

PLANNING AND INNOVATIONS FOR IRAQI SCHOOLS

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by

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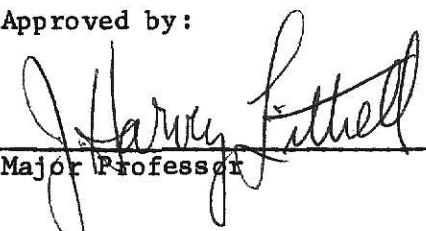
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

God has granted man, mind. By using this most important tool as a good helm in the interest of mankind, people have already served and are still serving their countries in different ways, fields, and areas. As thousands and thousands of citizens did and are still doing their best for offering their country, Iraq, good services, I would like to participate doing what I can do. I feel that I owe my homeland, Iraq, cradle of civilization, a debt of gratitude. I extend this humble report, "Planning and Innovations for Iraqi Schools", to my country that I love as much as I love my mother, my most favorite sacred symbol in life after God.

INTRODUCTION

The people in Iraq have their own ideals and values mostly religious based on Islamic instructions as well as other religions; but this does not mean that they are living in isolation. On the contrary, they can easily cooperate with other nations in various aspects, particularly educational affairs even though their beliefs are different, undertaking co-existence and friendships principles. Movement toward modernization is the aspiration and hope of the educated people, trying to put their country within the international procession toward accomplishing highly organized objectives to make a better future for all mankind.

Since school is the strongest tool for fulfilling almost all society objectives, American educators like to see the school fully provided with a variety of instructional materials to facilitate teaching. Innovative approaches as well as new technological devices are always being changed and modified in the interest of all citizens. Since the first decades of the twentieth century, the United States of America has adopted a colossal system in rebuilding all aspects of life of the American Society; a system which is based on scientific planning and implementing innovative technological devices to meet the needs of individuals is reliable and successful. A system, using computers, satellites, television on a large scale, a variety of films for educational purposes, and for communication, weather and sports as well, is worthy of profound study and respect.

It is the duty of planners, in Iraq, to establish a consistent educational system on which Arabs, eighty percent of the population,

Kurds, fifteen percent of the population, and other minorities, five percent of the population, can rely. The system should be designed in a strong way to sow seeds of national unity and solidarity and prepare Iraq citizens with the mentality of serving the whole country. Iraq, as an Arab country, should be taken into consideration when planning. Planners should bear in mind that it is a pressing need to think of the best methods and most modern approaches to be put into application, cooperating with other institutes in the advanced countries. Planners also must be always in touch with every innovation in all fields, particularly the field of education.

Purpose of the Report

Because of conflict between old thoughts and new, innovative approaches in education as well as in other fields, are urgently and widely needed. People were, as is their natural trend, and are still working in the hope of achieving better results. Writing briefly about the educational system in the past and now in Iraq may give an idea about the pressing need for change by applying innovative approaches and practices in this sensitive system as much as it can be. By this glimpse about education in Iraq, I would like to relate educational planning, as an innovative approach, with the matter of taking it as necessary priority for raising the educational level of the country. It is also the purpose of this report to throw light on innovations in education that are now being used and followed in the United States and to try to take advantage of putting into application what is suitable for my country within our capabilities of finance and manpower available.

SECTION ONE

A GLIMPSE ABOUT EDUCATION IN IRAQ

It might be useful to give an idea about the way education generally goes on in Iraq at present time. The reason is that it may be considered as a positive justification that can be accepted by all of those who like to see their country in a better educational situation. The rate of literacy, alas, is comparatively low according to the potentials of the country. Only thirty-five percent of the people are educated because of the indifference and disloyalty of the rulers before the 1958 Revolution. After 1958 the Iraqi Government embarked on a good policy of changes in all levels of education; many hundreds of school buildings were used for educating pupils in all nooks of the Republic of Iraq. Opportunities were equal before all citizens, regardless of any difference; enrollments of students in all levels and of both sexes increased; many colleges were opened, and hundreds of students were sent abroad to obtain their higher education in different areas.

Tables 1-5¹ give statistical information about the schools systems in Iraq.²

¹ Roderic D. Matthews and Matta Akrawi, Education in Arab Countries of the Near East, American Council on Education, 744 Jackson Place, Washington 6, D.C., 1949.

² Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Planning; Statistical Pocket Book, 1960-1970, Baghdad, 1972, pp. 206-7.

