we shall see) an external and historical critique as well as promoting liberal exegeses of Scripture.

We propose, however, that both worship and dogma be taught tolerantly, according to the principles of Lockean liberalism. In effect, on both issues (*cultus* and *credenda*), Locke demanded “absolute tolerance.” A Magistrate cannot force subjects either to worship or to believe. (Locke, [1667], 1992, 105 & sq.). A related idea expressed by **John Rawls in *Political Liberalism*** is that political liberalism is also philosophical, and therefore it extends tolerance into philosophical and metaphysical debates. To safeguard such tolerance, worship should be regarded as a private matter, in the sense that the state is not accountable for the performance of these duties; in addition, the state, while protecting the right of believers to worship, will not punish those who neither believe nor worship.

Unfortunately, the liberal principle of “unconditional and unlimited tolerance” is hard to apply in practice in most Arab countries, due to the popularity of Islam, and the various sociological pressures that result from being a “society of the Book”. The state is often torn between liberalism and popular religious demands. For example, it faces hard choices about closing public places during Ramadan, and about forbidding the consumption of alcohol.

At this level, the choice in Islamic countries is not between “absolute tolerance” and “zero tolerance” but between two other modes: “conditional tolerance” and “the primacy of public good over tolerance”. Conditional tolerance, according to Locke, is extended to beliefs and practices that do not threaten security and the public good. But while certain beliefs and practices may be left to the discretion of citizens, others should not. For example, a right to

polygamy (which Locke considered should benefit from conditional tolerance) is incompatible with a conception of public good governed by sexual equality. This should also be the case in Islamic countries. Specifically, **in this case “public interest must prevail over tolerance.”** (In fact, apart from Turkey and Tunisia, most Arab states still allow polygamy.)

c. Virtues

The same considerations should guide the domain of moral virtues. The state has no business worrying about the salvation of souls. Still, it should teach such virtues as loyalty, generosity, courage, love of neighbor, peace, and good works. Without a respect for such virtues, social life is given over to evil. Thus it is desirable to teach Arab values, what tradition calls the “*chivalric virtues*” (*makarem al-akhlaq*) such as honor, respect for promises made, courage, pride, hospitality, etc., and which the great Orientalist Goldziher has compared to Jewish [Noachim] law, and to the Latin *vertus* (Goldziher, 1976, I, 11-14). The public schools should also teach the humanist values of Islam: magnanimity, love, compassion, mutual aid, and peace (Boisard, 1979).

The moral duty to “enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong” has to be managed with prudence. Although this duty is of Koranic origin (3:104), it is according to tradition a collective duty (*fardh kifaya*). This means that the individual is absolved of it as long as the community represented by the public authority accomplishes it instead. If the duty to forbid what is wrong is taught, then the schools run the risk of pushing young people to conclude that a perceived failure of the public authority to uphold this duty obliges them to render justice themselves, or else proclaim themselves communitarian judges.

Different challenges are posed by the teaching of two other collective duties in Islamic tradition: the duty to seek knowledge, and the duty of *jihad*.

The first is established by the Koran (7:185, 69:2) and confirmed by the tradition of the Prophet’s enjoining of scientific research. Teachers can easily show how the community fulfills the duty to know through public schooling. At the same time, the duty to seek knowledge has become individual and universal in modern societies. Here Arab educators may cite the first pages of the *Decisive Treatise* of Averroes (1126-1198) in which the philosopher, after having established that “*Revelation declares obligatory the examination of beings,*” deduces that this examination is best made through the “*demonstrative syllogism*” of philosophy, the science of sciences in his day (Averroes, 1996, § 3-5).

When it comes to *jihad*, teachers should show how its lexical root signifies “to make an effort.” *Jihad* is not holy war but rather, on a personal level, an effort to combat one’s natural penchants and inclinations. In fact, textual interpretation can show that the “*great jihad*” is the struggle to master oneself and that only the “*small jihad*” refers to war (Abu Zahra, 1962 & Hamidullah, 1968). The pacific spirit of *jihad* properly understood should extend to knowledge of others, and teaching should foster peace and fraternity among peoples of all countries. The educator should insist on the fact that war has been banned in modern international relations, and the Islamic states, being members of the United Nations, uphold the right only to legitimate defense in the case of aggression. An assigned reading of the Charter of the United Nations would show that recourse to war is forbidden.

Finally, in the last years of public schooling, educators should show how Koranic virtues belong to the order of belief, and not to the order of knowledge. The difference is based on the fact that beliefs cannot be proved except through rhetoric; belief rests on faith, not facts. Knowing presupposes true understanding according to the protocols of science. The teacher would reassure the students, though, by insisting on the fact that the existence of God and the immortality of the soul are beliefs that are necessary for the realization of the sovereign good as the goal of the moral life. They are, as Kant said, “*postulates of reason*”, plausible hypotheses, but grounded only in moral duty, which in turn is based on the

autonomy of practical reason, which at the level of action imperatively prescribes what is to be done or not done, notably to act in such a way that we are all free (Kant, 1985, IV & V).

d. Social Relations

Arab educators should approach *social relations according to the principle of freedom*. On this theme, we have one of the rare cases in which classical Islam is perfectly in accord with liberalism. Islam promotes contractual freedom of property, of buying and selling, and of movement; it possesses legal mechanisms that guarantee the security of economic and commercial transactions.

It would be fortunate if public education stressed freedom of enterprise, and showed that social relations (unlike religious duties) are subject to evolution. For example, while a rate of interest was forbidden in the classical age, the requirements of modern life render necessary a recourse to a banking system based on a notion of investment, dividends, and interest.

In summary, we propose *that both worship and dogmas be taught according to tradition, but combined with principles that promote tolerance; that the virtues, despite their religious roots, be taught as public duties under the aegis of the state's authority; and finally, that social relations obey the principle of freedom consecrated by classical Islam and modern liberalism*. We also suggest that teachers *present religion as a matter of faith at the outset, deferring a critical exposition until later years, so as not to disorient young children who need time to form their personal ideas of faith*.

C Reconciling Religion with Human Rights

How can we reconcile the need to teach religion with the fact that society is founded largely on the principles of abstract and secular humanism, or on convention and a social pact freely consented to by free and equal social partners? If liberalism has been adapted to Islam, it is because of the new interpretations of the Koran offered by a variety of Arab reformers.

Among the founders of modern Islam, authors such as the Egyptians R. Rifaat Tahtaoui (1801-1873), Qacem Amin (1863-1908), Mohamed Abduh (1849-1905), Ali Abderrazak (1888-1966), Taha Hussein (died 1973) and the Tunisians Kherredine (1810-1879), Ibn Dhiyf (1803-1877), and Tahar Haddad (died 1935) ought to find a significant place in schoolbooks.²⁰ The work of the Moderns in Islam raises three questions for us that are at the heart of the re-reading of Scripture: religious tolerance (a); secularization (b); and sexual equality (c). These issues should accompany a reform of education in human rights (d).

1. Tolerance

In classical Islam, the world was divided into three realms: that of Islam (the world of *sharia* and justice), that of war (the impious world of anomie), and that of reconciliation (the world of non-aggression). Inside the Islamic world, Islamic law prevailed but the *dhimmis*, those protected by islamic law,²¹ could keep their beliefs and their jurisdiction. They benefited from protection conditional upon payment of a personal poll tax (9: 29).

In the modern age, equality was established in principle between Muslims and non-Muslims: equality before the law, equality with respect to taxes, and equality with respect to military service. This was a major achievement of the Turkish reforms of 1839 (Khatt Sherif) and 1858 (Khatt Humayum) and the Fundamental Pact ('Ahd al-Amen) in Tunisia (1857).

²⁰ Among the contemporaries, one might cite as examples Mohamed Talbi and Abdelmajid Charfi in Tunisia, and Nasr Hamed Abu Zayd and Ashmawy in Egypt, and Filaly-Ansary in Morocco...

²¹ *Dhimmi* means in Arabic "under protection". Protection and autonomy were granted upon the payment of a poll tax by the "people of the Book" (9: 29), i.e. Jews and Christians; however this status was extended by Islamic Law to Sabeens, Samaritans and Zoroastrians who were considered to have a "quasi-Book".

Three principles should be conveyed in teaching: belief is a private matter; prophecy is not a warrant for domination; and compulsion cannot produce religious belief.

There are textual and historical precedents for all of these principles in Islam. The Koranic verses that personalize belief, make it a private matter, are as follows: "O ye who believe! Ye have charge of your own souls. He who erreth cannot injure you if we are rightly guided" (5:105); "Whosoever goeth right, it is only for (the good of) his own [would??] soul that he goeth right, and whosoever erreth, erreth only to its hurt. No laden soul can bear another's load." (17:15). Other verses affirm that the Prophet cannot force people to believe; at the most, he has the duty to warn them: "Remind them, for thou art but a remembrancer, Thou art not at all a warder over them" (88:21-22). Such a constraint arises from the absolute divine will: "If the Lord willed, all who are in the earth would have believed together. Wouldst thou (Muhammad) compel men until they are believers? It is not for any soul to believe save by the permission of Allah" (10:99-101). Still other Koranic verses suggest the limits of coercion in matters of faith: "There is no compulsion in religion" (2:256); regarding those who think otherwise, "reason with them in the better way" (16:125).

2. Secularization

The classical theory of power in Islam was that of the Caliphate also called *imamat* (guidance). It was founded on the idea that the caliph, which etymologically means successor, "deputized for prophetics in the safeguarding of religion and the administration of earthly interests" (Mawerdi, 1982, 5). The Caliph (or Prince) applied the *sharia* but possessed all earthly power. Then, in the 19th century, the question arose of whether power ought to be secularized. Reformers set themselves the task of showing that Islam did not confuse the temporal and the spiritual and that it was able to adapt to the modern age. Tunisians like Ibn Dhiyf and Kherredine did so in a way that today could be criticized, but at the time was very suitable. The former, author of the *Fundamental Pact* (1857), in his *Chronicle of the Kings of Tunis* (1873), classified political regimes into three categories: "republican power", "despotic power", and "power limited by the law". Neither the first nor second corresponds to Islam, which is as much against the power of the masses as against despotism. Only a monarchic power tempered by the law wins the adherence of Ibn Dhiyf (1963, vol. 1, 6-77). Kherredine, prime minister and great reformer, in his *Essays on the Reforms Necessary for Muslim States* (1867) pleads for the need to borrow modern institutions from Westerners. He says, in effect, that borrowing is wisdom (*hikma*). The possible objections are the same as those used today by adversaries of the modernization of education: the opposition between modern institutions and the principle of religious law, the ignorance and incapacity of the masses to assimilate them (Kherredine, 1987, 133 ff). "Any enlightened man," he says, "can see that these objections have no foundation" (1987, 135-6). Reforms are "compatible with the provisions of our sharia, religious law" since the ideas of liberty and justice are "the fundamental basis of our religious Law" (Kherredine, 1987, 88, 93). In support of this proposition, a panoply of proofs is solicited: the *hadith* (sayings of the Prophet), texts from juriconsults (if the world doesn't exist in English than use jurists or ulemas), the historical experience of good caliphs and virtuous princes...

In Egypt, similar work was done by Abduh and refined by Ali Abdherazak. In a series of famous articles published in 1898 and later compiled under the title *Al-Islam, din al-ilm wa al-madaniyya* (*Islam, Religion of Science and Modern Civilization*), Abduh makes a division between faith and politics. Belief in God and in his unity, he says, can only be acquired through "rational proof," which arises from the "natural order" (*al-tabia*). Islam, he thinks, has never known a fusion of the temporal and the spiritual. Islamic Law has conferred upon the Caliph the management of human affairs, nothing more. Power, if you will, is *ab initio* civil. But how can one articulate the relation between power and religion, the affairs of this world and those of the next?

Abduh enunciates a few principles:

- The use of reason to obtain belief; here reason is an instrument (*wassila*) and a proof (*hujja*).
- The primacy of reason over the letter of the Koran. This means that in cases of incompatibility between reason and the tradition recorded by the doctors of the Law (*naql*), the former takes precedence. In addition, whatever the force of reason, it can only discover the Laws of Nature that pre-exist it. As for tradition, it obeys two principles: passive adherence where it is impossible to understand the inscrutable divine will, and interpretation according to well-determined methods that presuppose agreement between the rules of the Arabic language and reasoning.
- The refusal of the *takfir* (accusation of non belief). Abduh enunciates the principle that if proffered speech is liable to lead to unbelief in a hundred possible cases and to be taken in a single instance in a sense compatible with Islam, then one should prefer the single case in question over the hundred inquisitory interpretations.
- The "overturning" (*qalb*) of religious power, which means that Islam "has destroyed" (*hadama*) this type of power for the sake of a direct relation between God and his creatures without an intermediary. The only lawful relations among Muslims are those of counsel, reminding, education, fraternity, and warning. Consequently, according to Abduh, "*the community of believers (Umma) is the holder of power and it may dismiss the Caliph, who is the civil governor in all instances*".
- Tolerance: if Christianity is a religion of tolerance according to St. Matthew's Gospel (5:39-40), Islam equally enjoins magnanimity (*samâaha*), amnesty ('*afwu*), friendship (*mawadda*) with people of other religions and a rejection of excess (*ghuluw*) in religious matters (Abduh, 1978, vol. 3, 243-350).

Abduh's innovative interpretation was radicalized in 1926 by his disciple Ali Abd al-Raziq, who argued that political power is part of social relations and not of dogma. Mohammed was a prophet like Moses and Jesus, and not a political leader; the theory of the caliphate is not Koranic; and finally, the Koran does not prescribe any particular form of government, and so Muslims are free today to choose the system of government that suits the modern age (Abd al-Raziq, [1926], 1994). This thesis would be refined and developed by others (Charfi, 1996, 28; Filaly-Ansary, 1997, 110-148; Charfi, 1998, 157-202).

It is of the highest importance to explain to the young that the *Koran imposes no determined form of political organization; the Caliphate is a human institution that the first Muslims adopted precisely in the absence of clear and irrefutable Koranic indications about the nature of power.* And it is necessary to explain to them that *power in the classical age was authoritarian and that today nothing prevents power from being organized according to democratic norms.*

3. Sexual Equality

In the classical age, inequality between women and men was a normative social fact. Women were considered inferior in physical state and also as "*lacking in reason and religion*". The legal code included a host of discriminatory provisions benefiting men, some of Koranic origin and others customary: a right to polygamy, the man's right to repudiate a marriage unilaterally, a ban on a Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim man, wedding ceremonies performed in the woman's name by her guardian, the primacy of the husband in the home and in practically all matters relating to it, the veiling of women in public.

In the 19th century, Arab reformers began quietly to criticize such discrimination against women. The Egyptian Tahtawi (1801-1873) wrote a large book titled *Al-morshed al-amin li al al-banat wal banin (Guide for the Education of Girls and Boys)* in which he

pleaded, among other things, for the right of girls to receive a basic education (Tahtawi, 1972, vol. 2, 271-767). Thirty years later, Qacem Amin (1863-1908), a spokesman for women's liberation, went farther in two books, *Al-mara'a al-jadida* (*The New Woman*) and *Tahrir al-maraa* (*Liberation of Women*), recognizing a woman's right to unveil herself and to go to work (Amin, 1976).

A decisive stage was reached by the Tunisian Tahar al-Haddad (died 1935), whose book *Imraatuna fi al-sharia wa al-mujtama'* (*Our Women, Legislation and Society*, 1930) went farthest in the direction of emancipating women. Haddad argued not only for the liberation of women (Haddad, [1930], 1978, 149-240) but also for their legal promotion (Haddad, 1978, 21-147). On the social level, he defended an education system that was general, practical, moral, emotional and physical, as well as the right to work and the suppression of the veil. He vigorously criticized premature marriage of young girls and unions arranged by parents, and the general masculine domination that he imputed to ignorance, to under-development, and to custom. On the legal level, and based on an audacious interpretation of Koranic verses, he grounded the conjugal tie upon the couple's free choice (and not on parental guidance) based on love (not the sexual instinct). He attacked the unilateral right of the husband to repudiate his wife, which he proposed to correct by legal divorce. Finally, he attacked the taboo of polygamy by pointing to the Koranic verse saying that a man can never be equitable among his four legal wives (4:129). Based on this statement in the Koran, the first leader of the independent state of Tunisia, Bourguiba (1903-1999), promulgated in 1956 the code of personal status, which criminalized polygamy, fixed a minimum age for marriage, instituted free consent in marriage and divorce, abolished repudiation and replaced it with equal right to legal divorce.

With the exception of Turkey and Tunisia, almost all Arab and Islamic countries remain attached to the application of traditional norms. This includes Egypt, despite the intellectual precedents that we have noted. On this matter as many others, the intellectual bases and the work of interpretation do in fact exist for a moral reform of Islamic society—only the political will is lacking.

If the latter were manifested and the theoretical support made available, it could be translated into the school by providing obligatory schooling of girls and boys mixed together in classrooms, and also by teaching equality of the sexes.

4. Education in Human Rights

One of the school's duties is to prepare children to integrate into society through education for citizenship according to the norms of the modern, liberal, and secular state. From this perspective, civic education is an essential subject that should be made completely independent of religious education.

Student should be made familiar with the rules of how a modern state functions: local and regional administration, separation of powers, an independent judicial system, relations between executive and legislative branches, and the principles and voting methods of elections. Students should also be taught the values on which democratic states are founded: the fundamental principle of equality and non-discrimination among human beings and in particular between men and women, the principal individual and collective freedoms, the rights and duties of a citizen. Finally, civic education should stress the idea of historicity, that is to say, the evolution of ideas and institutions across different historical eras and in different regions of the world.

Thus the pupil would discover that the only legitimacy worthy of the name is democratic and that the history of humanity is, in a certain manner and as a whole, the history of an evolution from pre-modern forms (primitive, authoritarian, theocratic, etc.) to democracy: in other words, the shift from an absolute power that asserts its ownership of truth to a power that leaves the absolute to each person's conscience and governs in realms of

the relative where contestation is permitted, pluralism is practicable, and pacific alternance is possible.

And so humanity arrived (on 10 December 1948) at the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man, a text that should be read, explicated, and commented upon in all schools. This was the case in the reform of education that took place in Tunisia where each year, on this date, schoolteachers explain to students the principles and value of this founding text.

This "direct" teaching of the principles of democracy and human rights should be accompanied by the "indirect" teaching of these principles. It is fundamental that the choice of texts for all subjects in the humanities be oriented in this direction-- since no choice in any subject matter can pretend to innocence. The choice of written and visual materials to illustrate books designed for children in primary schools is important. For example, the illustration through images and boys and girls playing together or of the father and mother performing the same tasks, both noble and banal, habituates students to the idea of women's emancipation and sexual equality. By contrast, the image of an educated and active father and of an ignorant mother confined to housework normalizes a masculine, patriarchal, and misogynistic society.

