

The textbook, its subtext, and contents: A case study of sociology textbooks in Israel and their role in curriculum change/ Nissan Naveh, Beit Berl College, School of Education, Teacher Education, Department of Social Studies

This lecture is intended to somewhat enlighten the "Behind the scenes" of writing a textbook and its role in the process of curriculum change.

One might well assume that writing an introductory textbook to a subject intended for high school is a relatively simple task, involving translating the demands of the curriculum to clear language suitable for the young students.

In practice, the context in which the book is written is most important. Compiling and writing a textbook and its introduction to school is a social process involving quite complex political power struggles. The political environment of this struggle is similar to that in which the curriculum is formulated, embracing teachers, school subject coordinators, the subject supervisor on behalf of the Ministry of Education and various institutions, notably in the curricula department, in that Ministry. It also encompasses universities that are represented by the disciplinary academic world, by the educational didactic academic world, and particularly by those researchers who are involved in educational affairs, the subject committee in the Ministry of Education, students, principals, book publishers, groups of teachers who vary in their educational and didactic approach, instructors and so on.

The expectations of these factors are not always consistent, and the textbook authors are often asked to decide between contradictory trends and expectations. Thus does the overt text develop that contains the covert text.

Replacing a textbook is possible when discomfort exists with the existing learning materials. It raises a storm in the educational field, at whose center is the struggle between the conservative approach that prefers continuity, while compromising and adapting to the existing learning materials, and forces that are prepared for the necessary effort of exploring the existing learning material and, if necessary, changing and preparing for using new material in teaching.

The sources of discomfort with the learning materials, as well as with the curricula, are likely to be educational-ideological, diverse perceptions of the discipline or a manifestation of overt and covert power struggles between individuals and groups operating in the relevant field.

The authors of a high school textbook, committed to the official curriculum, constantly deliberate their readiness to adopt the curriculum as presented in the book, and often hint at the need to alter the curriculum itself. Thus the curriculum sometimes changes through processes generated by a new textbook.

The high school sociology curriculum in Israel underwent change in the second half of the 20th century, in parallel with which the textbooks were altered (Naveh, 2002). Social and cultural changes in Israeli society were also reflected in the high school curricula and in sociology as an academic discipline. The direction of change in the former was from a program based on social and political ideology, that characterized Israeli society in its early days,

to one that stresses the modern, rational, scientific, academic approach and in recent decades to one typified by doubts and a search for a path inspired by the critical, post-modern and individualist mood. These curricular developments follow the changes in Israeli sociology (Ram, 1993). The universities influenced the development of the profession directly through academics who operated in the world of curricula, and indirectly through publishing textbooks on the subject, imparting knowledge and an intellectual orientation to their students who, in the course of time, taught the subject in high school. The first stage in the development of the high school sociology curriculum was typified by the use of Eisenstadt's book (1966). Stage two was characterized by books by Shapira and Ben Eliezer (1987) and by **Rott-Heller and Naveh** (1987); stage three was exemplified by the use of the textbook entitled "The Sociological Experience" (Harrison et al., 1988) and thereafter by Naveh, Elad and Ran's (2003) book, "Sociology in Social Circles".

The lecture will focus on an analysis of the process that led to compiling the textbook "The Sociological Experience", of the factors that void its use and the introduction of an alternative textbook. "The Sociological Experience" was an attempt to discard, to a considerable extent, a book of text and to convert the classic and academic articles to shorter materials with a less theoretical approach. The teachers' critique of the book was directed mainly towards the absence of a text of a suitable academic level that presents the main ideas and concepts alongside an anthology of articles and learning assignments.

The lecture will present the main reflections that accompanied compilation of the book, "Sociology in Social Circles"- deliberations linked to sociology and to the teaching process, to the student and to the teacher.