TABLE 1

The Number of Primary Pupils, Teachers, and Schools in Iraq from 1920-1970

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>
1920-1921	8.001	486	88
1941-1942	88.864	3.752	761
1960-1961	760.463	25.130	3.679
1969-1970	1.040.970	48.307	5.183

TABLE 2

The Number of Secondary Pupils, Teachers, and Schools in Iraq from 1920-1970

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>
1920-1921	110	34	3
1941-1942	12.926	435	58
1961-1962	139.029	3.715	383
1969-1970	303.050	10.114	860

TABLE 3

The Number of Vocational Pupils, Teachers, and Schools in Iraq from 1920-1970

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>
1920-1921	80	—	1
1941-1942	642	56	4
1960-1961	7.975	765	44
1969-1970	10.053	1.046	46

TABLE 4

The Number of Primary Training Pupils, Teachers, and Schools in Iraq from 1920-1970

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>
1920-1921	—	—	—
1941-1942	2.091	82	4
1960-1961	8.313	512	29
1969-1970	3.628	198	21

TABLE 5

The Number of University Pupils, Teachers, and Schools in Iraq from 1920-1970

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>
1920-1921	19	1	—
1941-1942	883	32	(colleges)
1960-1961	12.260	852	(2 universities)
1969-1970	37.290	2.068	(5 universities)

As for kindergartens, there was a small number of schools in Baghdad and other major cities for children of affluent families. But after 1958, there was a large number of kindergartens. Table 6 shows the increase in the number of kindergartens.

TABLE 6

The Number of Kindergarten Pupils, Teachers, and Schools in Iraq from 1920-1970

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pupils</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Schools</u>
1960-1961	11.595	271	110
1969-1970	15.697	619	130

Teaching methods are mostly inductive, deductive, lecturing and demonstration. Students are asked to recite back or memorize what they learn. It is a kind of continuation of the spoon-feeding method which followed in the primary teaching. Students should be taught to acquire a habit of self-reliance and self-instruction with constructive guidance and directions of their teachers. Hopefully, educational planners and curriculum designers will work hard to replace the old teaching methods by following up-to-date methods and innovative approaches for the benefit of the coming generations. The present government in Iraq, led by the Arab Baath Socialist Party, undertook a nationalistic and patriotic policy since 1968 for improving the conditions of the Iraqi people, educationally, economically, and socially. Many progressive decrees were issued, including increments in salaries, appointing almost all the graduates and raising the living standards of the toiling classes.

SECTION TWO

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AS AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH

Educational Planning:

Methods that were followed along time ago for preparing students to be dependent on others should be discarded. Now it is the time for innovative approaches in every field in life especially the most sensitive field, education. Teaching should be a kind of friendly and cordial relationship between teachers and students. This type of teaching makes students self-determining and strong-willed members for organizing a civilized society. Education aims at preparing a system "to promote the dignity of each individual that lives in the society".³

Innovative approaches are designed to create instructional situations which stimulate and drive students to pursue everything at their own pace with the help of their teachers. Effort of reformers, educators, philosophers and thinkers have been incorporated and modified across centuries from Plato until the present day to find pertinent and most useful methods and techniques for the benefit of the student. Authentic educational planning plays a great role in the teaching-learning process in terms of interacting and cooperating with the most novel teaching methods, techniques, instructional materials, and concepts in different areas.

Planning means knowing how to plan and dependence on profound understanding of the philosophy of the country concerned. Planning

³ Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil, Models of Teaching, Columbia Univ. Teachers College, Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, p. 49; see also Donald W. Oliver and James P. Shaver, Teaching Public Issues in the High School (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966) p. 9.

involves both process and content. There should be a kind of unity between content and form, targets and manners, and arts and principles. Planning is a scheme and a scheme is a collection of certain procedures taken for carrying out a clear target. Every plan has two elements;

- a. A goal or a target to be reached.
- b. Ways clearly planned, for getting to that target.

A good plan should not depend on direction and prediction only, but it should follow the procedure of knowledge, prediction, and ability. To know is to study everything and to predict is to interfere in the course of events, to guess what will happen in future as possible as it can be. A planner should be positive and scientific when he interferes. He should not stand away from what is going on in his society like a spectator. He must listen, mix, and interact with his community. Planning is the only scientific way of making a modern man who desires to control his environment. A modern citizen refuses to live in an unbalanced and uncontrolled world. Man of present time has abandoned all old views of letting things take place accidentally. By relating educational planning to innovative approaches with spending much effort, any hardship can be overcome.