This pedagogy about equality of the sexes is necessary not only in the curriculum and textbooks: life inside the teaching establishment should be based on coeducation. In the Arab world these days most schools are single sex. It is imperative to put an end to this segregation so as to suppress any inferiority or superiority complex by reason of sex and in order to foster healthy and natural relations between the girls and boys of today, the women and men of tomorrow.

But all this does not mean that the teaching establishment should become ideological. The liberal school cannot permit this. Quite the contrary, in the promotion of the ideas of liberty, equality, democracy, and human rights, the school should present all theories, all doctrines, in harmony with the principle of pluralism that characterizes liberalism. This diversity will teach the young to recognize themselves in some ideas and to relativize others; it will help them to acquire the critical spirit and will foster in each the formation of his or her own personality.

D Conditions for the Application of Reform

An ambitious reform such as the one advocated here presupposes that certain conditions of effectiveness will be filled. There are three conditions that we regard as especially important: the proper teaching of modern science; the proper training of teachers, and promoting a broader culture of critical pluralism.

Although the matter does not seem to relate directly to religion and human rights, the teaching of science matters a great deal in Islamic countries because most **Islamists** boast of having scientific training, to the point that they are nicknamed "PhDs with beards". Now, everything depends on how of the sciences are taught. A good reform of the education system should aim to overhaul not only the humanities but also change methods of teaching the "exact sciences" so that the young truly understand the nature of physical, chemical, and biological phenomena. Theories that are often considered taboo, such as the Big Bang or human evolution, should be broached and explained.

A "school of knowledge" is also a "school of criticism" in which the student will discover that scholars have progressed by trial and error, by posing hypotheses and having doubts, and that scientific truths are often provisional and need to be completed or rectified. In short, the history of scientific truth is strewn with errors and challenges, which does not mean one should contest or reject the possibility of scientific truth, as do certain skeptics.

In general, narrow specialization should be avoided: even if he has learned to solve mathematical equations or use a computer, the Arab scientist today usually has only a summary general culture at best. Only a common syllabus that is as extensive and little differentiated as possible can avoid the premature specialization that results in training citizens who are "expert" in the sciences and "ignorant" in the humanities. Specialization in secondary schools should take place only two years before the baccalaureate, in order to allow engineers, doctors, and researchers to acquire an appropriate understanding of a general culture that is common to all.

In addition, reform can only succeed if the teachers fully participate in it. In France since the end of the 19th century, teachers have been the "Republic's hussars". Because of circumstances of pure historical chance, the Third Republic was installed in 1875 only provisionally, since the population still supported the monarchy. Thanks to the schools, though, in the space of a generation the republican spirit replaced the monarchist spirit among the population. Thanks to the cohesion among the body of teachers and their involvement in a democratic school that was secularized and open to all, the public school went hand-in-hand with universal suffrage (Ozouf, J. & Ozouf, M, 1992; Ozouf, J. 1993). Luc Ferry, the current minister of national education in France, has stated that "*there is no democracy except through the school, in other words, democracy grows out of a pedagogy that is democratic.*" (Ferry, Luc & Renaut, Alain, 1985, vol. 3, 170).

In Arab and Islamic countries, teachers lack uniform training: some have a traditional Muslim training and others a modern Western education; some are monolingual and others bilingual; some have been trained at home, others abroad. As a result, some teachers favor reforms and others do not. Experience shows that the viewpoint supported by the authorities will orient the schools, which means that radical reform will not succeed unless the teachers are aware that an educational policy corresponds to the state's clearly expressed will, especially at the top. Hence the imperative need for states to opt publicly for a policy of modernization through the classroom and for them to apply it with the highest vigilance, the greatest vigor, and without the least hesitation.

Finally, while a reform of education policy is important for all Arab and Islamic countries, so is a reform of the broader culture. It is up to intellectuals and artists to do this. Unfortunately, since Arab states dominate the media, government officials also have to assume some responsibility. In many Arab countries, Arabic and Islamic media are only deepening the "idealization and sacralization" of tradition instead of promoting critical pluralism. Even the private television networks (Al-Jazira, ANN) that were welcomed in the beginning have tended to idealize Islamic tradition. We now know that the policy of promoting Islam in order to cut the ground from under the feet of **Islamists** has in fact always backfired and served the latter. Cultural policy should be oriented toward wholly free creation, widespread support for intellectuals and artists, and ever greater openness toward universal culture.

III. THE EXPERIENCE OF REFORM OF CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN TUNISIA (1989-1994)

The reform of the educational system in Tunisia introduced by the law of 28 July 1991 was conceived in the spirit we have just sketched, both in its content and in its practical application. The Tunisian case thus merits careful study.

For didactic reasons, we will first offer a history of reform efforts in Tunisia since the 19th century.

A THE FIRST REFORMS

At the beginning of the 19th century, Tunisia was entering its fourth century of economic and social stagnation. As European nations began to modernize, a new awareness arose of the need to reform Tunisian society. The first reforms were initiated under the reign of the two monarchs Ahmed Bey (1837-1855) and Mohamed Sadok Bey (1859-1882) (Brown, 1974).

In 1840 Bey founded Bardo, a military academy on the Western model, that taught cadets foreign languages and the exact sciences. He built a cannon and gunpowder foundry. And new factories appeared: one to manufacture cloth, another to produce leather, a mill for flour powered by a steam engine, and a refinery for oil (1844-45). A national bank was created in 1847, one of the first in the Arab world. In conjunction with these initiatives, a rationalization of taxation took place, notably with the institution of direct taxes, a lessening in export taxes, the suppression of taxes on certain products (oil, arable land), and certain others collected by regional tax collectors (governors, sheikhs). The Waqfs (religious endowments) were centralized in 1874.

On the legal and political plane, Courts were reorganized and a new penal code implemented. Slavery was abolished between 1842 and 1846. The *'Ahd al-aman*, a sort of declaration of the rights inspired by the Turkish Tanzimat (1839 and 1853), was decreed in 1857; this was followed by a new constitution that limited the power of the monarchy for the first time in the Arab world (1861, suspended in 1864).

These reforms corresponded to the spirit of the times. In particular, the penal code was remarkably modern. For example, article 203 enumerated the range of punishments: the death penalty, forced labor, prison, banishment, and fines—no more corporal punishment. Article 204 stated: "*It is forbidden to pronounce punishments other than those permitted in the preceding article and that could involve physical suffering.*" Apostasy, not covered in the code, was therefore not punishable either. Article 281 legalized the sale of alcoholic beverages, which was to be sanctioned only if they were sold outside specially authorized points of sale. A Prud'homme tribunal charged with arbitrating work conflicts was created (1877). As in Turkey, two educated modernists and men of state played a crucial role in this period, Prime Minister Kehrredine (1810-1877) and Ahmed Ben Dhiab (1803-1877) (Van Krieken, 1976).

Finally, in the realm of culture, a renaissance occurred, notably with the birth in 1860 of an official press and the first newspaper, *Al raïd-attûnisi* (**Tunisian Guide**). Even more important was the creation in 1875 of Sadiki, a new secondary school. Offering a modern curriculum of classes in the exact sciences, modern languages, and world history, the *lycee* in the years that followed would produce many of the nation's political and cultural leaders. (Sraïb, n.d.).

While Sadiki attracted many of Tunisia's best and brightest, religious teaching remained unchanged. The country had 1250 *meddebs* (traditional teachers) in *koutiebs* (private Koranic schools) where only boys were taught the alphabet, elements of Arab grammar, and the Koran. No modern university existed yet. The traditional Islamic university, the Zeitouna, consisted of some 30 to 40 *cheikhs*, religious educators who dispensed both secondary and higher education to nearly a thousand students a year at the end of the 19th century. But the level of absenteeism was high and teaching non-obligatory, so that barely three hundred students a year graduated finished by passing the examination (Ben Achour, 1991, 105-110). Once they had their diplomas, the graduates of Zeitouna tended to become judges in religious courts, notaries, or *imams* in mosques.

The Zeitouna curriculum did not include the exact sciences, mathematics or engineering. It revolved instead around the study of Islam as a religion, and the study of history and law in conformity with traditional interpretations. Teachers expected students to memorize facts and ideas without rational discussion of their premises. Rationalist Muslim

theologians like the *mutazilites*, enlightened Arab philosophers like Averroes, and Arab historians of world civilisation like Ibn Khaldun were mentioned only to be criticized for their heresies. The pre-Islamic history of Tunisia was ignored, as was the wider history of the world. Except for questions of personal status (marriage, divorce and inheritance) that related to the expertise of future judges in religious courts, Zeitounian education was disconnected from time and space, and scarcely corresponded either to the requirements of modern times or to the evolution of moral standards.

Efforts to reform the traditional religious curriculum invariably failed, because such efforts were invariably opposed by the *ulemas*. At the same time, the popularity of the new Sadiki college produced an elite that was increasingly polarized. On the one hand there was a growing number of political and intellectual leaders with liberal values and a nationalist political orientation; on the other hand there remained a substantial number of jurists and clerics who upheld a traditional – and illiberal – understanding of Islam and disdained any direct involvement in politics.

The modernizers directed the development of the nation, successively creating the “Young Tunisians” movement (1911), then the Destour party (**Constitution**, 1920), and finally the Neo-Destour party (1934), which demanded and led the way to independence. The traditionalists meanwhile controlled the magistracy, and accused the modernizers of Francophony and of idolizing the infidels.

The history of Tunisian society in the final decades before independence may thus be schematically described as a struggle between an urban, secular, modern, and politically active elite (the Sadikians) and a traditionalist, religious and conservative elite that was politically incapable of assuming a constructive leadership role (the Zeitounians).

B INDEPENDENCE

Once independence was achieved in 1956, the leaders of the national movement set about trying to modernize the country. We know that the outcome of any modernization depends on the key agents who lead the process of change (Huntington, 1968). [??? MISSING REFERENCE] In Tunisia, the leaders were secularized intellectuals and civil servants, unlike the scriptural elite in Morocco and the revolutionary elite in Algeria (Henry-Moore, 1970).

After independence, the Sadikians assumed responsibility for foreign affairs, the army, the police, the national guard, and also for agriculture, industry, public works, communications, and public health. Lacking political and technical competence, the Zeitounians were relegated to subsidiary functions. Marginalized, they became restive. In response, the new government hired Zeitounians in large numbers to staff courts and schools. The judges and teachers were expected to ratify the reforms of the modernizers; in fact, they became a chronic source of opposition to such reforms.

In the first months of independence, the government instituted a new legal code. It criminalized polygamy, instituted civil marriage, fixed a minimum age for marriage, legalized adoption, sanctioned divorce and outlawed spousal repudiation. Judges with a traditional education were asked to apply this new code. They did so – but whenever there was room for interpretation, they applied traditional Muslim norms. As a result, family law in Tunisia to this day suffers from a contradiction between a modern legal code and its traditional interpretation by judges trained in the traditional way. Matters are further complicated by the growing power in lower courts of judges trained in secular law faculties.

After independence, education became obligatory, free and coeducational for both sexes from the age of six. Public education generally followed the example of the Sadiki curriculum. Arabic was taught alongside French in primary school, and English in secondary schools. Classes in the exact sciences were introduced. The various humanities curricula

(philosophy, history, geography, civics and religious studies) were fixed according to modern standards. Yet at the same time, Zeitounian graduates were recruited to teach Islam, Arab history, and the Arabic language. As a result, schooling in Tunisia to this day suffers from a chronic tension between the modern parts of the curriculum, which are taught by secularists, and the more traditional components of education, which are generally taught by religiously-trained teachers in as traditional a spirit as possible.

C CRISIS AND REACTION

The end of the 1960s witnessed instability in the education sector. This followed a crisis in Tunisia's political life. The reasons for the turmoil cannot be fully recounted here, but they included the institutionalization of a single party (1963), the cult of personality around the head of state, Bourguiba, and the authoritarian imposition of socialism (1963) (Camau, 1978).

The secular and progressive intelligentsia organized itself into a movement called "Perspectives" after the title of its clandestine paper published between 1962 and 1968, before a portion of its leadership became taken with ideas of the extreme Left and adhered to the international Maoism then in vogue in Europe. In response, the regime committed a double error. The political mistake was that it resorted to harsh measures to rebuff the demand for the democratization of political life (arrests, mass trials, heavy prison sentences, torture). The second mistake was cultural: in order to counterbalance the vogue for far Leftist ideas among the young, a decision was taken at the highest level to "re-Islamicize" education.

The **Islamists** in the 1970s were a small group of traditionalists who had already been socialized in an Islamicized public school but were sufficiently opportunistic to avoid attacking the regime head-on by contesting the cult of personality or by challenging the single party and economic policies. At the moment when democratic opposition was repressed, starting in 1972, the Islamicists and their associates became authorized to spread their ideas in their own newspapers such as *Al-Maarifa* (knowledge), *Jawhar al-Islam* (essence of Islam) and *Al-Mujtama* (society). Gradually, a tacit alliance (sometimes explicit) was forged between the traditionalists and the men in power: pan-Arabists, reactionaries, and clumsy politicians. The social gamble was to make Tunisia into a politically authoritarian country in their hands, and a culturally conservative country in the hands of the **Islamists**.

The latter infiltrated the structures of public education. By successive strokes, they radicalized still more the **Islamization** of the school curriculum. In return, the **Islamized** school had a "multiplying" effect on the recruitment of militants. Finally, the Islamicists, from a simple Association for the Safeguarding of the Koran in 1971, enthusiastic about the Iranian revolution they had welcomed, were transformed into a political party, the Islamic Tendency Movement in 1979.

Between 1970 and 1975, several Islamizing reforms affected the education system. First, there was an impromptu decision at the beginning of the 1970s to **teach in Arabic** the subjects of philosophy and history, which until then had been taught in French. No doubt such a decision was legitimate, but taken in haste and politically motivated to counter the Marxist Left. It meant that all the foreign visiting professors were fired; thus, bilingual teachers with modern training were marginalized or quit teaching because they were required to teach their courses in Arabic within the space of a few weeks. They were replaced by less qualified teachers (with secondary school diplomas or the *bac* plus one year), who were either former Zeitounians or graduates of universities in Egypt, Iraq and Syria. Both of these groups were sympathetic to pan-Arab and Islamicist ideologies.

These changes would have consequences for the respective status of philosophy, civic education, and religious education--three separate disciplines in Tunisia. Until 1970,

philosophy was a principal subject and was taught in French alongside Islamic philosophy. After 1970, Islamic philosophy absorbed general philosophy and took on aspects of an anti-modern and anti-liberal medieval theology. The religious education that had been marginalized was now valued again. For political reasons—to mobilize the traditionalists against the liberals on the eve of a congress of the single party, Monastir II in 1974--the High Council of National Education gathered urgently to decide on doubling classroom time for Islamic education. Teachers of religious education were also charged with providing courses in civic education, although it was a subject totally foreign to their specialty—and this would in turn augment their influence over the youth. The schedule of religious education was *de facto* tripled.

Finally, the content of the curriculum was sharply revised. Language textbooks used religious examples to illustrate grammatical rules. In the teaching of philosophy, non-Muslim philosophers were flatly ignored or else caricatured in a sentence, and dismissed as miscreants (e.g. Bertrand Russell) or Zionists (Jean-Paul Sartre). Students were even instructed to avoid reading their books.²²

The two rival systems of communism and capitalism were criticized in favor of the “best economic and social system,” namely Islam. Muslim philosophers who were known as universalist and enlightened were marginalized in favor of the theosophical school of Ghazali (died 1111), who had violently criticized “pure” philosophers such as Farabi (872-950) and Averroes (1126-1198). In the teaching of French and English, the reading of classics by Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, and Locke disappeared in favor of an instrumental approach to language, according to which a foreign language is simply a tool for mastering the sciences. The discipline of civic education, emptied of its substance, was transformed into a second course of religious education, its content purged of all reference to human rights, the rule of law, or democracy.

Consequently, young Tunisians schooled in this period scarcely knew about Hannibal, were ignorant of the works and even existence of the Tunisian Saint Augustine, and considered as foreign any history prior to the Islamic conquest. The latter was presented in a triumphalist and emotional manner to the point that, for example, the glorious resistance of the Berber leader Kahena and his troops to the Arab invasion were, if not kept quiet, then at least presented in an almost shameful manner. For the later period, the history of Tunisia itself was swallowed up in that of the Islamic empire. The whole reform movement of the 19th century was ignored.

In the teaching of values, the revival of traditionalism in the curriculum proved even more catastrophic. Corporal punishments made a reappearance in textbooks that went so far as to declare that anyone who denies one of the pillars of Islam, the obligation to say prayers, is an apostate.²³ The equality between the sexes instituted by the legal code was ignored, and children were taught that the husband has the right to repudiate his spouse without legal divorce, and that he may if necessary administer a punishment to her,²⁴ in defiance of the law that penally sanctions the perpetrator of such an infraction. The republic was unfavorably compared with caliphate. Democracy was criticized as a Western doctrine foreign to Arab

²² The whole Islamic education book, 6th year of secondary, published in 1988.

²³ Op. cit., p. 170

²⁴ Book of Islamic Education, 4th year of secondary, 1988 ed.

civilization²⁵ and a form of government hostile to Islamic religion.²⁶ In international relations, the duty of jihad was taught alongside the right to reduce prisoners of war to slavery.²⁷

In short, the schools of Tunisia functioned between 1970 and 1989 as a breeding ground for radical **Islamists**.

D REFORM (1989-1994)²⁸

On 1 October 1989, the Minister of National Education, Mohamed Charfi, presented the outlines of a frankly modernizing reform of education. The **Islamists** accused the minister of wanting to “dry up the springs” of **Islamism**. A fierce public debate ensued – though ultimately the reformers prevailed.

The reform as a whole was meant to harmonize the relation between the state, society, and education. It divided education into two cycles: the first, basic, lasting nine years, and the second lasting four. It instituted a common core curriculum lasting two years, in hopes of avoiding a polarization of graduates, premature specialization, and the production of “PhDs with beards,” scientists competent in research but reactionaries on a cultural level.

An education law of 29 July 1991 ratified the new plan. In the remainder of this paper, we will discuss three key aspects of the reform, and how it has changed the teaching of identity, modernity, and citizenship.

1. Identity

The first article of the education law affirmed the goal of “consolidating awareness of the Tunisian national identity and of belonging to Maghreb, Arabic, and Islamic civilization”. This is not a denial of the cosmopolitan spirit. No educational system can ignore the insertion of the young into a natural community. But the nature of this community is hardly self-evident. Thus, the reform developed knowledge of the first thousand years of Tunisian history, especially the Carthaginian and Roman heritage (Hannibal, St. Augustine, **Apuleius**). A required visit to the National Museum was organized to familiarize students with the idea that the nation is rooted in several civilizations.

