

# The state of the lebanese curriculum education essay

[Education](#), [Curriculum](#)



On Tuesday April 18, 1996 Israeli 155mm mortars shelled UNIFIL 's Fiji BATT compound in the small town of Qana few kilometres south E of Tyre in Southern Lebanon. Around 800 civilians had taken safety at the base. The organic structures of 102 Arab civilian work forces, adult females and kids were shattered to pieces. Many similar accidents had occurred in the past, but this one was different. It triggered protests and presentations against the Israeli ground forces which has been busying Lebanon since March 14, 1978. During and since these events, the Lebanese acted as united and cohesive people, fighting to make the same end of release, and to bask its fruits - a free and incorporate state. Four old ages subsequently, the Israeli military personnels moved out of the country and May 25, 2000, was declared a national vacation in jubilation of opposition and release.

Each twelvemonth, activities and visits are paid to the grave of the Qana slaughter victims, in memorialization of the 18th of April. Crowds of citizens, intellectuals and pupils from different countries of Lebanon visit the sufferer ' graveyard in Qana on the said juncture. The purpose is to supply approaching coevalss with cognition bases, good for the building of a hereafter rich in its national didactic lessons, peculiarly the national battle heroic poem against business.

As a Lebanese, I truly acknowledge the function the Lebanese have ever played in engaging a war against the business of our land and resources. However, I am critical of the Lebanese course of study which has been meaningless and non built on facets and issues of the Lebanese world. I am even more critical of the insensitive and unresponsive nature of the math

course of study we teach and survey, at least in the schools and universities in Lebanon, which is inactive and does n't experience anything of its milieus. There is no uncertainty about the extent of harm caused by many old ages of business in our instruction in Lebanon. Most significantly we are non able to cover with Westernmathematicswhich is described by Bishop ( 1990 ) as `` one of the most powerful arms in the infliction of Western civilization " . ( p. 52 )

Although the `` business " of our land is an highly serious issue, the biggest danger we presently face is the battle for stoping the `` business of our heads " because `` The most powerful arm in the custodies of the oppressor is the head of the oppressed " ( Freire, 1970, p. 14 ) . Since the development age was launched by Truman more than 50 old ages ago ( through declaring all societies outside the Western universe `` developing " and, therefore, in demand of `` aid " to `` develop " them ) , mathematics instruction, development plans, and scientific cognition have been the chief tools used in interrupting the dorsum of societies.

I was born in Beirut, Lebanon. Except for a few old ages when I had to travel out and work, I have lived all my life in Lebanon. When I was born, the Gallic system ofEducationwas used because, for some clip, we have been colonized by France. After 1968, the British and American course of study became the course of study in schools. Since 2000, and after the terminal of thecivil warin Lebanon, a so called `` Lebanese new course of study " has been in the procedure of being developed.

The intent of this paper is to cast some visible radiation on the Lebanese mathematics curriculum from a socio political position and to foreground some issues that defined and confined the Lebanese experience of learning math in schools. Specifically, I would wish to analyze what ``business of heads '' means in mathematics course of study and besides how ``business '' is reflected in the history of mathematics instruction in Lebanon. My peculiar attractive force to the impression of ``business '' lies in the fact that our heads have been controlled in Lebanon by restricting the options and options in how mathematics was taught and learned in the yesteryear. I am cognizant of this fact because of my past experience as both a pupil and instructor of mathematics in Lebanese schools every bit good as in other schools in the Middle East. We have been directed and driven so that we are unable to see possible options and options in both our instruction and acquisition of mathematics. The nature of mathematics learning has been such that pupils are non encouraged to talk up and show their different ( and sometimes opposing ) points of position and to admit the right of others to take his/her ain point of position.

## **OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING MATHEMATICS IN LEBANON**

In Lebanon ( besides true in many topographic points particularly the developing or Third World Countries ) , we are committed to a position of mathematics as a scientific discipline that is absolute and unconditioned. We have considered mathematics to be a complete system stand foring nonsubjective, ageless truths. In his chapter, Math, Culture and Authority, Fasheh ( 1997 ) excellently gives a vivid, thick description of how math, in

Third universe states, `` a^|. is normally taught as a set of regulations and expressions that pupils have to memorise, and a set of problems-usually absurd to students- that they must work out " ( p. 275 ) . This is every bit true for the Lebanese schoolroom and Lebanese course of study which is extremely compartmentalized and decontextualized. Teachers are the exclusive authorization in the schoolroom every bit good as the major beginning of mathematical cognition dictated as a set of nonnegotiable regulations and processs that challenge topographic point and clip. In short, mathematics course of study is considered as the unquestionable hegemony which is to be followed and respected by both pupils and instructors.

Reflecting on the province of the field, a closer expression at the history of how findings from international proving led many states to oppugn the substance of their school course of study and how this testing has led to divisions and wars been what the best math course of study for the twenty-first century is, confirms the incontrovertible position that when political relations intervene in instruction worldwide, the good intended messages are lost. Possibly a well known illustration is the California math Wars where terrible diminution in the sum of educational budgets made it more purposive the usage of standards-based appraisals as amotivationfor acquiring more support, the beginning being private organisations.

## **RETHINKING MATHEMATICAL KNOWLEDGE: ETHNOMATHEMATICS**

`` A common misconception in the instruction of math has been, and still is, the belief that math can be taught efficaciously and meaningfully without

associating it to civilization or to the single pupil " ( Fasheh, 1997, P. 281 ) .