Money allocated for undertaking a sound educational system based on innovative teaching approaches and up-to-date technological instructional materials will result in success and progress in various aspects. No matter how much money is invested, it will be in the interest of all citizens in the long run. Returns of invested funds for strengthening any system, will be greater and obtained within a shorter time. Returns of invested money in the educational field can be obtained within a period of nine to

ten years, from twelve to eighteen years in industries, and from twelve to fifteen years in agriculture. So, well-studied planning in education leads to vocational and social promotion. This can easily happen by preparing gifted students who cannot afford to complete their higher studies, if they are helped. Planning should take into account allocating sufficient funds for covering every nook of the society. Wise planning should also take into consideration habits, customs, and traditions of all ethnic groups.

Good educational planning is that which helps any citizen be able to be teacher of himself all his life as Rosseau said, "Being able to learn not only be learned." Innovations have the lead in this regard, knowing that an innovative plan should include many possibilities to be applied according to what the future calls for. It should be subjected to a timetable during fulfillment stages for knowing its strengths and weaknesses.

Kinds of Plans:

There are three kinds of plans:

1. Long-range plan (5 to 20 years, or more).
2. Mid-range plan (3 to 10 years). This kind of plan is practical and more applicable because all difficulties of prediction of the long-range plan can be avoided.
3. Short-range plan. It is really a part of the mid-range plan when dividing it into parts.

Types of Planning:

There are four major types of planning mostly affected by political systems.

1. Obligatory (binding) planning as it is followed by the Soviet Union according to which the overall process of planning is directed and guided by central authority.

2. Guiding (leading) planning as it is followed by France. There is a kind of indirect obligation in this planning.

3. Common Planning. It includes economical and social aspects of life.

4. Partial Planning.

I would like to suggest that the second type of planning, the leading one, a little bit modified, may fit Iraq in addition to some additional proposals;

1. Inculcating in our students humanitarian principles for preparing friendly citizens with all nations.

2. To understand ourselves to improve our situation with others.

3. Taking advantage of the second type of planning for establishing a system of force based on justice because "justice without force is powerless; force without justice is tyrannical."⁴

4. Constituting unprejudiced committees for follow-up to make sure of carrying out all the plans of the system.

It might be of use to repeat that social life of any community is based on three factors;

⁴ Blaise Pascal, Penseés, Part I Article IX, No. 8, (C. 1969), Editions Garnier Frères, 6, Rue des Saints-Pères, Paris, 1964.

1. Education
2. Population
3. Economy

planning, for this reason, should consider different forms of preparing good citizens, preschool education of children, education in formal educational institutions and at home for children, teenagers and adults and in other institutions not related to education such as the army, or in business firms. A planners' concern is with the formal educational institutions or the school system, both general and vocational. Some educational systems demand education and others demand educated persons. In other words, should we as educators and teachers, aim at pouring into our students' minds rote information or practical and useful information? Should teachers teach their students to perceptualize (grasp) or conceptualize (transform) or generalize (transfer)?

The Purpose of Planning is:

1. Decision-making which has very much the major goals of the educational system. For achieving these goals, teachers, buildings and equipment are needed.

2. Technical preparation of the plan.

3. Implementation and control.

The quality and quantity of the needs, and teachers, buildings, and equipment, should be well-estimated to know to what degree their availability in the technical preparation of the plan is. If these needs are found unsuitable, the plan should be revised. If they are promising, the planners are encouraged to step forward to a more detailed and

enlarged planning. After plans have been accepted by people then planners see that the plans are implemented. Plans are applied step by step and time may be shortened when people react with them positively. Implementation and control are the only way to examine the attainment of the goals. The administration of the country concerned is responsible for this operation. Prudent and reasonable planning needs the help of demographers for providing dependable data about the population. The help of economists is needed as well. Planning, also, should not neglect viewpoints of other parties in society to plan an integrated system.

Curriculum and Innovative Planning:

Planning is an innovative way of preparing a relevant curriculum that should be determined according to what students need to learn. Curriculum and programs should be designed in a direction toward the student; the student is not brought toward the curriculum. To plan programs innovatively means to focus on the role of the student in the learning process as an active and self-guiding person while throwing light on the part of the teacher as a helper and facilitator and not a person with the authority of deciding everything. Teachers are no longer knowledge transmitters, students are not knowledge receptors either.

