



Tuesday, 26 May 2009

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**Cultural and Spiritual Heritage of the Region**

With much interest I have read the curricular guidelines developed in Croatia and find them to be an excellent example of a curriculum designed to encourage dialogue between students who are members of diverse ethnic groups. The curricular guidelines undoubtedly encourage openness to diversity while also promoting critical thinking and inquiry. As such they have the potential to widen the horizons of participants in all that relates to issues of social cohesion and the recognitions of alterity.

Acknowledging the cultural embeddedness of all human experience is essential to the development of cross-cultural understanding. The guidelines clearly acknowledge humans cultural anchoring and yet, at the same time, recognize the responsibility of agency in human activity thus preventing a sense of abandonment and predetermination. Moreover the guidelines encourage the search for that which is common in human aspirations and thus allow for the development of a balance view which accounts for both difference and unity. It is exciting to read curricular guidelines which echo the best in present cultural/cross-cultural educational theorizing.

Pedagogically the guidelines also resonated with the best practices supported in present educational research. Among others collaborative and active learning strategies are suggested. These are enriched by an approach which seems to emphasize the centrality of participants' interests as these are expressed in their immediate experiential spheres of participation. These pedagogies will undoubtedly encourage the greater involvement in democratic processes in the schools for all: students, teachers, and the larger community. The guidelines are also laudable in the fact that they encourage strong teachers involvement



through reflective processes which if supported by supervision efforts and a careful and sensitive evaluation process will secure a worthwhile contribution to present knowledge in all that relates to co-existence educational efforts.

Having been involved, in a long standing ethnographic research effort in the integrated Palestinian Jewish bilingual (Arabic Hebrew) schools in Israel for the last ten years, I have no doubt that the curriculum suggested can be adapted and implemented in these schools and for the benefit of their communities. I am convinced the Israeli integrated schools would welcome the opportunity to participate in a collaborative comparative effort in which the experience gathered would benefit those involved in the difficult task of promoting co-existence and mutual recognition in conflict ridden societies

I would like to congratulate you all on this exciting curriculum project and look forward to hearing more about its implementation.

With all best wishes

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