In matters of religion and law, the reform sought to prepare students “for a life that leaves no place for any form of discrimination or segregation based on sex, social origin, race, or religion” (art.1, al. 3). It aimed to inculcate instead “values of tolerance and moderation” (art. 1., al. 6). At the same time, both metaphysical questions (the existence of God, prophecy) and **worship or religious duties** (the five pillars of Islam) were to be taught in classical fashion, “**adapted**” to the subject of religious education in the first years of primary school.

In later years, students were to be introduced to the idea of religious toleration. Thus, lesson 3-4 of the 7th year basic text for religious education is exemplary, stresses the common values of the monotheistic religions. A table in the text compares the injunctions of the Koran with the Ten Commandments, and a genealogical tree illustrates the legend of the kinship between Moses, Jesus and Muhammed through their common ancestor, Abraham—and hence

²⁵ Book of Islamic Education, 5th year of secondary, 1988 ed., p. 39. Previous editions contained the same developments on different pages.

²⁶ Op. cit., p. 73.

²⁷ Op. cit., p. 124-139.

²⁸ See Jonathan Randall, “Tunisia Attuned Education to Islam and to Democracy,” *The Washington Post*, 7 September 1995.

the common origin of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (see appendix 1). [??Where is this Appendix?] Students also become aware of the spirit of reform that has animated Islam in Tunisia and elsewhere in the Arab world since the 19th century.

Finally, both Muslim and Western modernists are part of the civics curriculum. Their approaches are explained to allow students to reconcile the writers' ideals and their own reality. For example the textbook of the 8th year is devoted to religious thought. Divided into four parts, the first deals with "foundations of religious thought" in their historicity. The second treats "renewal and reform" through the writings of contemporary reformers (the Egyptians R.R. Tahtawi and M. Abduh, the Yemenite A.b.A. Shoukani, the Syrian Kawakbi, the Moroccans A. Fassi and M.A. Lahbabi, the Algerian A. Ben Badis, the Tunisians Kherredine, A. Ibn Dhihaf, General Hussein, T. Ben Achour....). The third part deals with "Islam and Christianity" through the seminal text by Abduh, which we have mentioned as criticizing religious fanaticism (Abduh, 1978). And the fourth part explicates some Koranic rules based on verses: speak with moderation, verify sources of information, search for peace, man is a social being by nature, faith is conviction and rational examination and action. Currently, of 135 authors studied in religious education, 111 are contemporary, 6 date from the 19th century, and 28 are ancient.²⁹ The timetable of religious education is 1.5 hours per week, much less than in other Arab countries (see Part II).

In addition, the theological university of Zeitouna has been reformed. A 1995 decree fixed its goal as realizing a balance between belonging to Islamic civilization and the requirements of life (arts. 1-4). Its courses have been revised so that the future theologian also masters "the different branches of modern knowledge that allow him to accede directly to the products of the universal spirit" (art. 4).

2. Modernity

The education law of 29 July, 1991, balances the teaching about belonging to specific communities with an "openness to modernity and to human civilization" (art. 1). The new curriculum also insured there would be no more dissociation of scientific training from the broadening of minds. It insisted on the notion of parity: students should be equally educated "in the sciences" and "in moral, cognitive, affective, and practical" matters. (art. 8). Specialization was to be delayed. Along with Arabic, the official language (art. 4), the student was required to learn French starting in the third primary year (for 9 years), French and English in the 8th year of the same school, and had an option to take a third language (German, Spanish and Italian).

Openness to universal civilization presupposes a knowledge of world history, geography, and philosophy. The curriculum re-established the traditional balance in the study of philosophy, dividing it into themes as follows: what philosophy is, the body, language, consciousness and unconsciousness, instincts and institutions, visions of the world. This curriculum was integrated with the science and math baccalaureate, where stress was put on scientific rationality and the social sciences. Each philosophical theme was to be illustrated by the main schools of philosophy from Greece to the modern day. For example, under the heading of instincts and institutions, there is one text of Islamic thought (from the sociologist Ibn Khaldûn) out of 19 selections, and under 'visions of the world', 3 texts out of 28 (Ghazali, Farabi and the writer Abdelkebir Khatibi).

3. Citizenship

²⁹ As demonstrated in a thesis defended by Michel Guillaud at the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies Yes in Rome in 1995, dealing with religious education in Tunisia.

A self that is simultaneously situated and open-minded should be cosmopolitan in the Kantian sense of the word. Here the reform aimed to foster an interest in political and human rights. The teaching of civics was dissociated from religious education (of which it had been part) and given autonomy in the faculty of letters and social sciences, in hopes of encouraging some students to become teachers of civics themselves. The new curriculum included the following elements: administration, separation of powers, elections, equality and non-discrimination between sexes and peoples, individual and collective freedoms, rights and duties of citizenship including fiscal ones, the individual, civil society, popular sovereignty, modern political regimes, the history of political regimes, etc. The intention is clear: to show that history is a gradual evolution from theocracy to democracy and from authoritarianism to pluralism.

.....

CONCLUSION

The Tunisian example proves that a constructive reform of education is possible in the Arab world, at least under the right circumstances.

In Tunisia in 1989, reform was supported by the state at the highest level, and also supported by a majority of the population. The reforms were implemented only after wide consultation among relevant stakeholders. Its application was administered by a broadly-constituted commission, itself divided into commissions grouping together the principal partners. The result was impressive: more than 200 textbooks published, and a 1,200 page decree defining the curricula subject by subject for each of the 13 years of education (9 basic and 4 secondary), dated 29 march 1993.

The reform was to be evaluated regularly, and this job was given to the Institute of Educational Sciences, a body entrusted with ethical oversight and given financial autonomy. The first full assessment took place in June 2002, when students who had entered the school system in 1989, the date of the reform, would be graduating and entering university. But it is too early to make a definitive assessment.

In any case, in years to come it will be practically impossible to modify the content of the reform or to betray its spirit, without this leading to a major political and cultural crisis in Tunisia.

Of course, since 1994 (when Charfi resigned as Minister), successive education ministers have each tried to roll back aspects of the reform, but without succeeding.

A new education law was adopted in 2002, but its goals were purely formal and politic. What is essential in the reforms--aspects relating to philosophy, civic and religious education--has been preserved.

On the whole, one can affirm that Tunisia presents a model of how to school young Arabs in a Muslim culture that is simultaneously modern and cosmopolitan.

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Education for All, but for What?

(A crude draft)

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Preamble

The world has changed. However, the change in education is hardly detectable. This paper purports to discuss the challenge of the societal change on education, and how education could respond to such a challenge.

The changes in the economy and the society have taken place in a pace faster than one could have imagined, yet the changes are fundamental. People now have recognized the overhauling change due to the industrial revolution that was brought about by the invention of the steam engine in the 19th Century. There was then the emergence of mass production and large factories that entailed division of labor woven by production lines, layers of administration and divided departments, and with them the necessity of strict rules and regulations, so that massive laborers could yield assembled products. As will be discussed below, such characteristics of an industrial society is fading away, and at a speed much faster than when that society took shape. The change, which is now often referred to as a change from an industrial society to a knowledge society, takes place in a matter of years, as compared with the industrial society that took many decades to materialize.

However, there is no visible change in education that corresponds to such a dramatic societal change. It is commonly understood that the present school system (as different from small independent schools) was formally established in the mid-nineteenth Century. Although group learning has been a long tradition in many ancient civilizations², schools as a social system have only a history of less than 200 years. It is arguable that the school system we are having mirrors mass manufacturing in an industrial society, and we will discuss that further, and hence it corresponds to the structure and ideology that represent a certain period of time in human history. If such an argument is valid, then, it is justifiable to similarly argue that such a school system will also fade away with the decline of the industrial mode of production and lives.

We have to admit, nevertheless, that such an argument is yet to gain sympathy from educators in general. The inevitable fundamental change in education is recognized only by a few, and is still not so much on the policy agenda in education. The purpose of this paper is to revisit the nature and objectives of our education systems, which are one of the most significant social institutions, vis-à-vis changes in the society.

It is perhaps immediately obvious from the above discussion that the challenges to education cannot always be understood from within education. Instead, this paper tries to look at what is there external to education, and to ask fundamental questions about what education should be vis-à-vis a society which has undergone fundamental changes. Among others, the paper has chosen to

² Confucius had more than 3,000 individual students, and that was over 2,000 years ago.

examine changes in the workplace and to see how expectations on education have been changed in recent years. Apart from expectations, this paper will also look at the organization of activities in education, to understand how such an organization also mirrors the manufacturing mode of production, and to explore how such an organization would further evolve.

There have to be two disclaimers at this beginning of the paper. First, by looking at the workplace expectations first, we would immediately attract criticisms that we try to bend education in order to fit economic needs or employer expectations. This is a valid concern. However, the paper will inevitably address the issue about the autonomy of education, about its relations with the larger society, and how such relations would further evolve because of the change in the fundamental structure of the society. We will not abide by the assumption, nonetheless, that consideration of workplace demands is not necessarily a reflection of submission to the bourgeoisie. Such an assumption could be held valid in an industrial society.

Second, this is basically a descriptive paper, trying to understand our education vis-à-vis the changed environments by way of analyses. However, it also naturally leads to some normative elements where more obvious directions of further development will be explored.

Posing the Questions

"Education for All" has been on many governments' agenda for many years. The Compulsory Education Act (?) in UK was enacted in 1944, one of the earliest to apply state invention in order to put every child into a school. In US, Europe, Despite occasional issues of truancy, the developed world rather easily passed the quantitative expansion target. The battles there have been how to make students learn, and learn effectively.

The wave for universal education hit the developing world after the Second World War, when human capital theories prevailed, and education was seen as the gateway to national development. International endeavor started in 1961 in the meeting in Addis Ababa, where the African nations envisioned compulsory 9-year education in 20 years' time. This was followed by similar endeavors in Asia, at Karachi 196X and Latin America, at Lima 196X.

Thereafter, there have been continuous efforts to sustain the vision of Education for All. People began to become rather impatient and pessimistic in the 1980s, until the highlighted in the Joim Tian conference in 1990, which has sparkled another tide of attention to universal basic education, this time perhaps with more caution, but obviously with the benefit of hindsight and experience. Unlike the developed world, the struggle among developing countries is very much one of quantity, of how to put children into school places, and how to

build schools to house those places. They have to battle against limitations in resources because of competing priorities. They have also to battle with the population which often develops faster than the education system.

After all, the vision of universal basic education, both in quantity and quality, has gone unchallenged in the five or six decades. However, a fundamental question has seldom been asked: *What do we do in basic education? And, what for?*

The origin and rationale for making basic education compulsory is still rather mysterious (Tyack, Boli,). Although no one would dispute that education for all is a good thing, few could explain why it should be compulsory. Many scholars have tried to probe into the arguments for compulsory education, but there are only few of such. Nonetheless, compulsory education has become a benchmark in the international community. It is extremely difficult for a nation to escape that benchmark. Compulsory education has also been used by many national governments for internal legitimacy. Compared with other promises such as economic growth or improvement in welfare, compulsory education is a relatively easier goal to achieve. Compulsory education is also a proxy for realizing human capital investments. It is not unusual in the international literature to argue that a country is not investing enough in its human resources if it has a low enrolment ratio in basic education.

However, it would be using to ask some fundamental questions. These question largely remain unanswered, or not even raised. The purpose of this report is exactly to explore the possible answers to these questions.

- (a) In many countries, the "last ditches" of EFA have proved extremely difficult, for example in pockets of minority communities. Is it a matter of effort or resources, or is it a matter of relevance?

The Massai. [Story in box. The relevance of compulsory education to the nomadic Massai.]

The Miao girls. [Story in box. The relevance of compulsory education to girls in Miao, a Chinese minority, where embroidery is a social currency.]

- (b) In many other countries, EFA has been basically achieved with huge effort. Has it been evident that the population has learnt what is wanted and what is needed?

- i) Has the population learnt what is expected in the workplace?
- ii) Has the population been able to catch up with changed expectations?

(c) In cases of inadequacy, is it a matter of quality deficiency or is it a matter of inappropriate learning goals? In other words, should we be doing more and better of what we are doing, or should we be doing something different?

The Changed Workforce

World statistics has clearly pointed to a spectacular growth of the service sector in the economies in almost every part of the world (World Bank). The majority of countries have seen the economic output of the service sector taking over the output from the manufacturing sector. The following table is a demonstration of such a trend (to be updated to 2002 data):

Table 1: Structure of Economic Output (%): Selected Economies³

Economies	Agricultural		Industrial		Service	
	1980	1998	1980	1998	1980	1998
OECD						
United States	3	2	33	26	64	72
Japan	4	2	42	37	54	61
U K	2	2	43	31	55	67
France	4	2	34	26	62	72
Netherlands	3	3	32	27	64	70
Norway	4	2	35	32	61	66
Australia	5	3	36	26	58	71
Latin America						
Argentina	6	6	41	29	52	66
Chile	7	7	37	30	55	62
Columbia	22	13	26	25	51	61
Paraguay	29	25	27	26	44	49
Peru	10	7	42	37	48	56
Asia						
India	38	29	26	25	36	46
China	30	18	49	49	21	33
Hong Kong	1	0	32	15	67	85
Malaysia	22	13	38	44	40	43

³ Source: World Bank, *World Development Report 2000*, Table 4.2.

Singapore	1	0	38	35	61	65
Korea	15	5	40	43	45	52
Thailand	23	11	29	41	48	48
Philippines	25	19	39	32	36	49
Bangladesh	38	22	24	28	38	50
Pakistan	30	26	25	25	46	49
Africa						
South Africa	6	4	48	32	46	64
Sierra Leone	33	50	21	21	47	29
Morocco	18	17	31	32	51	51
Nigeria	21	32	46	41	34	27
Kenya	33	26	21	16	47	58

In many countries, almost the majority, the service sector is producing an output that is greater than that from the manufacturing sector. This is very different from the situation some twenty years ago. There is a general decline in the output of the manufacturing sector.

If we look into the manpower dimension, there is a corresponding growth in the service sector, although such a growth is slower than the growth in the economic output, and there is obvious gender disparity between the male and the females: more females are employed in the service sector. (Table to be updated to 2000 data)

Table 2: Service-workers as % of total workforce, by gender (Average 1992-97)⁴

Economies	Agriculture		Industrial		Service	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
OECD						
US	4	2	34	13	63	85
Japan	5	6	39	24	55	69
UK	3	1	38	13	59	86
France	6	4	37	15	57	81
Netherlands	4	3	32	10	62	85
Sweden	4	2	39	12	57	87
Norway	7	3	35	10	59	87

⁴ Source: World Bank, *World Development Report 2000*, Table 2.4.

Australia	6	4	31	11	63	85
Latin America						
Argentina	2	0	33	12	65	88
Chile	19	4	34	14	47	81
Columbia	1	0	32	21	66	76
Paraguay	6	1	37	13	57	87
Peru	10	5	27	12	63	83
Asia						
India*	59	74	17	15	24	11
China*	69	76	17	13	14	11
Hong Kong	0	0	31	15	69	85
Singapore	0	0	34	25	66	75
Korea	10	13	38	21	52	66
Thailand	49	52	22	17	29	32
Philippines	48	28	19	13	33	59
Bangladesh	54	78	11	8	34	11
Pakistan	44	67	20	11	36	22
Africa						
Sierra Leone*	60	81	22	4	18	16
Morocco	4	3	33	46	63	51
Nigeria*	43	44	9	3	49	53
Kenya	19	20	23	9	58	71

* Average of 1990-1997

The implications for education are tremendous. In brief, there is a decrease in the number of blue collars and increase in white collars.

In the industrial era, we conceived the workforce as a pyramid. Typically, in technical education jargons, the few elite engineers were at the apex of the pyramid. The technicians formed the second tier, but were larger in number. Then, there was a large layer of craftsmen, or trained laborer. At the bottom were a massive number of frontline operatives who worked as manual laborer. The general concept in an industrial society is that here are a few white collars who mainly contribute to the production using their minds, and a vast number of blue collars who are expected only to use their hands.

The pyramid notion assumes the typical manufacturing process:

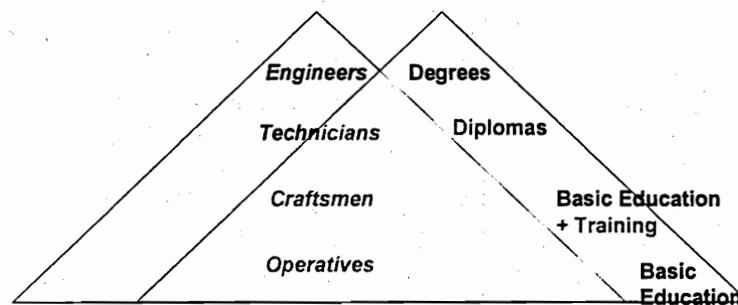
- There is fine division of labour, layers of administration, well-defined structure and hierarchy of qualifications, i.e. bureaucracy.

- People work in specific occupations, specific jobs and specific tasks. Hence people are classified horizontally by occupations. They work with specialised expertise in specialised departments.
- People are classified also as layers of manpower, presumably according to levels of knowledge and skills, i.e. qualifications and specialisation, and are hence also classified vertically as operatives, craftsmen, technicians and engineers, for example.
- People work separately according to specific job-descriptions under well-defined rules and regulations specific to their jobs.

The pyramid of workforce in the society was also a reflection of the pyramidal structure of workplace organizations. The elite engineers or managing directors at the top designed the products and the production procedures. There were then layers of middle managers, who were given the different degrees of authority to supervise the production processes. There the vast majority at the bottom were laborers there to carry out the simple tasks within a complex scheme of division of labor.

As such, the pyramid was also a pyramid of knowledge structure. The few elite in the apex were expected to have all the knowledge and wisdom to oversee the entire production process. The knowledge expectation diminished when one went down the hierarchy. The grassroots operatives were expected to use only their hands, and not their brains. It was in this context that the Marxists created the demarcation between manual labor and mental labor.

**Assumption: Industrial
Manpower & qualification pyramids**



Therefore, this pyramidal structure was matched by the education system, which was also a pyramid, exiting different number of graduates at different levels of the education system. The differential expectations of knowledge were matched by graduates at different exit points of the education system.

However, as is seen in Table 2, with the rapid development of the service sector of the economy, the structure of the workforce has changed drastically. Most of the jobs in the service economy are white-collar in nature. Or, the nature of the blue collars has changed. The assumption that majority of the population would work as manual blue-collar laborer is no longer valid. [There will be some elaboration here, to distinguish between service economy and knowledge economy.]