Curriculum planners should bear in mind that curriculum is like "a three legged stool."⁵ One leg represents the nature of knowledge, the other leg represents the nature of society and the third represents the nature of the individual. Educators and planners know that wants

⁵ Jack R. Frymier, "Stimulation and the Need to Know," Center for the Study of Motivation and Human Abilities: Motivation Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 2, Winter, 1971, p. 2.

are clues or rather the best keys for realizing the needs, so the disciplines or knowledge, society, and the individual are the only dependable sources for knowing students' needs better. Students' needs are academic, social, and individual needs. But the question is which of these needs is the most important; taking into consideration that man is the end, subject matter is the means, and society is the result.

Providing our schools, as possible as it can be, with animals, living plants, and different kinds of objects that can be manipulated by students is another important aspect in planning. Students will learn many things through direct contact with these animals, plants, and objects. Their abilities are no doubt improved and their attitudes toward life and toward each other are improved too. Students are also provided with practical experience by observation. This supports their theoretical study and urges them to more pursuits and research. Students will be in touch with their environment because life is to be lived not only taught. Practice is very useful and it is known that "an ounce of practice is worth a ton of theory."⁶

⁶ Vincent R. Rogers, Teaching in the British Primary School, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1970), p. 275.

SECTION THREE

INNOVATION AND ADOPTERS OF INNOVATION

Meaning of Innovation:

Innovation means change that aims at taking the society from good to better and best. Innovation has a great and dangerous meaning; great when it is used wisely and prudently for helping people change their old and boring ideas into promising and good ideas and their tiresome ways of living into useful and happy ones; dangerous when it goes in the extreme direction of changing all hopes and expectations of people into disasters and disillusion. Innovation needs all citizens to work as one sturdy person directed by an elite of highly astute designers and planners. Innovation does not mean something to be taken lightly and without serious intent for improving society conditions that call for change; nor is it something that people may think of as passing time only. Innovation means the introduction of new ideas and novelties, and using useful and practical devices for the benefit of all society members. Innovation is a revolution in changing old customs and harmful rites and it is a positive means of eradicating evils in society.

Why Innovation?

To adapt to new things that rehabilitate various aspects of society is a pressing need. Adaptation is the strong foundation on which any change or innovative process is based. Those who plan to change the on-going values and practices of their society, have humanitarian and

reformative purposes for raising the level of the society concerned. Change is contemplated for the benefit of people, though the majority are liable to stand against it at first.

Systems, out of tune, should be changed because of their invalidity. Such systems may resist any outside intervention.⁷ New practices that are planned to replace old ones play an important role to change. This importance emerges from the fact that school may not be in a state to respond to the environment. The innovators prepare new curriculum programs. Schools are to study these programs well and may cooperate with outside change agents in adopting the programs, because it is quite clear that the school is the most effective instrument for responding to social conditions and trends that call for change.

Innovations and Interest:

Interest is the most important starting point for doing everything because nothing can be done effectively without interest. Things, done without desire and interest, appear paralyzed and incomplete. To innovate means to change and to eliminate old ways. Change must be of use for the society, otherwise it turns into destructive means. All aspects of life require innovations and should be changed to new and useful things being needed by people. Schools, farms, factories, commerce and trade, administration, business, markets, hospitals, defense communities, associations, policies and the like should open wide doors and room for innovative ways and techniques.

⁷ Arthur J. Lewis, "Innovation and the Open School," Teachers College, Columbia Univ., New York, New York, 1967.

Since education is responsible for preparing all society agencies and school is the best instrument for this duty, it is hoped that successful and valuable curricula are developed innovatively. It is absolutely the concern of the educational planners, working with economical and social planners and program designers. To make any change in curricula should not depend alone on decisions taken by teachers and other school personnel. Teachers and other school personnel formerly shaped or determined the kind of educational program for meeting the needs of a specific school system. Generally if curriculum development is undertaken by teachers only without administrative approval, it will be a slow process. Teachers' suggestions in curriculum development are important and should be used along with suggestions from other participants such as administrators, students, and lay persons.⁸

The best innovative solutions to practical problems and the best materials may have no effect, if people are not concerned to learn how to use these materials properly. The more practice people have, the easier they can handle any materials and the more benefit can be obtained.

If new materials are to be spread among people in a shorter period, they should be diffused in practical manners. These materials will help solve problems of the society concerned or at least diminish most of them. Teachers well trained for using instructional materials help make our pupils willingly attached to their schools. Pupils learn better by using real things and objects to reinforce what they have already learned.

⁸ J. Harvey Littrell, "Lay Participation, A Guide for Education in Working with Citizen Groups that are Studying Curriculum Problems", The Clearing House, Nov. 1961, Vol., 36, No. 3, pp. 137-9.

verbally. But innovations really need some important steps to be diffused on large scale. The best activity and most useful means for diffusion is demonstration. Demonstration aims at building up desired outcomes in special audience. Importance and effectiveness of inventions based on well planned and guided demonstration can convince practitioners of the validity of this activity.⁹

What is Behind Innovation?