Extensive research acknowledges the function that civilization dramas in act uponing the manner people see things and understand constructs. This, and non the trouble of the topic, impacted the position that math is nonmeaningful, stiff and beyond one 's apprehension. `` Math can be used to emphasize one 's ain civilization with its particular and beautiful features. At the same clip, math can be used to do one aware of the drawbacks in one 's ain civilization and attempt to get the better of them " . ( Fasheh, 1997, P. 284 ) .

My ain experience, and the experience of many others that I knew or read about, made me progressively believe in the sociopolitical facet of math as a tool to stamp down and rule minorities in the universe.

Mathematicss has played an of import portion in globalisation ( English, 2002 ) . First, the topic itself is a merchandise of centuries of cultural exchange between East and West. In the head of many, it has achieved a position of an international linguisticcommunicationindependent of cultural association and context of development. The similarity of many mathematics instruction plans around the universe is partially a merchandise of this thought. Second, besides mathematics is seen as a ticket for draw a bead oning persons and states for technological, and therefore economic, development. This image of mathematics promotes the copying of course of study from the economically more successful to the less successful states.

Further, the position of mathematics in the course of study is similar in many states where it is given a particular importance, 2nd merely, if non equal, to linguistic communication instruction. In many states mathematics is tied to scientific, technological, and therefore to economic development.

Undoubtedly, these similarities have added ammo to the often-expressed position that mathematics is a `` cosmopolitan linguistic communication '' . These similarities have given rise to the term `` planetary course of study '' in mathematics instruction.

## **The Role of Ethnomathematics**

From prehistoric ages, worlds have been roll uping cognition to react to their thrusts and demands. Such responses vary from part to part, from civilization to civilization ( Bishop, 1990 ) . Possibly the most of import philosophical difference between a traditional and an ethnomathematical position is that ethnomathematics recognizes, encourages, and awards the belief that all people do mathematics within their ain unique and personal context, and that this ability may take many signifiers ( Borba, 1997 ) . Indeed it emerges from within each person through their single interaction with their cultural and physical environment. It besides recognizes that everyone does mathematics, hence there is no such thing as a non-math individual - ethnomathematics is closely tied to issues of entree and equity ( Anderson, 1997 ) .

In his chapter, Ethnomathemtics and Education, Borba envisions `` ethnoknowledge '' as the starting point for the pedagogical procedure in which pupils ' cognition is `` compared with the ( ethno ) cognition

developed by the academic subjects in a manner that this academic cognition can besides be seen as culturally bounded " ( p. 269 ) . Harmonizing to Borba, this study can be accomplished by pupils and instructors discoursing `` the efficiency and relevancy of different sorts of cognition in different contexts " ( p. 269-270 ) .

It is going clear in the heads of many the fact that instruction has transformed cognition and learning into trade goods, and pupils and instructors into consumers ( Kilpatrick, 2003 ) . I still retrieve how my female parent, run using apparels for us and for our friends, used mathematics unwittingly in her pattern. She used to routinely take rectangles of cloth and with few measurings turn them into beautiful, absolutely fitted vesture. The mathematics she was utilizing was beyond my comprehension. Sing her mathematics in context made me understand my mathematics in context, the context of intent, significance, and power. I feel that my female parent was much freer than me. She learned by detecting, making, reflecting, associating, and bring forthing. She constructed her own apprehension. In contrast, I was an impersonator, work outting jobs, most of which have been solved for a trillion times, in tiring repeat in schools around the universe for the past 100 old ages at least. While she was invariably involved in the human facet of math, my cognition and thought were confined chiefly to text editions, which I studied and taught. Detecting my female parent 's math and cognition helped me detect how deeply my cognition was entrenched in text edition during my surveies, and during my instruction.



As a consequence of colonial instruction, in Lebanon and in other Third universe states as good, we come to see mathematics by and large as a merchandise of the West. The addled course of study organ transplant - during the 1960's- from the extremely industrialized states to 'Third World ' states reinforced this image. Although, during the 1970 's and 1980 's, there emerged among instructors and mathematics pedagogues in developing states, a turning opposition against the Eurocentrism, ( Powell & A ; Frankenstein, 1997 ) , in Lebanon this misconception is accentuated due to the unstable political clime that swayed Middle East part up-to-date.

### **What can be done?**

In an effort to reform our math instruction and acquisition, we are in the procedure of constructing a new math course of study which extremely acknowledges criteria put forth by NCTM. We are now, more than of all time, aware of the importance of stressing job posing/problem-solving attacks to learn, curriculum dialogue and incorporate course of study planning supported by appropriate appraisal schemes including non-competitive appraisal. I would wish to visualize that in the future our teaching method could be community - based and community focused and that it helps develop the pupils ' accomplishments in the defense mechanism, care and farther development of our rational heritage and civilization.

The position and intent of math course of study is closely linked with the different socio-political ambiances that reign from one state to another. While we, as Lebanese, view math as an indispensable tool for release from the business of land and head, others see it as a agency to remain in front in

the battle for political power. In Lebanon, now, we are fighting to specify ourselves through reflecting on our lives, and seeking to show that in every bit many signifiers as we have in our `` dirt of civilizations, " and through discoursing what we do and what we are. In the concluding analysis, a chief issue is to specify ourselves or else be defined by others.