This is soon understandable when one looks at the actual change in the work organizations, where in most countries, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have become the large majority. In SMEs, which are the fundamental units for the service economy, most of the workers are in the core business and there is therefore a much greater demand for "knowledge workers" (examples).

Small and Medium Enterprises

In Hong Kong, for example, which is a metropolis where the service sector contributes to 85% of the economy and over 80% of the workforce, 98% of the registered companies are small or medium enterprises, defined as units under 50 people in the commercial sector, and under 100 in the manufacturing sector. Such SMEs constitute 65% of the workforce. Moreover, 88% of the registered companies have a staff of nine or fewer people. Most of these small firms can hardly afford layers and departments in their organization. Most of these small work units expect employees to be all round, generic and able to learning new things anytime, anywhere.

On the other hand, the remaining large organizations are basically multinationals, typically investment banks, consultancy firms, accountancy firms, etc. In these organizations, departments (which are based on internal specialization of tasks) are replaced by task forces (which are organized for specific clients). These task force are loosely structured with no clear division of labor. This will be revisited later in this paper.

Therefore, overall, around the world, there is a rapidly increasing demand for "knowledge workers" and the percentage of workers who undertake mainly manual labour is rapidly diminishing. In other words, the workforce is moving rapidly away from a pyramidal composition.

However, most education systems are still designed with the assumption that human beings are classified for a pyramidal workforce. Vertically, it assumes that human beings are classified according to ability. Horizontally, it still assumes that human beings are specialized. In basic education in particular,

screening and sifting are still often seen as the fundamental functions for schools. [data on the pyramidal structure of the education system.]

The implications for education are beyond our imaginations. There are already serious social problems emerging in various parts of the world. (Hong Kong, Shanghai, examples in OECD countries).

What first emerged was massive structural unemployment among those of age 40+ and 50+ who used to be operatives working by the production lines in large factories. Such factories have disappeared from their societies. Their education, which was adequate barely for manual labor, could not enable them to find a job in the sectors that have replaced massive manufactory.

This happened initially in developed economies, in urban centers and among the most labor intensive industries.

- (a) Some of these manufacturing factories simply have disappeared from the horizon, and with them the traditional mode of production and the traditional types of jobs.
- (b) Others have moved to less urban regions of the same countries, attracting workers from the less educated populations, but repeat the cycle of development and spreads structural unemployment at some later stage.
- (c) Many of such factories have moved to less developed countries, which then repeat the same cycle of development, but at a much faster pace, and suffer from structural unemployment at a later stage.
- (d) The same phenomenon also moves, over time, from the most labor intensive industries to the less labor intensive industries. That is, the volume of knowledge and learning implied in all sorts of jobs is rapidly growing.

In all these cases, many countries have experienced similar stages of development with basic education:

- (a) In the very early years, basic education was first not universal and was not seen as necessary. There were even arguments such as "if so many have so much education, who would be willing to be factory manual workers?" At the high time of the manufacturing economy, the education system was sometime seen as a beauty because it did not only help to select the elite, but also help to legitimize keeping a large percentage of the populace in the manual labor category.
- (b) At some later stage, basic education was seen as a necessity, either for visible economic reasons, or because of international pressure, and hence was introduced, most of the time by way of legislation of 9-year compulsory education. At that stage, the manufacturing industries

have also advanced, and would see basic education as a necessary ingredient to it basic workforce.

- (c) In the past two decades, nations have gradually come to see basic education as inadequate because it would not warrant a decent working life. Many countries therefore have moved to spread universal education beyond 9-year compulsory education, to introduce universal secondary education, to attempt high attendance at higher education level, or to develop extensive modes of lifelong learning beyond basic education.

Even in developing economies, where there are still large sectors of agricultural economy and which still look forward to growth in the manufacturing sector, the same shifts of the economic sectors and the workforce are equally significant. (Examples: India, one West city in China, Nairobi, one Latin American city). In these countries, the implications for education would be equally significant because formal education is basically an urban phenomenon. (Evidences....)

The challenge to education is serious. With few exceptions, the demand of knowledge-based workers is simply not met by the education systems. While the manpower pyramid is disappearing with increasingly fewer jobs that require only manual labor, the education system is continuously producing young people who are not prepared to engage in jobs that are more knowledge-based.

The Double Disengaged

In Hong Kong, in 2000, 19% among the 15-20 year-olds are "double-disengaged", which means they are not admitted to any studies and are not employed. This is not surprising when one looks at the public examination results at the end of secondary schooling. In 1999, 11% of the prospective secondary school graduates scored zero in the high-stake examination. With a life expectancy of over 80, the society has to worry about what these young people could do in the rest 60 years of their lives.

The challenge to education is fundamental. If the education system assumes that human beings are vertically classifiable according to ability, and that the education system is a fair means of sifting human beings or the society, then young people who fail in the school system do not deserve decent working lives, because, by birth, they simply could not cope with the knowledge society. However, one could challenge such an assumption and argue that the school system, as an institution developed during the industrial era, works in an

ideology that justifies human ranking. The school setting, the curriculum, the assessments and even a great part of the pedagogy, favors young people of one type and not others. Such a counter argument gain some support from the common knowledge that people who failed in education could do very well in later parts of their lives. It is also evident that the notion of school failure is relative. There are countries which have much fewer school failures than other countries, no necessarily that students are cleverer in these countries than others. It is safe to argue that education could hold the same assumption it holds, and holds well, in the industrial era. There has to be an overhaul of the ideology about education⁵.

The Changed Workplace

If it were only a shift of number, that is, more places that were occupied by blue collars are now replaced by knowledge workers, then the solution would be perhaps to give more education to the population. However, there is also a **qualitative dimension** to the changes in the workplace. And such a dimension would pose even more fundamental challenges to the notion of basic education, and indeed to the entire social institution of Education.

In order to understand the change in the workplace, perhaps we should look closer into the **nature of the changes** in the economic sectors mentioned earlier.

- (a) There is a general trend, in both manufacturing and service sectors, of customizing products, tailor-made to fit needs of the individuals. This is a major deviation from manufacturing in massive quantity and then looking for scale market.

Retail banking

Retail banking used to mean mainly simple cashier services. With standard procedures set by the bank, the customers deposited money and withdrew money. The majority of the services were provided at the cashier counters. Starting from the 1980s, or even earlier in some parts of the world, retail banks began to diversify their services in order to compete for customers. Many retail banks began to assign special members at the bank lobby to play traffic-controller and divert customers to different kinds of services. Later, when services were further diversified and customers were given more choices, such traffic-controllers were developed into enquiry desks, which further evolved into individual desks or rooms where advices were provided to cater for customers' individual needs one-on-one. With such individualized services, the cashier counters have gradually retired to the rear of the bank. More recently, there has

⁵ Peter Senge, *at el.* (2000) *Schools that learn.* London: Nicholas Bealey.

been a trend of further reducing the function of the cashier counters by installing more automatic teller machines. In many banks, the cashier counters have been moved to the basement or upper floors, in order to give way to the multitude of customized services. Hence, the bank is hiring only a few pure cashiers who handle routine deposits and withdrawals, and many more managers who are able to handle individual customer relations.

From standard policies to brokers

Insurance companies used to provide standard policies. They based on such standard policies and tried to persuade customers to purchase such policies. In the past decades there was a general development to customize the policies according to customers' needs. Hence, designing a tailor-made policy for the individual corporations or individual customers has become the routine of an insurance company. The task of the *agents*, who work for particular insurance companies, is to satisfy the customer by doing financial planning for the customer and design a policy that would also fall within the general framework and which is still profitable for the company. More recently, agents have given way to *brokers*. While agents work for insurance companies, brokers work for clients, and would solicit the best policy for the client from various insurance companies. The brokers face more challenging tasks when compared with the agents.

(b) Accordingly, there is therefore a shift of the emphasis from production to design, such that more types of products are produced each for a smaller number. There is therefore also the shift towards more creativity and innovations, and there is a reduction of routine work.

Changed mode of manufacturing

A manufacturer in Shenzhen, a special economic zone in China, specializes on carton boxes for packaging electrical appliances. He used to provide boxes for rice-cookers, which are produced in tens of thousands with only two or three models. Hence, with a few fixed designs, the major function of his factory is producing such boxes. The majority of the workers in his factory were manual laborers, and were basically illiterates from nearby villages. A few years ago, he has moved to high end package of a major brand of computers. Unlike rice-cookers, computers are produced in a large range of models, each for only a few thousands. Meanwhile, the computer models change every six months, and the carton boxes have to be redesigned accordingly. Moreover, the client may ask for modification of the design almost every minute. Therefore, his factory has evolved to have a fairly large design department and a relatively small

department of production. There is also high degree of automation in the production. All his workers have to be at least high school graduates, and quite a few are with degrees.

(c) Alongside this trend, the spread of technologies have also reduced the human workforce spent on routine and repetitive work.

(d) As is mentioned earlier, there is therefore also a dramatic reduction in the size of workplace organizations, hence dramatic increase in the number of SMEs in most countries.

(e) The other trend is out-sourcing of the non-core activities of organizations, such that organizations now host fewer workers outside the core business and the out-sourced tasks, in specialized service companies, have now become client-oriented, tailor-made and hence is no longer routine in nature.

Cleaning as customized service

The job nature has changed when cleaning of a firm, is outsourced. When cleaning is done by an in-house team of cleaners, they work on the same kind of floor or carpet every day. Once they have realized the way to handle certain kind of floor, the cleaning would become a routine. However, when cleaning is outsourced, the cleaner from the cleaning company has to face many different clients and many different kinds of floors, and there is a high frequency of encountering new types of floors every day. Hence, there is a need to study the new floors and make decisions almost every day. Although the floors are the same, the cleaner have changed from a routine manual laborer to someone who has to provide customized services. Therefore, they have to be able to read instruction about the floor, the chemical, the machinery and so forth, and be able to make right decisions. There is certain requirement of literacy and decision-making capacity on the cleaners.

The change in the economy is dramatically reflected in the **organization** of the workplace. If we look at large organizations, typified by multinational invest banks, consultancy firms, accountant firms and technology related enterprises. There is fundamental shift from organization by departments according to internal division of labor towards client-centered task forces (variedly called production team, project groups, "accounts", ...). There are a few characteristics in the organizational arrangement.

- (a) Instead of each client served by many departments and each department serving many clients, each task force is devoted solely to serve one client, and each client faces only one task force.
- (b) The task-force is expected to provide total solution to the clients. The client could be a customer or a product. The latter could be either a commodity (e.g. a particular software) or a service (e.g. an insurance policy).
- (c) The design of the product happens at the front-line task-forces rather than handed down from the chief engineer at the top. Front-line workers have to have the capacity to innovate and make decisions.
- (d) The accomplishment of a project is achieved within task forces rather than among departments. Few others outside the task force would interfere with the activities inside the task force.
- (e) As such, the need for middle-management is diminishing. (Drucker). Most such contemporary organizations are flat in their structure.
- (f) The "work" of the task-force is basically achieved through constant interactions among its members ("brain-storming") in order to cater for ever-changing needs of the clients or projects.
- (g) Within a task force, there is/are
 - blurred division of labor,
 - integration of special experts,
 - few or no layers of management,
 - vague rules and regulations, and
 - fluid modes of operation.
- (h) The nature of the work in the task force necessarily entails constant learning on-the-job, on-demand, just-in-time.

Such large organizations are few in number among all the work organizations in the society. However, when we look at the operation of the small organizations, they function more or less as a task force and bear all its characteristics. Hence, the characteristics mentioned above are near universal⁶.

It is worth noting that unlike in the industrial society, we can no longer safely assume that everyone leads a working life in an organization. Increasingly, there are people who are self-employed or free-lancing. In the latter, the working individual is employed by many but fully employed by none.

⁶ There is, however, a literature in Europe that argues that there is little change in the workplace organization and its culture. To be further explored.

They work for organizations, but they do not work as members of any organization.

Many organizations are also in a transitional structure, often known as a matrix structure, where departments and task-forces co-exist. However, even in such organizations, the tendency of moving towards a client-oriented structure is unmistakable.

After all, Max-Weber's notion of bureaucracy, where rational-legality was the prevailing principle in order to coordinate a vast number of people to work according to one master plan, is facing fundamental challenges. That is, the entire ecology has changed. The shift from industrial to service economy has caused the shift from producer-centered to client-centered mentality of production, which in turn caused a change in the way the workplace is organized.

In the same context, it is not unusual for an organization to actively engage in frequent restructuring, reengineering, merger and downsizing⁷. (IBM) That is, even in the same kind of industry, the nature of job has changed and expectations on the workers have changed.

It is not only a shift from manual labor to knowledge-based work, but also a shift from routine and operative tasks to responsive, decision-laden tasks across all sectors of the economy. More people are expected to be innovative, to be involved in decision-making, and fewer people for purely carrying out orders. This applies to both manufacturing and service sectors. All these have tremendous implications on education.

The fundamental ideology in our education system is one of compliance. In basic education in particular, we expect students to follow a curriculum designed for students across the board, we group them in classes and expect individuals to abide by class norms, we assess students according to relatively uniform standards, and we expect them to observe rules and regulations that keep them in proper modes of activities. Such an ideology is also the ideology in a manufacturing factory, or in a bureaucracy typical of a large commercial firm in the 20th century. The "training" student received in schools could fit the expectations of the society. However, the workplace has changed, and the society has changed. Compliance, synchronized activities, uniform standards, strict rules and regulations are no long the norm in contemporary workplace. The question is, *what should education do?*

⁷ Deal and Kennedy, 1999

Changed Individual Work Lives

It is essential to look at the implications of the societal change to individuals, and that should be essential of our consideration of education development.

The first phenomenon is frequent change of individuals' task, job and career.

- Change of job is very common among individuals in most urban cities around the world. Either because of change in the job situation or change in personal preference, or both.
- Even when one stays in the same organization, the task may change, either because of restructuring of the organization, reshuffle of job assignments, or due to out-sourcing or downsizing of the department in which one works. Merger or acquisition also changes the task situations in the organization.
- What is also true is that individuals tend to change careers, and increasingly often with increasing frequencies.

The net effect is that individuals do not work in the same organization for a long time. The notion of loyalty to a particular organization is at stake. The individual-organization relationship is undergoing a fundamental change.

By the same token, membership and loyalty to a particular profession needs redefinition. Fewer and fewer people take one career as a lifelong commitment. In US, the average number of careers one undertakes in a life time is around four (reference).

Therefore security and certainty is no longer to be expected by any working individual. *Change* has become the main theme in one's work life. Because of such changes in an individual's work life, learning becomes a major issue:

- (a) Learning has to take place at all junctures of the change, and such changes are continuous. There is continuous need to acquire new knowledge necessary for adaptation to a new task, new job or new career. And this is on top of the fast obsolescence of old knowledge.
- (b) Learning therefore becomes a necessary part of the individuals' work life, and this is spreading to all sectors and all strata of the society. Not only that grassroot workers have to have the knowledge that was not required of a manual laborer, they also have to face challenges of picking up new knowledge almost every day.

- (c) Even if one stays in a job which is relatively stable, the nature of most tasks require creativity and innovations, very much because of the changing environments, changing market or changing expectations.
- (d) Such learning, learning-during-doing, largely takes place on-the-job, on-demand and just-in-time.
- (e) The segregation of learning and application of knowledge, that is, the notion of "learning first, application later" does not represent the learning process in reality.
- (f) Dividing a person's life into separate stages of study and work is also under question, let alone using age as the benchmark of learning achievements.

Indeed, in many cases, there is serious *mismatch* between what is in demand in the workplace and what is warranted by formal qualifications. There are two dimensions to this issue. One, the formal qualifications do not always reflect the kind of capacity in individuals that the society is looking for. Two, the frequent change of careers has made educational credentials no long valid for life.

One, it is increasingly difficult to expect a formal qualification to embrace all the quality in individuals that the society seeks after. For example,

- (a) formal qualifications often provide evidence only about what the person knows, but not how the person could use that knowledge;
- (b) formal qualifications often tells what the person knows in the past, but not what the person would be able to know in the future;
- (c) formal qualifications record, at best, only how a person learns as an individual, but not how the person would learn in a group;
- (d) formal qualifications, as they are now, often prepares a person for some specific career, but do not prepare the person for a life of multiple careers.

Two, data from various countries have concurred that increasingly more graduates are engaged in careers that do not match their area of study⁸. This is particularly true for undergraduate higher education. Apart from Medicine, where only a few graduate would have their first jobs outside the medical profession, there is little promise that student will work in a job that is directly related to their undergraduate study. This is even more serious in rather liberal disciplines such as science and humanities. As is mentioned, even those whose first jobs match their studies do not project long-term commitment to that particular career.

⁸ Data

With that changed scenario, many disciplines have included substantial generic elements in their undergraduate curriculum. Among others, the Engineers have advocated a minimum of 1/3 of their undergraduate curriculum should be in non-engineering areas⁹. In most business curricula in North America, the Business undergraduate curriculum devotes only about one-half of it to studies specific to Business. The most recent Journalism curricula have reduced journalism-related studies to only 30% of the undergraduate curriculum. Along the same lines of development, the European Community, in its deliberation for a common framework across countries, has determined for the undergraduate studies to concur a three-year generic curriculum, and to delay specialization to higher degrees¹⁰. Even in UK, which was known for its highly specialized tertiary education, there has been call for a 2-year generic Foundations Degree, so that specialization takes place only in the second degree¹¹.

Such a trend, of delaying specialization and emphasizing on generic capacity among student, is yet to be realized in basic education. If even higher education sees itself as an experience for development generic capacity, then basic education should be released from the pressures of specific subjects required for higher education entrance.

In most countries, the curriculum in basic education still mirrors a specialized learning path leading to a specific occupational future. In most countries, the school curriculum still consists of *subjects*, and such subjects are often an early start of conventional higher education disciplines. A typical example is for secondary schools to offer subjects such as Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Such subjects follow the internal rigor of individual disciplines, and are taught with little reference across the subjects. They were also taught as if they were the only disciplines in science. Students are therefore not given a generic capacity to handle their relations with nature (which is what science education should be about). They are not even given a genuine picture of how real science works in the true advancement of human knowledge, for example in real laboratories.

[Two or three more paragraphs to illustrate this point.]

Moreover, there is also serious inadequacy in formal qualifications. Apart from the fact that qualifications testify only what one knows in the past and are no indicator of what one would know in the future, there is also a discrepancy between what is expected in the workplace and what qualifications aim at. Most of what are listed as workplace expectations or recruitment criteria are not provided by formal qualifications. They include

⁹ Washington Accord, 1998.