Thinkers, inventors, and philosophers do not find life easy to pass smoothly when they want to change the surroundings and environment for the benefit of man. But through repeated attempts and by working hard, they can find out or invent relevant media for facilitating life.

It should be taken into consideration that things thought of, discovered, or invented bring their advantages and disadvantages with them. If the scale of good points exceed horrible and undesirable ones, they will be accepted by people in terms of being practical and useful. Usually acceptance of new things is a gradual process for people. Many reasons lie behind this fact. Fear of the unknown, lack of sacrifice, stability rather than hurriedly shifting to a new stage, and loss of social standings because of jealousy are hindrances in the way of any change. Innovation and change impose themselves against the will of those who work for themselves only. It is kind and humanitarian to help people understand new concepts so that they may get rid of being under the influence of selfish elements of society. It would be useful too, in the long run, to let people adopt their desired things without being compelled, because people are the

⁹ Egon G. Guba, "Diffusion of Innovations", Educational Leadership, Vol. 25, No. 9, Jan. 1963, pp. 292-93-94-95.

energy and fuel for pushing the innovators' machine forward. It is understood that no machine can work without fuel and without being maintained. Innovators, for these reasons, should be clever enough and careful when trying to put novelties into application. They should cooperate with psychologists, sociologist, demographers, economists, planners, political powers, theologists, lay persons and all influential factors of society. This cooperation is necessary because innovators may over emphasize some aspects of education and neglect others. To help students grow cognitively, for instance, technological innovations can be used; but it will be dangerous if other domains, particularly the affective domain, is neglected. Education is of the whole man." And "the whole is more than the sum of its parts."¹⁰

Classification of Adopters:

Innovators are the vanguard of the pioneers in adopting new notions in society. They are "the first members of a social system to adopt new ideas. Innovators are venturesome individuals. They desire the hazardous, the rash, the avant-garde, and the risky."¹¹

Farmers, school administrators, industrial firms, and Aborigines call innovators as "... starry-eyed" experimentors or people with their "... heads in the clouds."¹² Since innovators differ from people because

¹⁰ R. S. Peters, Ethics and Education, Atlanta, Scott, Foresman, 1967, p. 9.

¹¹ Ross, Donald H. (editor) Administration for Adaptability, New York, Metropolitan School Study Council, 1958, p. 25.

¹² Ibid.

of their quick behavior in innovating new things, so their behavior and moves should be well observed and understood. They are always put out of the local circle of their peers because of their affiliation with new practices. In other words they behave so strangely that other people are not familiar with such behavior. Innovators may be considered as effective means of spreading new ideas in spite of geographical distances that are likely to be found between them. They may form cliques for the purpose of implementing their new ideas, no matter, if their society accepts them or not.

Innovators tend to be young because the young are usually less attached to traditional values. They may follow traditional values and practices, but they have the ability of quitting them as soon as they adopt new things. Innovators are of high social status because of their education or may be they are of higher economic status. Innovators are known as cosmopolite. They put forth opinion leadership, trying to put their new ideas into application. Innovators are viewed as deviants from the norms of the social system by their peers and by themselves as well. They are 2.5 percent of the society. Innovators may be characterized as "pioneers, lighthouses, advance scouts, progressists, non-parochials, experimentals."¹³

Early Adopters.

Early Adopters are the leaders of change and better than innovators in making change. Early adopters are respected for their judgment.

¹³ Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, New York, Free Press of Glence, A Division of the MacMillan Company, 1962, pp. 150-51.

They tend to be younger than other societal categories. They are 13.5% of the people. Teachers can contribute effectively with other change agents without notable losses.

The Early Majority.

They form 34% of the society. They come after Early Adopters in adopting new ideas. They are known as deliberate people who take careful thoughts or consult with others in reaching decisions.

The Late Majority.

Those people are critical and skeptical. They form 34% of the population.

The Laggards.

They are the last people to adopt new things. The Laggards are very suspicious. They doubt to try anything. They are traditional and polite. They are 16% of the society.

Change Agents:

The person who tries to play the role of a change agent has the intention of influencing others in an interesting way to adopt decisions. He outlines, if not determines, the direction as he thinks it desirable and he helps others to continue to do something. A change agent is one who supports people to use new things for their own benefit.