¹⁰ This is an essential part of the Bologna Declaration, 1998.

¹¹ David Blunkette, 2000.

- (a) the ability to communicate,
- (b) the ability to pick up new knowledge and skills,
- (c) the ability to innovate,
- (d) the ability to question and challenge,
- (e) the ability to analyze and organize thoughts,
- (f) the ability to be responsible in lieu of formal disciplines,
- (g) the ability to work in teams,
- (h)

Some of such capacities are only implicit in the school requirements in basic education. Students might score high in languages, but this is no guarantee that they were able to communicate well. Students might be very good in following disciplines, but there is no test how they would behave under loose disciplines.

Others are capacities that are seldom required in schools. For example, in most parts of the world, in basic education, students are expected to respond to questions with expected answers. They are not supposed to challenge the question, or to ask questions beyond teachers' expectations. They are not expected, either, to innovate, unless they are in areas of the arts. In many cases, students in basic education are still expected to work in isolation. Or, in cases where students could work in groups, they would eventually be examined as individuals.

Typically in a conventional school, students are tested with the amount of knowledge they have acquired, or the amount of taught knowledge that are retained in students' minds. There is relatively little of how they learn, and how they are able to use the knowledge. However, learning and application, rather than knowledge per se, are often what are most essential to a successful work life.

There are also other dimensions that are more about attitudes. Such as:

- (a) Thoroughness
- (b) Proactiveness
- (c) Inter-personal flexibility
- (d) Self-confidence
- (e) Self-control
- (f)

In the West, cultivation of such attitudes is often seen as extra to “study” in schools and is beyond the core function of schools. It is often seen as belonging to “pastoral care” which is taken seriously only by elite schools, for example, in UK and US with a religious heritage. Otherwise, it is seen as a responsibility of the family or the church. In other cultures, where moral or spiritual dimensions of education are seen as essential, such as schools in the Confucian tradition or Islamic heritage, such attitudes are often regarded as matters of discipline or conformity to social norms, which again do not fit the expectations of the contemporary workplace.

Changes to Learning

All these challenges to basic education could be seen as part and parcel of the general change in the entire notion of learning that takes place among individuals. This is partly because of the constant changes in the workplace and therefore ever varying needs of knowledge, but also because of the emergence of the World Wide Web, invented in 1993, that have changed the way knowledge and information could be acquired. This is quite different from the situations one or two decades ago, when the television was supposed to be the only alternative to schools and books for knowledge acquisition.

First, much of learning does not take place in institutions. There are diverse sources of information and knowledge beyond traditional institutions of learning, such as schools, universities, libraries, museums. The World Wide Web, has increasingly become the major source of informational knowledge. Hence, institutions are no longer the sole source of information.

Second, as a corollary, the notion that learning is about transmission of knowledge is no longer valid. Knowledge transmission is now relatively easy, not necessarily through schools and institutions, and does not deserve many years of school lives.

Third, as another corollary, the convenience of the Web has also rendered storage of knowledge and information in the human brain not always necessary. And in any case, what are stored might soon become obsolete in a short period of time. In other words, if the fundamental objectives of *education* and *schools* are seen as transmission of knowledge, they are now under challenge.

Fourth, increasingly, more people’s learning paths are designed according to individual needs appropriate to demands in the workplace, or for individuals’ desire or leisure, rather than according to set-menu curricula pre-designed by institutions.

Fifth, institutional accreditation is changing in its nature. Awards and qualifications tend to be short-lived, because the knowledge they represent soon requires renewal, and they seldom provide currency beyond a single career.

Sixth, knowledge boundaries are being blurred, and knowledge is hardly confined to "subjects" or "disciplines". There is a general phenomenon that students are supposed to study within the discipline of the particular subject, and they are seldom required to cross subject boundaries and integrate what they have learnt.

Seventh, in order to face changes, development of generic capacities has become of prime importance. However, in traditional schools, learning is often taken for *study*, which is often understood as coverage of the subject contents in the syllabuses.

Eighth, in the actual workplace, workers are obliged to learn new things whatever is necessarily anywhere, anytime, on-the-job, and real learning takes place only when the knowledge is being applied. In traditional schools, there is a subtle notion that learning takes place before application, which amounts to a separation of *learning* from *doing*.

Ninth, in the actual workplace, few people work in isolation. Team work has become a major mode of work. In traditional schools, however, students are only rarely expected to work in groups. Or, even if they occasionally work in groups, the examinations discourage collaborations.

In sum, institutional control of knowledge is being continuously challenged. The traditional educational institutions, schools in particular, are fit for preparing people who would work in a specific position in a structured bureaucracy under fine division of labor, with clear job description and strict rules and regulations.

Such a notion of education could no longer fit the expectations in real life. This is particularly true at basic education level, where the amount of knowledge and information students could receive from formal teaching is never comparable with the vast amount of knowledge and information they acquire from other sources.

Under these circumstances, the value of institutional learning should be realized as a way of training students' capacity to learn for life, and providing them with learning experiences that could transcend different realms of knowledge. This is particularly essential at the stage of basic education.

Although it may be argued that WWW is not available to schools in many developing countries, it is also arguable whether the slow development information and communications technology (ICT) is indeed a matter of economic strength or a matter of priority. China, as the largest developing country, has developed a fairly comprehensive ICT network available to most schools in the nation. India, as another large developing country, has also achieved relatively wide coverage of ICT in basic education at relative low cost. The famous "Hole in the Wall" experiment has demonstrated that ICT familiarity

could be achieved effectively at very low cost. The recent growth of the African Virtual University has also demonstrated the relative efficiency of employing ICT to strengthen learning, although the concept is yet to spread to basic education. The development of ICT in many Latin American nations has also demystified the establishment of use of ICT in basic education.

The Organization of Education

Not only that learning in "education" does not fit the contemporary society, the organization of education in most systems still mirrors the industrial society and manufactory factories, and is also under challenge.

In hindsight, large-scale education systems existed only after the mid-19th Century (since 1870)¹². It was born at the high time of the industrial societies.

- As is mentioned earlier, the overall design of education is still a pyramidal structure.
- The system assumes horizontal division of human beings according to specialised occupations.
- The system also assumes vertical ranking of human beings according to their "abilities".

There are tacit assumptions about human beings that are never proved but never challenged:

- (a) Human beings are born with different abilities.
- (b) The crucial ability is their learning ability.
- (c) Innate abilities play a predominant role in human developments.
- (d) Human beings deserve different fates (work lives, socio-economic status, ...) according to their abilities.
- (e) Human abilities can be measured with one single yardstick.
- (f) Human beings should therefore go through the same processes of learning.
- (g) Human beings live through a lifelong occupation.

These assumptions are also echoed and indeed reinforced in the education system. Despite all other claims, the education system consciously classifies human beings. There is horizontal classification, or *specialization*, in the sense that people are channeled into different disciplines of knowledge, in anticipation of working as specialists for the rest of their lives. There is also vertical

¹² Reference.

classification, or *ranking*, that creates a hierarchy where each person belongs to a certain rung on the ladder.

The classification function of the education system is very much realized through the notions of success and failure that are central to the maintenance of the education system. There is the assumption that "there are smart kids and dumb kids"¹³, and hence educators often take upon themselves the role of a gate-keeper, to make sure that the "dumb kids" would be stopped and would not fall through the cracks.

With that assumption, education has set within the system standards of success and failure. Such standards are determined within the education system as a consensus among educators, but are seldom scrutinized by the external world where the students will spend most of their lives. The education system defines the contents that the students have to learn (i.e. the curriculum), the paths they have to undertake, and the criteria of success and failure. As such, the education system has a specific way of defining "ability" and "learning" that are not always shared by other sectors of the society. In other words, students' performances in schools are not always a good predictor of their future performances in their working life.

Cynical analyses would see schools as a factory, where students are seen as raw materials, go through processes that are pre-determined independent of the students, and are scrutinized at different points of quality control. In this analysis, recent moves around "quality assurance" in various countries in all sectors of education have further exacerbated such a notion of "education". In the end, too much attention is paid to the processes of the education system, and too little attention is paid to the actual *learning* among students.

Earlier criticisms of education as a "screening" machinery¹⁴, very much along Marxist lines of thinking, have taken a political framework of class discrimination and class struggle, but does not look into the "industrial" nature of education. They were not given the benefit of foresight of a knowledge society.

However, the "industrial" legacy of the education system is not confined to its classification functions. The very way schools and educational institutions are organized also mirror the manufacturing organizations.

- (a) The design of the processes of education comes from above, as is the case with the design of a production process in a factory.

¹³ See Peter Senge (2000) *Schools that learn*.

¹⁴ For example, Ronald Dore (1976) *The diploma disease*.

- (b) There is a strong division of labor among teachers who work in departments, such that each student is "processed" by many teachers and each teacher has to "process" many students.¹⁵
- (c) Because of the large number of students in a school, they are divided into classes, so that they can be handled in groups of manageable size.
- (d) Learning is largely regarded as transmission of knowledge from the people who know (teachers) to those who don't. Students are largely seen as passive receivers of the doses of knowledge.
- (e) Knowledge is divided into subjects as separate chunks to be transmitted to students. Teachers are specialized in delivering particular types of knowledge (or subjects). They seldom cross subjects.
- (f) Students are given doses of subject knowledge at regular intervals as is governed by the timetables.
- (g) Students' learning is complete when they have finished all the doses of the required subjects and pass the quality control (or examination) at the satisfaction of the teachers.
- (h) As a net result, students are not given total solutions of their learning. They are fed with piecemeal information or knowledge supplied by separate teachers in different subjects.

The above discussions runs counter the contemporary understanding knowledge about learning.¹⁶ Such an understanding comprises a few salient points.

- (a) Learning is a process of construction of knowledge, rather than transmission of knowledge.
- (b) Learning and application of knowledge cannot be separated.
- (c) Learning is most effective when knowledge is integrated rather than segregated in "subjects".
- (d) Learning is a social process and is most effective in collaboration.
- (e) Learning is about the unknown more than the known.
- (f) Teachers should be facilitators of learning, rather than sources of knowledge.

¹⁵ This is less the case in primary schools in some countries, where the "home room" teacher takes care of the whole class in a comprehensive way.

¹⁶ Bransford, J.B., Brown A.L. and Cocking, R.R. (eds) (1999) *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience and school*. Washington D.C.: National Research Council.

(g) Schools should be learning communities, rather than classes of individuals.

(h)

Changes are already emerging in the education horizon. They are challenging the industrial model of schooling and are indications to future directions. The following are some examples. In brief, there are a few trends of change:

- The spread of *problem-based learning*, where students play an active role in learning through solving real problems.
- The trend of replacing subjects by *key-learning areas* and *learning experiences*.
- The construction of *learning communities* where a large group of students' learning is taken care by a group of teachers.
- The emphasis on *tacit knowledge, values education, civic education, ethics education, character education,* as an emphasis on the non-cognitive dimension of student development

Problem-based Learning

Starting from McMaster University in its Medical School in 198X, Problem-based Learning (or PBL) has become the major mode of learning in medical education in most parts of the world. Beginning medical students typically started with basic lectures of Anatomy, Pathology, Physiology and Pharmacology, and were allowed to apply their knowledge to real patient cases only when they had finished study of these theories. In PBL, however, students are asked to handle real cases (initially on paper, then in real life) by identifying the problem, searching for supporting knowledge, designing treatments or solutions and discussing such solutions in groups of 10 to 12. During this process, a few characteristics emerge:

- Students learn to identify and ask questions, rather than only answer questions.
- Students search for information and knowledge, rather than fed with such.
- Students create their own solutions, rather than look for model answers from teachers.
- Students aim at solving problems, not passing examinations.
- Students have to integrate their knowledge in solving problems.
- Students are exposed to multiple possibilities of solutions.
- Students work in groups.
- Students are used to challenges and criticisms of their solutions.
- Teachers are there to facilitate, rather than to dictate answers.

The entire process of problem-based learning simulates the real-life situations of problem-solving for a real medical professional. It also echoes all the fundamentals in the understanding of the human learning process.

The principles of PBL are now being spread to learning in many other sectors of higher education. There are also emerging experiences of PBL in secondary and primary schools.

Key-learning Areas

The curriculum reformers in Hong Kong, echoing reforms elsewhere, have done away with subjects and constructed eight learning areas in order to facilitate students' learning experiences in five domains.

The five learning experiences are:

- Intellectual development
- Moral and civic education
- Community service
- Career-related experiences
- Physical and aesthetic development

The eight key-learning areas are:

- Chinese Language
- English Language
- Mathematics
- Humanities
- Science
- Technology
- Art
- Physical Education

Learning Communities

In Western Australia, schools operate in Learning Communities where 120 or 130 students study together under a team of 6-8 teachers. The team oversees the development of the entire learning community, and students learn in varied sub-grouping according to the areas of learning.

In some cases, the learning community runs across ages, so that students are grouped according to learning needs rather than their ages.

Accordingly, the physical layout of the school campus is differently structured. Instead of regular classrooms, there are often a cluster of rooms surrounding a large common area.

Conclusion

The economy has changed. The society has changed. The social institutions are yet to change, and Education is among such institutions. Basic education, which forms the core of the education system, and which is less directly connected to the society, may take some time to received the challenges of the society and hence feel the need of change. Nonetheless, the society would not wait. Students who are in basic education today will become a mature member of the society in a matter of a few years. By then, the society will be further changed, and presumably change with a greater speed. It is indeed up to us human beings, who created the education system, to consciously initiate changes from within the education system. It is in this context that observations in this report could make a contribution.

Defining Quality Education for Universal Basic and
Secondary Education (UBASE)

Draft paper for the
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This paper examines what constitutes a “quality education” for a universal basic and secondary education (UBASE). It does not seek an *a priori* definition that is theoretical and abstracted from the realities of society. Instead its purpose is to provide concrete, reality-based guidance for education that the UBASE project can take forward and apply in the policy dialogue. Thus this paper first describes how the conceptual foundations and institutional reality of universal education in modern democratic societies shape and constrain the definition. Then it considers a recent international and interdisciplinary effort to frame how “key competencies” (which can be thought of as definitions of what educational systems should teach and expect individuals to be able to do in practice) might be used in international comparative assessments and education policy. This effort led to the creation of a conceptually and theoretically sound frame of reference to identify and define key competencies, which included a three-fold categorization of key competencies. We believe this frame of reference and the categorization of key competencies provide a promising definition of the fundamental requirements of a “quality education” for UBASE and a way to structure discussions of quality universal education in the world. The paper then considers the implications of this definition for schooling as we know it today and how current school practices and realities constrain the practical implementation of this definition. This paper ends by examining the broader implications of applying this definition in the developing world.

I. What “universal” implies in “universal education”

The starting point to understand the conceptual foundations and institutional realities of universal education is the simple fact that making an education universal changes the idea of what education is. In the abstract, “an education” refers (in order, from the most to the least general meaning) to (a) the process whereby people learn, (b) the contents of that learning (whether it be knowledge or a skill), and/or (c) the mastery of those contents. In a particular context, an education usually refers to a particular subject or task—learning to do X, to make Y, or know how Z works. All that is necessary for an individual’s education in this sense is a relationship of learning between the student (the subject) and some knowledge or skill (the object of learning). Although a teacher (whether a pedagogue, a parent, or a mentor) is often helpful to start, direct, or guide an individual student’s learning, a teacher is not an essential ingredient for such an education in its general meaning. If everyone in a country were to undertake some sort of education or another, in this general sense, one could say that education was universal in the country, but this is not what is normally meant by “universal education.”

Conventionally and in historical practice, a “universal education” is a different thing: it means making the learning of some particular subject(s) or task(s) common to all.¹ Thus a universal education, by definition, implies some decision-making about what is to be commonly learnt by

¹ This concept of “universal education” is sometimes conflated with the idea of ‘giving some sort of education to all.’ But throughout this paper, we use “universal education” to refer only to ‘giving all the same education.’

all students. In addition, if this common learning is to be in fact universal, universal education also implies some agent to ensure that common learning actually takes place. This is to say, for there to be universal education it is necessary not only to have a relationship of learning between all students and some common knowledge or skills, but also to have that relationship established by some collective decision-maker—like a state—and ensured by a teacher, a test, or another such guarantor. In this essay, we will use the term *schooling* to refer to this type of relationship—generally involving students, the state, and schools—which is necessary for universal education in a country. In this essay we will also focus on the nation-state as the locus for universal education because, even though one could imagine a truly “universal” education common across countries or world-wide, such a vision requires in practice the coordination of different countries’ universal education policies and could not be imposed on nation-states from above.

We start with this exposition of the conceptual logic of universal education not because this exposition explains the origins of the institution of universal education², but because this exposition underscores the point that the type of education implied in any discussion of universal education is a particular type of education—one structured and socially constituted by a decision that there is some sort of education that is appropriate or necessary for all individuals. This may seem like a long winded way to state the obvious, but it is important to completely unpack this implication because two of the features of this type of education—the *concept of the individual* and the *role of the state*—are often taken for granted (if not assumed that they must always be true) and these features have important implications both for defining a “quality education” for the UBASE project and for applying the definition world-wide.

The notion of the individual

The first of these features is that this particular type of education is premised on the idea that all individuals can learn certain things and thus can have certain knowledge or skills in common. This is not only an egalitarian premise, but one that requires an abstract concept of the individual as an agent capable of learning.³ This means that the idea that any sort of education can be universalized is only conceivable once the concept of the autonomous individual has come into existence and permeated the thinking of a society’s movers, shakers, and policy makers.⁴ This point

² For an account of the historical development of universal education, see Aaron Benavot and Julia Resnik, “An intellectual and programmatic history of UBASE,” [insert full cite].

³ Without such an abstract idea, the practical reality of everyday life experience is more likely to lead one to conclude that not all people can learn the same things. For a sociological account of the social construction of the concept of the individual as an abstract “capacity for responsible agency,” see John W. Meyer and Ronald L. Jepperson, “The ‘Actors’ of Modern Society: The Cultural Construction of Social Agency,” *Sociological Theory* 18:1 (March 2000): 100-120. On the relationship between “the rise of individualism” and mass education (and how “[m]ass education is meaningless and in fact practically inconceivable where the primary social unit is the family, clan, village, or other group collectivity”), see John Boli and Francisco O. Ramirez, “World Culture and the Institutional Development of Mass Education,” in John G. Richardson, ed., *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986): 65-90, quotation 69.

⁴ For a detailed historical account of how the concept of the individual as an abstract capacity for agency permeated and came to predominate in British and American culture, see James E. Block, *A Nation of Agents: The American Path to a Modern Self and Society*, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002).

becomes clear if one considers the institutional realities of how universal education came into being.

According to historians, the emergence of the concept of the autonomous individual occurred around the 15th century in Europe (give or take a century, depending on the region).⁵ Before then, “schools” and “education” were qualitatively different than what we think of today. From the Middle Ages through the Renaissance (or from the 10th through the 14th century), formal education consisted of training in the skills of reading, summing, singing, and writing. Such education was offered free by the Church, generally through monasteries (which ran song schools and writing schools for those being trained for a role in the life of Church, and almonry schools for promising poor children who might become monks, friars, nuns, or priests).⁶ Or such an education could be purchased on the open market from teachers (tutors for hire) who taught the children of families of means at home or operated a school for fee-paying students of a town or city.⁷

Schooling intended to impart a specific common education to all children only emerged during the Reformation (16th century) once the concept of the autonomous individual had fully emerged and reshaped Christianity. Succinctly, this is to say, before the Reformation (and before the concept of the autonomous individual had taken root) most thinking people in Europe believed that the Church could save all baptized Christians as a corporate body through its liturgical and ecclesiastic practices. The Reformation burst onto the stage in Europe when people became concerned whether only individual relationships with God could lead to salvation. Although Catholics and Protestants differed on the nature of the proper relationship with God—whether it was individual or collective, earned or unearned, etc.—the idea that salvation rested upon a properly formed individual conscience emerged as common tenet for most forms of Christianity in the West during the 16th century.⁸ It was in this context that universal education was conceived—to

⁵ Historians differ as to exactly when and why Europeans developed the concept of the individual (i.e., persons as unique beings and not as members of collective groups or as social roles), but clearly a sense of individualized relationships (and the tensions between individual and collective responsibilities) captivated public interest by the 16th century, when Shakespeare’s plays on this theme were popularly received. Walter Ullman, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966); Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual 1050-1200* (London: SPCK, 1972).

⁶ On early forms of education in Europe before and during the Renaissance, see Pierre Riché, *Education and Culture in the Barbarian West Sixth through the Eighth Centuries*, trans. by John J. Contreni, (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina, 1976 [originally published in 1962]); Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran *The Growth of English Schooling, 1340-1548* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985); Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy: Literacy and Learning, 1300-1600* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, 1989); and E. Levasseur, *L’Enseignement Primaire dans les Pays Civilisés* (Paris: Berger-Levrault et C^{ie}, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1897).

⁷ According to Paul Grendler, a historian of early European education, “[t]hese [schools] were ‘free enterprise’ schools that sold pedagogical services in an open market,” in which a teacher’s “only qualifications were his teaching skill and his ability to persuade parents to send their children [to his school].” Paul F. Grendler, “Schooling in Western Europe,” *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43:4 (1990): 775-76.

⁸ [Patrick Collinson, “The Late Medieval Church and its Reformation, 1400-1600,” in McManners, *The Oxford History of Christianity*, 243-76. On Christian religiosity of the Middle Ages, see Morris, “Christian Civilization,” esp. 228-29.]

ensure that all children learned their catechism, which was considered the key to develop a proper individual conscience (and religious loyalty).

In (Protestant) Prussia and (Catholic) Austria authorities issued edicts mandating that all children be taught the catechism of the ruling regent over the 16th century and 17th century.⁹ Implicit in these edicts was the assumption that all individuals could benefit from learning the sanctioned catechism and that the state¹⁰ would benefit from all knowing the proper catechism. Explicit in these edicts generally was a mandate that existing school convert “from purely utilitarian institutions into centers of indoctrination” or that communities establish “schools” to ensure that such religious instruction took place.¹¹ Of course, such edicts did not translate everywhere into real transformation or new schools, but neither were they merely proclamations: “church visitations” or inspections by the authorities to ensure compliance were customary until the early 17th century when “confessional tensions subsided.”¹²

This history is not to argue that compulsory schooling was fully born during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, but that schooling directed at individuals *qua* individuals for the purpose of imparting a universal education was created during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and established a precedent and example for the state to use education as a means to “manage” the population by forming or shaping individuals in particular ways, and thereby shape the society in ways deemed beneficial. Universal education in the West has, of course, changed dramatically since this time, but this basic purpose remains unchanged and part of its conceptual foundation. Thus a definition of a “quality education” that is to be universalizable must define a common schooling for the idealized (individual) citizen of a modern western democratic society. It cannot be merely the ideal education of particular individuals or be a definition with different criteria for different subgroups of the population. Likewise, it cannot be a definition tailored to the interests of one subgroup of the population (e.g., a religious group, a labor or capitalist group), nor be a definition of a narrowly vocational or elitist education.

The role of the state

The second of these features (with important implications for defining a “quality education” for the UBASE project and for applying the definition world-wide) is a universal education is based

⁹ James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the 18th Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5-7.

¹⁰ By state in this paper, we mean...

¹¹ Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the 18th Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling*, 5.

¹² Quotation from *Ibid.*, 6-7. Van Horn Melton goes on to note that despite a decline in “church visitations” at the end of the 17th century, “available statistics nevertheless point to an extensive network of parish schools in Prussia and Austria by the eighteenth century” (7).

on some decision about what is the appropriate set of things for all students to learn. For there to be such a decision requires both (a) a decision-maker in a position of legitimacy and power to decree what all should learn and (b) an exigency for such a decision. For example, the first attempts to institute universal education came from the absolutist regimes of the Prussian and Austrian empires. The political exigency for them to decide that universal education in the catechism was needed was the potential threat of royal subjects defecting to the opposing religious denominations. The theological exigency was the belief that without indoctrination in the tenets of the true faith for the right formation of individual conscience, the masses could not be (inwardly) true Christians. Successive attempts to institute universal education have been undertaken by cities (e.g., Geneva in 1872¹³), states (e.g., Massachusetts in 1852, Illinois in 1883, etc.¹⁴), and nation-states (e.g., France in 1793 and again in 1816¹⁵) under very different conditions or with different exigencies. Always, however, universal education has been instituted (or attempted) by a centralized authority¹⁶ as a policy tool of the state (or central authorities) to respond to some need or interest of the state (or territory).

Thus a definition of a "quality education" that is to be universalizable (but which does not issue from a central authority) must address the needs of modern nation-states and do so in such a way that it is superior in some way to any existing national concepts of a quality education. It must define a "quality education" in a way that the value is a function of how well the education prepares individuals to meet the needs or demands of life in a modern state or modern society. The value of the education cannot rest on any Platonic, abstract, or academic ideals.

All of this means that universal education is not an abstract concept or abstract-able institution, but rather is an institution grounded and meaningful in the development of modern (especially western citizens) and a modern (especially western) nation-state. It also means that the definition of an education that is universalized is not fixed but relative to the changing needs or demands of modern states or modern society. Thus UBASE conceptually and institutionally should be clearly understood as a

- (a) project of schooling (or state-directed learning for all individuals) for policy purposes,
- (b) project that assumes a modern western (and largely democratic) social order, and

¹³ Charles Magnin, "La Reclamation de l'Instruction Obligatoire, a Genève, au XIXe Siècle: Du Refus de 1842 a l'Acceptation de 1872," in Giovanni Genovesi, ed., *Introduction, Development and Extension of Compulsory Education, Conference Papers for the 8th Session of the International Standing Conference for the History of Education*, (Parma, Università di Parma, 1986), 274.

¹⁴ Stephen J. Provasnik, "Compulsory Schooling, From Idea to Institution: A Case Study of the Development of Compulsory Attendance in Illinois, 1857-1907." (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1999).

¹⁵ Paul Gerbod, "L'obligation éducative en France des Origines a nos jours," in Genovesi, ed., *Introduction, Development and Extension of Compulsory Education*, 44-45.

¹⁶ By centralized authority we mean any form of governance with the ability to select a single policy and institute it throughout a territory or state. Thus all of the individual American states can be considered centralized authorities even though the Union of the states is considered to be a federal or "decentralized" system.

- (c) project that needs to be responsive to the changing needs and demands of modern states and society.

These are important points because they mean that accepting any definition of a quality education for a project of universal education is to accept tacitly (a) the concept of the autonomous individual, (b) the legitimacy of the needs of the modern state or modern society as the determinant of the quality of education, and (c) schooling (as we have described it) as inseparable from modernity.

Having described how the conceptual foundations and institutional reality of universal education in modern democratic societies shape and constrain the definition of a quality education, this paper now turns to a recent international effort to develop a conceptually and theoretically sound frame of reference for "key competencies," which we believe is very promising and applicable for defining a universalizable "quality education." We describe the development process at some length because the multiple facets and steps involved reveal the major challenges involved in defining a "quality education."

II. Rethinking schooling

Given that schooling has developed as a policy tool of the state to shape individuals (and thereby the society) for the interests of the state, it should not be surprising that changes associated with new technologies (e.g., the silicon chip that made possible the micro-computer, cell phones, computerized appliances, etc.) and globalization (of world markets and the rise of the free trade order of the post-World War II world) have sparked discussions about traditional forms of education and their relevance to the demands of life today. In Europe and the U.S., this discussion has taken place both in the economic and labor sectors and has resulted in calls for curricular reform, higher standards, and measured results:

- Curricular reforms are meant to revise the content of schooling to build bridges across disciplines, to change the traditional notions of targeted vocational and pre-university academic education, and to prepare students for a new workplace.
- Higher standards are meant to raise student, parental, school, and ultimately community expectations for educational achievement. (This may be primarily an American phenomenon.)
- Measured results are meant to make it possible to hold schools and school systems accountable for outcomes, including the academic achievements of their students.

Each of these movements implicitly raises the question *what is a quality education?* because each is a means or policy tool that requires some defined end to reform for, set standards for, or measure for. This question became particularly important to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) when it initiated efforts to improve the comparability of education statistics and how education results are measured (Benavot and Resnik, UBASE paper) in the mid-1990s.

Most measures of student learning in developed nations at this time focused on traditional school subjects, and across various nations education policy-makers and analysts recognized that such

measures were limited and that some broader measures of education were needed (see Salganik, 2001). At the heart of the problem, though, was a disconnect between measurement efforts and broader discussions about curriculum, standards, what young people need for modern life, and the goals of school generally. Thus the international efforts to improve measured results led to an international project to explore whether a limited set of key competencies could be identified that would guide the development of broader measures of a quality education. This OECD project came to be known as The Definition and Selection of Competencies: Theoretical and Conceptual Foundations Project—or DeSeCo for short.

DeSeCo

DeSeCo set out to develop a conceptual and theoretical foundation for key competencies by addressing the question: *What competencies are needed by individuals to live a successful life and for society to face the challenges of the present and the future in modern, democratic societies?* DeSeCo was led by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office, and the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics and Statistics Canada supported the work. Although conducted in the context of statistics and government statistics agencies, the project aimed to contribute to public dialogue about education policy and practice as well as statistics. Thus DeSeCo recruited inputs and dialogue on the topic of competencies from a variety of perspectives spanning the world of scholarship, policy, and education practice. DeSeCo sought to have an international and interdisciplinary interchange among scholars from different disciplines as well as policymakers and policy researchers. DeSeCo's organizers believed that such an approach was necessary to develop a sound theoretical and conceptual answer to DeSeCo's guiding question—an answer that could guide the development of both assessments and education policy strategies. DeSeCo focused on OECD countries, but it considered that the work would have the potential to be relevant beyond the OECD.¹⁷

DeSeCo initiated its work with the task of identifying competencies because *key competence* and related terms (e.g., key skills, life skills, core competencies) have been prominently used in education policy discussions since at least the 1980s (as well as in psychology and job training discussions) to focus attention on behaviors that are important for individuals. Of course, DeSeCo did not take up the concept of competence just because it was prominent; DeSeCo picked up the concept for the same reason it gained wide circulation: because the concept focuses attention on individual behaviors and defines behavioral outcomes as opposed to assessing particular skills, as is typical in subject-specific definitions of educational success (e.g., all students can add and

¹⁷ Specifically, DeSeCo's work included organizing papers by scholars on the project's guiding question, soliciting comments by other scholars and people from the policy sector, collecting contributions from OECD countries about recent activities related to competencies, and hosting two international symposia. For additional information on DeSeCo, see Rychen, Dominique Simone, & Salganik, Laura Hersh (eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies* (Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe & Huber, 2001); Rychen, Dominique Simone, & Salganik, Laura Hersh (eds.), *Key Competencies for a Successful Life and a Well-Functioning Society*, (Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe & Huber, 2003); and www.deseco.admin.ch.

subtract successfully, all students can express their thoughts in written form clearly, etc.). DeSeCo recognized, however, that this concept needed to be clarified.¹⁸

To provide conceptual clarification, DeSeCo commissioned Weinert to review different ways that the term competence has been used in academic literature. After doing so, Weinert recommended that DeSeCo adopt a pragmatic conceptualization, namely that *competence be used to refer to the necessary prerequisites for successfully meeting a complex demand*. At first glance, this is a straight-forward, if someone abstract, concept. But it is worth taking a moment to consider this concept and contrast it more fully with traditional approaches to defining quality education.

First and foremost, it is important to see is that instead of mastery of some body or knowledge or set of skills—the traditional goals of educational, the concept of competence looks at the ability to meet complex demands,¹⁹ which requires both cognitive and noncognitive (e.g., motivational, ethical, volitional and/or social) “prerequisites” The concept is flexible enough to be used with demands that are very specific (for example, to a particular occupation) as well as demands that appear in a variety of domains of life. The constant is that the logical structure of a competence derives from that demand.²⁰ In contrast, traditional expressions of goals of education are structured around particular knowledge and skills.

Within the broad concept of competence, Weinert proposed that the term *key competence* be used when for competences that are used to meet “many different, equally important demands of everyday, work-related, or social life.”²¹ This is to say, when a competence is needed by all or should be a universal competence. The topic of the concepts of competence and key competencies will be discussed further in the section below on DeSeCo’s frame of reference. However, for now it suffices to know that DeSeCo used Weinert’s conceptual definition as a starting point for its subsequent work.

¹⁸ The need for conceptual clarification was underscored by the research of Weinert, who noted that over 650 different key competencies have been recognized in German literature on education—a number that begs the question of whether these competencies are truly key for everyone. Weinert, F.E., “Concept of competence: A conceptual clarification,” in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, 45–65. Oates similarly noted that in England, where the identification of key skills has been prominently used in the field of vocational training, there is often confusion over whether “key skills” refer to common skills, generic skills that apply in a wide range of setting, skills that allow individuals to transfer skills from one setting to another, or skills which are not commonly needed in the present but are likely to be needed in the future. Oates, T., “Key skills/key competencies: Avoiding the pitfalls of current initiatives,” in D.S. Rychen, L.H. Salganik, & M.E. McLaughlin (eds.), *Contributions to the second DeSeCo symposium*, (Neuchâtel, Switzerland: Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2001), 171–193.

¹⁹ By a “complex demand,” Weinert did not mean a complicated task in the sense of something with many parts that demands coordination of the parts; he meant an exigency to which an appropriate response requires applying and combining skills, knowledge, and other prerequisites in dynamic ways that cannot be predicted or automated.

²⁰ For an overly simplified example consider, a competence in skiing to meet the demand of commuting in rural Sweden. This specific demand... [complete example.]

²¹ Weinert, “Concept of competence,” 63.

How does one determine which competencies are key?

Scholars' viewpoints

DeSeCo asked the question “which competencies are key?” of five scholars. In keeping with the goal of an international and interdisciplinary perspective, the scholars were from different academic disciplines (anthropology, economics, philosophy, psychology, and sociology) and different countries (France, Switzerland, the UK, and the US). Thus their ideas represented a range of viewpoints about what it is that is important for individuals to learn. This range suggests the difficulties involved in defining a “quality education.” Their ideas also, however, represented a number of common threads, which suggest that it may be possible to define a “quality education” that has the potential of being universalizable. These two points are evident from a brief synopsis of each of their contributions.

- Anthropologist Jack Goody (University of Cambridge) rejected the idea of identifying common key competencies *per se* on grounds that theory must always be considered in the context of practice.²² Recognizing that there may be some very general qualities required by modern life, Goody focused on the intractability of specifying key competencies that can span cultures, social contexts, and individuals *within* any one country, let alone *between* countries at a sufficient level of specificity to guide practice. (Relevant for UBASE, he also cautioned against limiting the work to developed countries because it is bound to be used in a larger context and have a negative, homogenizing effect.)
- Philosophers Monique Canto-Sperber (Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, Paris) and Jean-Pierre Dupuy (Ecole Polytechnique, Paris) established a set of values that are useful for defining a good life and are consistent with major moral theories: accomplishment, choosing one’s own course through life, understanding oneself and one’s world, enjoyment, and deep personal relationships.²³ In addition, they established the premise that the human mind cannot be reduced to a set of abstract rules or algorithms that describe the workings of a machine. Based on these values and this premise, the authors identified five broad dimensions of competence: coping with complexity (recognizing patterns); perceptive competencies (discriminating between relevant and irrelevant features); normative competencies (choosing the appropriate means to reach a given end, appreciating various possibilities, making and applying moral judgments); cooperative competencies (cooperating with others, trusting others, taking the role of the other); and narrative competencies (making sense of what happens in life to oneself and others, describing the world and one’s own real and desirable place in it). These competencies can be construed as dimensions of a five-dimensional space, with sub-competencies and skills pertaining to several if not all of the five areas of key competencies.

²² Goody, J., “Competencies and education: Contextual diversity,” in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, 175–189.

²³ Canto-Sperber, M., & Dupuy, J.P., “Competencies for the good life and the good society,” in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, 67–92.

- Psychologist Helen Haste (University of Bath, England) began from the premise that humans are adaptive, social beings whose competencies both derive from these attributes and allow them to meet the demands of particular historical periods and social contexts.²⁴ She proposed management of the tension between innovation and continuity as an overarching meta-competence, and she identified five broad areas of key competence: adaptively assimilating changing technologies; dealing with ambiguity and diversity; finding and sustaining community links; managing motivation and emotion; and the competence to focus on morality, responsibility, and citizenship. She described the competent individual as one that “is self-sufficient, able to focus attention and plan, with a future orientation, is adaptable to change, has a sense of responsibility, has a belief that one can have an effect, and is capable of commitment”. Haste suggested that it is useful to think of competencies through thinking of individuals as “Tool Users” in the sense that tools (including language) are “part of an active dialogue between the individual and the environment” (Haste, 2001: 96). Competencies then are more than skilled use of the tool; they involve recognizing what the tool makes possible and integrating new ways of understanding or making sense of the world, and new activities into our lives.
- Sociologist Philippe Perrenoud (University of Geneva) focused his analysis on “ordinary actors, the woman or man in the street, doing their best to survive and live as well as possible.”²⁵ What competencies do they need to preserve their autonomy, without infringing on that of others, and to avoid being abused, alienated, dominated, or exploited? Drawing on Bourdieu’s concept of social fields, Perrenoud proposed a set of transversal key competencies: being able to identify, evaluate, and defend one’s resources, rights and limits; to form and conduct projects and develop strategies, individually and collectively; to analyze situations and relationships; to co-operate, act in synergy and share leadership; to build and operate democratic organizations and systems of collective action; to manage and resolve conflicts; to understand, apply, and elaborate rules; and to construct negotiated orders beyond cultural differences.
- Economists Frank Levy (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Richard Murnane (Harvard University) argued that recent social changes related to technology and globalization have transformed the competencies needed in the workplace.²⁶ They used relevant economic theory and available empirical results, as well as their own research with hiring practices of high-performance firms, to identify those competencies that predict economic success and individual income. These competencies include reading and mathematical skills (not only for their instrumental use but as the basis for life-long learning); oral and written communication abilities; skills to work productively in different social groups; emotional intelligence and re-

²⁴ Haste, H., “Ambiguity, autonomy, and agency: Psychological challenges to new competence,” in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, 93–120.

²⁵ Perrenoud, P., “The key to social fields: Competencies of an autonomous actor,” in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and selecting key competencies*, 121–149, quotation from 126.

²⁶ Levy F., & Murnane, R.J. (2001). “Key competencies critical to economic success,” in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, 151–173.

lated abilities to co-operate well with other people; and familiarity with information technology. As a result of their grounding in economic theory and research, these competencies are identified in a particular field and for a specific group (e.g., employees in the labor market), but are seen as relevant across social fields and groups.

It is quite obvious that the ideas in these papers are very heterogeneous; the scholars structured their approaches to identifying key competencies around different organizing ideas, central questions, and conceptual frameworks. With the exception of Goody, however, they each proposed a set of key competencies needed by the individual for what the authors define as success, reflecting their overall approaches. While seemingly disparate on the surface, these sets of key competencies have many underlying common themes. To develop a synthesis and identify commonalities among them, DeSeCo asked developmental psychologist Robert Kegan (Harvard University) and sociologist Cecilia Ridgeway (Stanford University) to review these five foregoing scholars' papers.

One commonality that Kegan saw across the sets of key competencies was the need for individuals to reach a particular level of mental complexity.²⁷ Kegan draws from his evolutionary theory of mental development in which individuals' "ways of knowing" change from childhood into adulthood. Adolescents, for instance, are expected to be able to think abstractly, construct values and ideas through self-reflection, and subordinate their interests to those of a group. But these capacities do not allow adults to meet the often conflicting demands of the modern world. It is necessary to go one step further, to step back one's own socialization and create one's own system for prioritizing and resolving conflicting demands, and then to act, to be "self-authoring", to be the author of one's own script. Kegan observes "Haste, Perrenoud, Canto-Sperber and Dupuy, and Levy and Murnane all present us a picture of socializing processes, but they all ask 'competent adults' to be simultaneously mindful of them (thus not a sociopath or irresponsible ward of society) without being captive of them (thus not merely a faithful, loyal, obedient part of an unquestioned set of arrangements)" (2001, p. 199). Without reaching this level of mental complexity, individuals will not be able to apply specific key competencies in their lives.

Ridgeway identified two broad areas of common ground among the essays.²⁸ She noted that the first—the ability to join and function effectively in social groups—is a truly universal key competence, necessary for material and psychological survival of human beings. In modern democratic societies, it is necessary for people to join and operate democratically in multiple, complex, and socially heterogeneous groups. Taking the role of the other, finding mutually agreeable solutions in the face of conflicting interests, motivation to act democratically, and cognitive complexity and ideational flexibility are examples of components that contribute to this competence. The second area identified by Ridgeway is the importance of the personality attributes such as

²⁷ Kegan, R., "Competencies as working epistemologies: Ways we want adults to know," in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and Selecting Key Competencies*, 192–204.

²⁸ Ridgeway, C., "Joining and functioning in groups, self-concept and emotion management," in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Defining and selecting key competencies*, 205–211.

self-concept, which supports individuals' ability to act with confidence, and emotion management, which allows individuals to deal with frustration, disappointment, and failure.

Policy and practice

Given these commonalities, DeSeCo concluded that the concept of key competencies had the potential to be useable for assessing the results of different countries' educational systems. However, given that the ultimate aim of DeSeCo was to develop a theoretical and conceptual foundation for activities in the policy arena, the project also sought to understand whether the concept of key competence could be used by policymakers and practitioners. Toward this end, DeSeCo asked individuals from relevant organizations to comment on the five scholar's essays and invited OECD countries to contribute reports about how key competencies were used at the national level and which key competencies were identified.²⁹ DeSeCo learned that there are questions about the universalizability of competencies but that at the same time the concept of competencies are already in wide use and there are many similarities in how it is used.

The question of whether it is appropriate to think that there may be common key competencies, even within countries, was raised by several respondents: The New Zealand report commented that the value placed on autonomous individual behavior reflects a Western paradigm, which is not consistent with the values of the Māori and Pacific peoples' cultures (Kelley, 2001). Some respondents noted that differences between Western capitalist ideas about property and the values of middle-Asian communal economies may mean that one needs different key competencies for different groups (Oates, 2003). Respondents also identified citizenship as an area where common key competencies may not be possible, for while meeting demands related to being a citizen may be a common key competence, the particularities of doing so differ in different political and cultural contexts (Fratczak-Rudnicka & Torney-Purta, 2003).

The majority of respondents, however, concurred that, in spite of contextual differences, which everyone recognized, it is possible and worthwhile to identify key competencies and use them to guide policy and practice. Delors and Draxler (2001) note that all collective human endeavor is based on the assumption that there are some things that unite individuals, and they cite the United Nations and democratic governments as examples of institutions that assume certain common ideals and values. They reject the argument that the fact that these commonalities are sometimes situational or seen as idealistic and ideological makes them irrelevant. Consistent with the idea mentioned above that key competencies should be anchored in a normative starting point, they point to their experience with UNESCO's International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century. Despite the different perspectives related to cultural viewpoints, pragmatic versus ideal starting points, differential application of these values, the commission

²⁹ This section draws heavily on Salganik, L.H., & Stephens, M., "Competence priorities in policy and practice," in Rychen & Salganik (eds.), *Key Competencies for a Successful Life and a Well-Functioning Society*, 13–40, and Trier, U.P., "Twelve countries contributing to DeSeCo: A summary report," in Rychen, Salganik, & McLaughlin (eds.), *Contributions to the Second DeSeCo Symposium*, 27–64.

discovered a much greater agreement about the nature of competencies than one would assume. The ability to make moral judgments and apply them, to describe the world and our own real and desirable place in it, the ability to marshal our own skills to constructing a future that involves living in society (with its freedoms and constraints), and so on, are universally recognized as competencies for a "successful life". (Delors and Draxler, 2001: 215)

DeSeCo also found that the idea of key competence has been a useful conceptual tool in different social fields in many OECD countries for formulating and discussing policies that respond to broad demands seen as associated with rapid technological changes, globalization, and movement towards a "knowledge economy." Although the emphases have been different, the idea of key competence has resonated in education and in the economic sector, and also in other fields such as youth development and citizenship.

- In education, key competencies are often associated with broadening of both general and vocational education and also with reforming education for social renewal.³⁰
- In the economic sector, the use and value of the concept of worker competencies and skills has become quite standard.³¹
- Outside of the formal education system, discussions about key competencies have arisen in initiatives meant to contribute to the social, emotional, physical and/or intellectual development of youth.³²

³⁰ Salganik and Stephens, 2003. In some countries (generally Austria, Germany, and Switzerland), they have been a policy vehicle for promoting curriculum changes that integrate across schools subjects, either directly through curriculum reform or indirectly through school-leaving requirements. In others (generally the Nordic countries), key competencies have been used in national expressions of the goals of education.

³¹ Worker competencies and skills are frequently seen as a "strategic factor that can be used to boost productivity and market competitiveness" (Callieri, 2001); see also Farrugia, 2001 and Oliva, 2003. Competence development and management as a legitimate guiding framework for organizational decision-making is seen as an addition (or alternate) to the traditional focus on formal qualifications and a means for integrating the notion of lifelong learning into the business management process. From the labor perspective, there is the concern that these strategies are used by business to promote their own interests; Ritchie (2001) suggests that businesses themselves do not practice teamwork, flexibility, trustworthiness, characteristics they ask of their workers in the name of key skills or competencies. In some countries, unions have also used the idea of key competence as a means to promote increasing the opportunities of workers. Both the business and labor perspective acknowledge that there is a tension between on one hand developing broad competencies that aren't applicable in specific jobs and on the other, specific skills needed for a particular job but relevant for others. Callieri, C., "The Knowledge Economy: A Business Perspective," in Rychen & Salganik (Eds.), *Defining and selecting key competencies*, 228–231; Farrugia, J.P., "Competence management as an investment: A business perspective," *Ibid.*, 232–235; Oliva, A., "Key competencies in and across social fields: The employers' perspective," in Rychen, Salganik, & McLaughlin (Eds.), *Contributions to the Second DeSeCo Symposium*, 97–99; and Ritchie, L., "Key competencies for whom? A labor perspective," in Rychen & Salganik (Eds.), *Defining and selecting key competencies*, 236–240.

³² For example, in the United States, the 4-H program is conducting a research study to conceptualize life skills in each of the four "H"s: Hands, Health, Head, and Heart. A similar effort has also taken place in the Netherlands. Concern in the civic sector has focused on behaviors associated with participation in democratic society.

A number of national-level projects have conducted research and developed statistics and indicators related to key competencies. Responding to the National Educational Goal for “every adult American to be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in the global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” (National Education Goals Panel, 1999), the United States initiated *Equipped for the Future: What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century* (EFF), which conducted an extensive consensus process to ask adults what skills they thought they needed in their roles as citizens, family members, and workers, and to identify the skills which underlay these activities. Switzerland, Canada, and Denmark have conducted research and developed indicators structured around key competencies. Related research in France has focused on the importance of context for developing indicators of skills and competencies.

At the international level, a number of large-scale survey efforts have measured characteristics related to key competencies across countries. The Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (ALL) assesses literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving and builds on the International Study of Adult Literacy (IALS), conducted during the 1990s. Most international studies of school-age youth have focused on school subjects. Recent efforts to measure competencies more broadly include the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the OECD and the IEA Civic Education Study. PISA measures reading, mathematical, and scientific literacy as well as cross-curricular competencies such as self-regulated learning and problem-solving. The IEA Civic Education Study measured civic knowledge, skills, and attitudes of 14- and 18-year olds.

Trier conducted an analysis of the reports submitted by countries to DeSeCo.³³ His conclusions about which competencies are identified as key in the different countries are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The most common demands for individual competencies in 12 OECD countries, by the frequency with which they were mentioned in country reports for DeSeCo

High	Medium	Low
Social competencies/Cooperation	Value orientation	Cultural competencies (aesthetic, creative, intercultural, media)
Literacies/Intelligent and applicable knowledge	Self-competence/Self-management	Health/Sports/Physical competence
Learning competencies/Lifelong learning	Political competence/Democracy	
Communication competencies	Ecological competence	
	Relation to nature	

Source: Trier (2003), in Rychen, Salganik, & McLaughlin (eds.), *Contributions to the second DeSeCo symposium*, 45.

³³ Trier, U.P., “Twelve countries contributing to DeSeCo: A summary report,” 27–64.

Based on this input and the discussion at two international symposia of scholars and leading representatives from policy and practice at the international and national levels, DeSeCo concluded (1) that it is worthwhile to construct a frame of reference for competence and key competence and (2) that it is possible to do so in a way that is both theoretically grounded and relevant to current concerns in policy and practice. What follows is the model or frame of reference DeSeCo proposed to theoretically ground proposed competencies and keep them relevant to current concerns in policy and practice.

DeSeCo's frame of reference for key competencies

DeSeCo set out to address the question of whether it is possible to identify a small number of key competencies, and if so, to identify the competencies and explore the extent to which differences and convergences about their significance exist in different political, economic, social, and cultural environments" (Gilomen, 2003, p. 182). Without claiming to have found the only answer, DeSeCo concluded that "there is compelling evidence that based on explicit normative, definitional, and theoretical criteria, it is possible to define and select a limited number of key competencies (Gilomen, 2003:183). Further, in the interest of going beyond producing yet another list of key competencies, DeSeCo focused on "developing concepts and theoretical models that are meaningful to policy concerns that that can underpin the definition of competence and the construction of key competencies" (183). This section presents the main elements of the theoretical and conceptual foundation, which resulted from a synthesis of ideas presented in the material collected by DeSeCo and the discussions at the international symposia.³⁴

Concepts of competence and key competence

Having concluded that key competencies were possible and promising for policy and practice, DeSeCo defined the concept of competence in a way that it could use it for the purposes of conceptual coherence. DeSeCo adapted Weinert's definition of competence, adopting as a definition of competence *the ability to successfully meet complex demands in a particular context through the mobilization of psychosocial prerequisites (including both cognitive and noncognitive aspects)*.³⁵ This definition represents a functional approach that stresses the demands facing individuals and the actions, choices, or behaviors needed to meet these demands. This definition allows for a broad view of demands on individuals, including in the family, the workplace, civic life, or social/personal life. It also allows demands to be expressed at different levels of generality/abstraction, referenced to broad and general demands or those specific to an occupation, particular area of life, or even a specific situation. (For example, they could be referenced to as wide a variety as occupations, responding to broad changes in technology, or personal decisions concerning relationships with others.) What is key in this conceptualization of competence is that a competence entails being able to meet a demand facing an individual.

³⁴ For further information, see Rychen and Salganik (Eds.) 2003, primarily Rychen and Salganik, 2003; Rychen, 2003; and Gilomen, 2003.

³⁵ Rychen and Salganik, 2003, 43

This definition of competence also recognizes that a range of internal prerequisites combine together to allow individuals to meet demands. These may include knowledge, cognitive skills, practical skills, attitudes, emotions, values and ethics, and motivation – multiple factors that interact among themselves in a complex manner that eventually results in an action. Many of these internal attributes (including both cognitive and noncognitive ones) have themselves been thought of as competencies (e.g., knowledge), but according to this definition, they are not competencies. Indeed, in this formulation, knowledge may be important even to meet demands that are typically not characterized as cognitive; similarly to meet demands often characterized as “cognitive,” attitudes, emotions, values and ethics play an important role. Thus, it does no good to possess particular internal attributes (e.g., knowledge, values) unless one has the constellation that contributes to behavior, choices, or action that meet the particular demand.

The final element in the definition of competence is the role of context. Competencies are played out in the social and physical environment – and thus their specifics, as well as the specifics of their internal components are profoundly influenced by the individual’s particular situational context. For this element, DeSeCo drew from Pierre Bourdieu’s notion of social fields (Bourdieu, 1980; 1982; Swartz, 1997). According to this theory, individual action takes place within dynamic systems of sets of social interests and challenges, which are referred to as social fields. Meeting demands in a social field involves understanding and being able to operate within the system of capital of the field. As competencies vary on the scale of abstraction, social fields vary according to specificity. They can be broad such as spheres of life or they can be quite specific as particular context – work situations, families, etc. With the inclusion of context in its definition, the concept of competencies recognizes that there is variation in how competencies are manifested – even within developed countries.

Key competence

Within this concept of competence, what is a key competence? Based on the inputs it received on competence and key competence, DeSeCo proposed that there are three criteria that define a key competence:

Key competencies [1] contribute to highly valued outcomes in terms of an overall successful life and a well-functioning society...[2] are instrumental for meeting important, complex demands and challenges in a wide spectrum of contexts...and [3] are important for all individuals.³⁶

Several ideas beyond the minimal idea that key competencies are important are incorporated in this definition.

- Individual behavior is seen as affecting not only the individual but also the larger society, and its impact on the larger society needs to be taken into account in considerations of key competence. The end result of key competence is not just individual success. Social capital, in

³⁶ Rychen, 2003, 66-67.

the sense of social networks grounded in trust is one example of the potential impact of individual competencies on a characteristic of society.

- Key competencies are important for different areas of life, such as the economic sector, civic life, the family, interpersonal relations, individual and public health, and are not directed only toward individuals' basic survival or society's basic functioning. Potential benefits of key competencies at the social level include a productive economy, democratic processes, social cohesion, and peace; at the individual level, key competencies contribute to successful participation in the labor market, civic and political life, and interpersonal relations, health, and general satisfaction with one's life.
- Lastly, key competencies are neither reserved for an elite nor seen as a second-rate substitute for other competencies; they are for everyone. Competencies that are needed only by some or are relevant for a narrow area of life may be important for those individuals or in those contexts but they are not key competencies.

Common normative starting point

Any designation of key competencies that contribute to *highly valued* individual and social outcomes for *all* individuals necessarily involves value judgments about what is a successful life and a well-functioning society. This is to say, it must be grounded in a normative vision of a desirable world. Thus, as part of the project, DeSeCo addressed the question "Are there sufficient commonalities across OECD countries and potentially in-transition and developing countries to identify common key competencies?"

DeSeCo grounded its normative starting point in international agreements and conventions – the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the World Declaration on Education for All, the Rio Declaration on the Environment and Development – "which specify basic human rights, democratic values, and sustainable and integrated environmental, economic, and social development as desirable goals for all societies" (Rychen, 2003: 69). These agreements are based on the notion that there are sufficient common ideas and values to support collective world enterprises (Delors & Draxler, 2001:214). This idea is reinforced by the philosophers' contribution to DeSeCo on the topic of the "good life." Canto-Sperber and Dupuy argue that all humans share certain psychological needs and capacities (for example, aspiration to go beyond necessity, to learn from the past and plan for the future, to think, remember, imagine, have feelings and emotions). These common aspects, along with major moral theories, justify their criteria for a good life: accomplishment, the elements of human existence ("choosing one's own course through life and having a life which is properly human"), understanding oneself and one's world, enjoyment, and deep personal relations. These form the normative starting point for DeSeCo's identification of key competencies.

Common demands of today's world

Given the central role of demands in the concept of competence, the existence of common demands in modern, democratic societies is critical for the existence of common key competencies. It is clear that even within the OECD, different countries and different groups within and across

countries have different concrete circumstances and have different cultural traditions and social institutions. These all contribute to variation in specific demands facing individuals. Yet, as with the normative framework, there are characteristics that these societies share and thus demands that individuals living in them face in common. An in-depth analysis of modern, democratic societies is beyond the scope of this paper; however, briefly stated, common challenges arise from increasing interdependency throughout the world, movement of populations, and new forms of communication. Furthermore, old and new problems such as poverty, inequality of opportunity, preserving the environment, increased competition, and alienation and violence are certainly not the exclusive province of one country or another (Rychen, 2003, page 74-5). Together, facing uncertainty and complexity is the rule rather than the exception in today's world.

Beyond these common demands, DeSeCo also identified broad agreement on concepts that provide a common conceptual foundation for all the key competencies identified by the project. The concept is reflectivity and reflective practice, which is seen as a common thread running through each of the key competencies enabling individuals to address complex and potentially conflicting demands and take an active role in grounding their actions in their own value systems. Given the nature of demands facing individuals, a consensus emerged that recalling knowledge, thinking abstractly, and being well-socialized are no longer sufficient if they ever were for individuals to meet the challenges they face. There is a need for what Kegan (2001) terms the "self-authoring level of mental complexity" that allows individuals to take a critical stance towards their own lives, gain some distance from the socializing press, create a value system which allows them to prioritize among conflicting demands, and take responsibility for their own lives—in a sense, to become the playwrights of their own lives. One of the reasons why this is so important is that issues individuals face today often cannot be resolved through an *either-or* solution. Individuals need to recognize and deal with tensions, "for instance between equality and freedom, autonomy and solidarity, efficiency and democratic processes, ecology and economic logic, diversity and universality, and innovation and continuity--by integrating seemingly contradictory or incompatible goals as aspects of the same reality" (Rychen, 2003, p. 78). What is needed beyond recognizing these tensions is for individuals to make decisions and to take responsibility that their decisions and actions are consistent with their goals and values. In Kegan's view, this capability is part of a developmental theory in which individuals must first be able to think abstractly and fit themselves into a social system; thus the higher level of complexity is not reached until adulthood. Reflective practice is then a common internal feature of key competencies, which, consistent with the concept of competence, are focused around demands on individuals.

Three-fold categorization of key competencies

Based on this common normative framework and the common demands, and drawing from the scholarly essays, DeSeCo developed a three-fold categorization of key competencies. This conceptualization of the three categories, together with the information about the use of key competencies in OECD countries, formed the basis for identifying the exemplar key competencies in each category. The categories are interrelated and conceptually distinct. The categories, which are described in more detail in Rychen, 2003, are as follows:

1. Interacting in socially heterogeneous groups

Human beings are dependent throughout their lives on ties with others, not only for physical survival but also for their sense of self and social meaning. This category addresses interaction with others, and given the pluralistic character of modern democratic societies, the focus is on socially heterogeneous groups—“different others.” Because “[w]e live in a network of close relationships,” this category of interacting in socially heterogeneous groups “concerns the development of social bonds and coexistence with people whose backgrounds may be different from one’s own, who do not necessarily speak the same language (literally or metaphorically) or share the same memories, history, culture, or socioeconomic background” (Rychen, 2003: 87). Key competencies under this category benefit individuals both in instrumental ways and by enriching their understanding of themselves and society. These competencies work to strengthen social cohesion and alleviate fragmentation and social strains associated with increasing individual diversity. (This group of key competencies addresses the general concerns associated with such terms as “social skills,” “social competencies,” and “intercultural competencies” found in lists of key competencies submitted to DeSeCo.) DeSeCo identified three key competencies in the category of interacting in socially heterogeneous groups.

The ability to relate well to others

This key competence focuses on initiating, maintaining, and managing personal relationships, for instance with family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Empathy – taking the role of the other person and seeing things from his or her perspective – is an important prerequisite to relating well to others. It leads to reflection about options for actions, with the realization that one’s own view is not necessarily shared by the other person. Awareness and management of one’s emotions are also important for relating well to others.

The ability to cooperate

Many demands of modern life can not be met by one individual alone. Cooperation – working together with others towards a common goal – is a key competence mentioned repeatedly in the DeSeCo material. Joining forces with others is necessary in work teams, families, civic organizations, unions, management groups, indeed in just about every social environment. Cooperating involves balancing one’s own desires with commitment to the group and its goals and norms, balancing responsibility for active participation with the need to share leadership and support others, understanding one’s roles and responsibilities in relation to the group and its goals, constructing alliances with others, allowing for different shades of opinion, and making compromises (Rychen, 2003: 89).

The ability to manage and resolve conflicts

Conflict occurs in all aspects of life and the ability to manage and resolve conflict is the third key competence identified by DeSeCo in this category. It is an unavoidable by-product of individual freedom and rather than seeking to avoid and eliminate it, conflict should be approached in a constructive manner. This means considering the desires and needs of others, looking for win-win solutions rather than exclusively achieving one’s own goals, and recognizing when others’

needs take precedence over your own. “For individuals to take an active part in conflict management and resolution, they need to analyze the issues and interests at stake (e.g., power, recognition of merit, division of work, equity), the origins of the conflict, and the reasoning of all sides, and recognize that there are different possible positions” (Rychen, 2003: 90).

2. Acting autonomously

Acting autonomously is the category of key competencies that focuses on an individual’s sense of identity and empowerment to exercise control over his or her own life. It should not be interpreted as meaning that individuals can do whatever they want or can freely act in isolation from others. Rather acting autonomously is complementary to acting in socially heterogeneous groups; all our actions take place in the context of other people and of social norms and institutions. Key competencies in this area enable individuals to develop a value system, “to act rather than to be acted upon, to shape rather than to be shaped, and to choose rather than to accept choices decided by others. Acting autonomously refers to participating effectively in the development of society, in its social, political, and economic institutions (e.g., to take part in decision processes), and functioning well in different spheres of life – in the workplace, in one’s personal and family life, and in civil and political life” (Rychen, 2003: 91). The image of individuals determining life outcomes is most commonly associated with those who have power in society, but key competencies related to acting autonomously are just as important for those at the margins of power if they are to conceive of potential for change and take action to improve their lives. It is recognized that autonomy has to be considered relative to the rules of the social field in which an individual operates – for example the rules of autonomy are influenced by institutional norms (e.g., military, bureaucratic, religious, schools). However, even in these spheres, there are situations in which stepping outside of institutional norms and exercising individual autonomy is recognized as consistent with a wider value system. Three key competencies were identified in this category.

The ability to act within the “big picture”

This key competence involves understanding that individual actions take place within a larger normative and socioeconomic context and acting in accordance with the wider implications of one’s actions. The “big picture” is frequently multi-faceted, including not only the local situation but also a wider view of the community and ultimately, a global perspective. This competence allows individuals to understand the larger issues at stake and the consequences of their actions in a larger context, so that individuals’ actions are just and responsible, even when it is not easy or convenient (Rychen, 2003, page 93). It requires individuals to have an understanding of the larger physical and social world, envision the impact of different courses of actions, and choose actions that are consistent with one’s values at different levels of the system.

The ability to form and conduct life plans and personal projects

This key competence enables individuals to see the development of their lives as an object of their actions. Initially, this entails being aware of one’s own obligations, goals, and dreams. Then, it requires an orientation toward the future and the ability to prioritize among different possible ends, understand one’s own strengths and weaknesses, balance resources, learn from the

past, monitor progress and make adjustments (Rychen, 2003, page 95). It is also associated with terms used in policy discussions such as “self-directed learning,” “strategic competencies,” and “self management.”

The ability to defend and assert one's rights, interests, limits, and needs

This key competence recognizes that in modern Western societies, individuals are seen as responsible for making myriad decisions, and both the norms and formal rules related to them are increasingly complex. It is often the case that an individual's rights, interests, and needs are in conflict with those of others. As a result, autonomous action is needed both to assure rights related to the self (such as fair opportunities in society) and in the interest of collective life (such as adequate health care or education for all, effective democratic institutions). Many rights are established in formal laws, but these should be seen by individuals as a resource not a guarantee. ‘The development of this competence empowers individuals to assert both personal and collective rights, ensure a dignified existence, and gain more control over their own lives (Rychen, 2003: 97).

3. Using tools purposively and interactively

Like interacting in groups, using tools is a universal activity for human beings. Here, the term “tool” is used in the broadest sense of the term, to include not only physical tools but also socio-cultural ones such as language, information, and knowledge. The adverb “interactively” signifies that what is needed is not just the technical skills to operate a tool (e.g., reading or making a phone call with a cell phone); to use a tool interactively is to understand the potential of the tool for allowing us to do new things, to interact with the world in a different way, to accomplish new goals. Our experiences using various tools should “shape how we make sense of and become competent in the world, how we deal with transformation and change, and how we respond to long-term challenges” (Rychen, 2003: 98). When we encounter a new tool, we recognize its potential to allow us to do new things – live in different places, communicate with others differently, express new ideas, solve new problems, or undertake new activities that we could not do before – and take action accordingly. Three key competencies were identified in this category.

The ability to use language, symbols, and text interactively

Here the focus is on using language, symbols, and text to participate in society and accomplish personal goals. Thus, it requires the ability not only, for example, to read or manipulate numbers correctly, but also to reflect on the content's relevance in one's life, and draw on attitudes and values to use the language, symbols, or text as a tool to relate to the world. This key competence is related in policy discussions to “communication competence” and also to some uses of the “literacy,” although the meanings of these terms vary widely.

The ability to use knowledge and information interactively

This key competence draws attention to the importance of knowledge and information for individuals and society. But again, what is important is not just to have knowledge or information; what is important is to use them to make decisions or take actions. “It assumes critical reflection

on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure, and its social, cultural, and even ideological context and impact. Information competence is necessary as a basis for understanding options, forming opinions, making decisions, and taking informed and responsible actions” (Rychen, 2003: 101). Using knowledge and information interactively is needed not only for activities generally thought of as cognitive but also for those considered as predominantly social. Knowledge and information are important for understanding others and interacting with others in a manner consistent with one’s values.

The ability to use technology interactively

Human beings are confronted with advances in technology when new technologies are developed or when they are introduced where they were not available before. In today’s world, information and communication technologies in particular have placed new demands on individuals. Using new technology interactively entails not only learning how to operate it and agreeing to adopt it, but also adapting to what it makes possible. Examples from the developed world are the use of the cell phone and e-mail. They are not simply a different medium for making a telephone call or sending mail – they have changed the way people communicate with others. There are many other technologies that have changed the way we live (e.g., cars, televisions, and microwave ovens, to name a few that have affected the West in living memory). Recognizing the potential to do new things with such technologies and acting in a manner consistent with what one values in making use of that potential is at the heart of using tools interactively.

III. Implications of DeSeCo for defining a quality universal education

The first section of this paper stressed the importance of the exigencies faced by state decision-makers as the motivating factor behind the creation and evolution of universal education. The purpose of universal education is to impart to everyone “something” that has been deemed important by the decision-makers, with the specifics depending on the social, cultural, physical, and normative structures in which it is situated. But how does one define that “something”? Descriptions about education goals and curricula typically only touch the surface of schooling as an institution and how they affect students. The second section of the paper about the DeSeCo project laid out an approach that can shed light on this question. It described a conceptual link between *important common demands on individuals* and *expectations for individual behaviors*: the concept of key competence. In this third section, we describe why and how the concept of key competence can be used, and what the implications of its use are.

The concept of key competence we believe can contribute much toward developing a definition of universalizable quality education, from a Western perspective and more widely, because the concept (a) includes the idea of universality (key competence is for all), and (b) structures an approach to education that promotes individual behaviors that are needed for a successful life and a well-functioning society rather than only for mastering knowledge. There are three ways in particular that key competencies structure such an approach to education.

- First, as with any competence, the logical structure around demands facing individuals focuses attention on what individuals need to do and assures an explicit linkage between education and expectations for individuals outside of school. In the West, expectations have

changed over time and challenges from the outside of school have been the stimulus for changes in schools (*add reference for more info*). With key competencies as a structure for defining quality universal education, this connection between schooling and what individuals need to be able to do outside of school is direct and transparent. With respect to non-Western countries, where universal education represents a secular trend, being clear about what are the demands upon individuals that call for universal education forces to the surface the topic of what aspects of the social environment constitute the driving force behind efforts to institute universal education.³⁷

- Second, the notion that competencies are manifested through the complex and dynamic interaction among different attributes of individuals – including but not limited to those associated with the cognitive domain – draws attention to the fact that schooling influences students in a variety of ways. That “something” that schooling is supposed to impart is multifaceted, encompassing what generally speaking are considered to span the domains of cognitive and social functioning as well as values and beliefs that underlie a wide range of behavior. The importance of school as a socializing institution is a central idea in sociology of education. (*Here more will be added to refer to different theories in sociology of education about socialization in schools.*) Fraczak-Rudnicka & Torney-Purta (2003) reported that in the majority of countries participating in the IEA Civic Education Study, the extent to which students reported an open, trusting classroom climate was a predictor of whether they intended to vote in elections and several other civic-related measures. Further, competence encompasses the idea that learning – whether learning school subjects, learning what behaviors are appropriate at work, or learning how to get along with others – involves a range of factors. The idea that individuals meet demands (or attain goals) through a complex interplay of different characteristics suggests a different paradigm of learning from the one that conceives of the mind as a container to fill. The new paradigm for learning takes account of how affective, moral and physical factors, as well as cognitive ones, affect learning (Gonzci, 2003; Salganik & Rychen, 2003).
- Third, the role of context has ramifications for defining and implementing quality universal education. The concretization of competencies is fundamentally affected by the context in which they occur, both with respect to demands and the internal attributes that allow individuals to meet them. (*This will be elaborated on.*)

The discussion in this section so far has brought out why the ideas behind key competencies lead in the direction of providing a quality education and defining the content of a universalized education. As discussed above, DeSeCo went further and developed a frame of reference for key competence to address the question of what competencies individuals need for a successful life and well-functioning society. What about the underlying demand for reflective practice and the three-fold categorization of key competence identified in DeSeCo? Are they relevant for UB-ASE? To address this issue, we look back at the four different grounds that make up the case for UBASE, put forth at the inception of the project (Bloom & Cohen, 2002). They are:

³⁷ Of course it is always possible that there is no rational reason for expansion of education other than to copy the West. Think about this.

- Humanitarian: Enabling human beings to achieve their capacities;
- Sociological: Developing social and cultural capital, strengthening community, and empowering people to take responsibility for their own lives and improving the lives of those around them;
- Political: Ensuring democracy and political stability; and
- Economic: Increasing human capital to raise productivity.

Together these also contribute to promoting health and a demographic transition from high fertility and mortality to low fertility and mortality. This perspective echoes the same themes as those raised in DeSeCo.

How can key competencies be used?

Key competencies allow for an expression of the goals of education – what individuals need to be able to do – *and* a theory for the components necessary for individual action to take place. They can be used to establish commonalities across different educational systems and at the same time allow for context-specific implementation at the practical level. Thus key competencies provide a conceptual tool for educational efforts to articulate their theory for why what is done in school will result in individuals able to meet particular demands or educational goals. In addition, the inclusion of context as an explicit element in the frame of reference requires some analyses of how a key competence can be concretized appropriately for a given context. Thus key competencies can be used to make educational efforts less one-size-fits-all and more tailored to particular aspects of the lives of individuals.

[This will be explained more fully]

What key competencies should be adopted?

DeSeCo's international and interdisciplinary "efforts resulted in an overarching frame of reference that can situate current and future key competencies in a large conceptual context" (Gillmen, 2003: 184). It includes the concepts of competence and key competence, a normative anchoring point, and the specification of the nature of key competence and a three-fold categorization of key competencies needed for a successful life and a well-functioning society in modern, democratic societies. Thus DeSeCo provided an overarching framework for identifying key competencies that we think provides an excellent foundation for defining a quality education that is universalizable. Such an education cultivates in individuals a reflective practice (i.e., to step back from their own socialization to resolve conflicting tensions and demands) and develops key competence in three broad areas: interacting in socially heterogeneous groups, acting autonomously, and using tools interactively.

[This discussion will be developed more fully]

Implications for schooling

Can schooling institute an education that cultivates reflectivity and develops (1) competence in interacting in socially heterogeneous groups, (2) competence in acting autonomously, and (3) competence in using tools purposively and interactively? How could it do so?

The challenge

If one thinks of schooling as merely teaching the explicit curriculum—mathematics, reading, science, history, etc.—there is little in the traditional content or teaching methods that seems obviously suited (or even malleable) to cultivate these key competencies. Each discipline has its own traditional teaching methods and the focus of these teaching methods is training students to produce desired outputs, not develop prerequisites for different demands. Moreover, schools are not completely flexible institutions that can institute any type of education. They have developed to provide particular types of curricula in particular types of institutions. Further, schooling also includes what has been called the “hidden curriculum”—the teaching of norms, values, and ways of conceiving of knowledge and the world at large. Although analysts frequently focus on differences among school, there is remarkable consistency across schools – even looking across countries (Meyer & Rowan, 197X; McEneaney & Meyer, 2003; Baker, 200X). The current model of schooling and its robustness is a primary factor that must be taken into consideration when defining quality UBASE.

[Further discussion and explanation of the hidden curriculum and of baseline model of schooling]

The potential

However, it is important to remember that the goals for schooling are primarily defined outside of schools, not by educators. Thus if politicians, policy-makers, or society more generally were to recognize the value of key competencies and call for them, they could be instituted, both in the explicit and the hidden curriculum.

In Europe, as the DeSeCo materials have shown, there is already a movement for recognizing competencies in school curricula as a strategy for changing schools in response to new social demands.... *[more details will be provided including discussion of U.S.]*

this out because it might start a discussion of the US and that isn't the point for now.

[This argument will be fleshed out further]

IV. Application to non-Western countries *[this section is even more preliminary]*

As explained above, defining a universalizable quality education with DeSeCo's frame of reference for key competencies offers many advantages for modern Westernized nations. However, for non-Western countries, any universalized education challenges the cultural and normative system by virtue of universal education's implicit endorsement of the concept of autonomous individual and the legitimacy of the modern social order. This definition of a quality education—so squarely grounded in the normative structure of modernity—presents an overt challenge to that system...

Why non-Western countries, and in particular countries suspicious of modernity (e.g., Muslim states), would accept this paper's definition of quality education for UBASE is an important question that must be addressed.

Moreover, in developing countries that do accept this paper's definition of a quality education, there remains the perennial problem of educational development projects: in areas of subsistence farming one can institute all of the outward activities of schooling and compel attendance with some degree of success, but the children have no authentic motivation or reason to learn (other than perhaps wanting to please a teacher) and, as a result, they generally do not progress through their lessons and advance through the grades.... One can argue that these attempts to educate indigenous people need the sort of frame of reference developed by DeSeCo to reform their educational efforts; however, schools cannot reform/change society singlehandedly.

UNESCO created an International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century in 1993 to look at "What kind of education is needed for what kind of society tomorrow?" The commission's final report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, identified four pillars of education: Learning to know; Learning to do; Learning to live together, learning to live with others; and Learning to be.

[These points will be more fully discussed.]

Conclusion

[To be drafted]

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