

# Curriculum theory and diverse classrooms: challenges for history education and 'A Look at our Past' as an example of taking them up

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**What does it mean to think historically?**

**Promoting historical understanding in classrooms of mixed abilities and diverse backgrounds and developing channels of communication with the wider community**

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# Mapping the paper...

- Introduction: why this topic here today?
- Education, schooling, curriculum and identity
- Theory, history and sociology of curriculum: the subjects
- The case of 'history education'
- 'A Look at Our Past': a case of a school subject in transition

# Aim of the Paper

to discuss ways in which we can draw upon the theory, history and sociology of curriculum

to revisit history education for diverse classrooms

## **The socio-political context of Cyprus: a narrative**

- an historically multicultural island
- lying in the Eastern Mediterranean and at the margins of (traditional geographical definitions of) Europe,
- Between the constructed divide of East and West but also North-South
- a recent member of the EU,
- burdened by conflict and division, yet also an example of peaceful coexistence and cross-cultural interaction
- in search for a solution to the political problem within the framework of the UN and the EU.
- Recent curriculum review of Greek-Cypriot curricula, including for the subject of History

# **Part I:**

## **Curriculum theory, sociology and history: in search of analytical tools**

# Education, schooling and curriculum

- Shift from the pre-modern to the modern period: changing constructions of childhood and education
- Compulsory-state schooling and official-national curricula as a governance mechanism
  - Governable subjects
  - Skilled workers
  - Loyal soldiers (Green, 1997)
- Control of education (and citizens) for economic and cultural/national reasons-a historical perspective

**Le maître d'école, 1687.**  
**Huile sur bois d'Egbert van Heemskerck le Jeune**

[Image of religious school-community]

- History of Education Museum in Rouen, France

- Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Classroom

[Image of traditional classes in rows-desks]

## **School Classrooms**

[Image of pages from a school textbook  
for reading, writing and arithmetics]

**(A. Seignette, Dupond, 1890)**

## Αφίσες σε σχολικές τάξεις

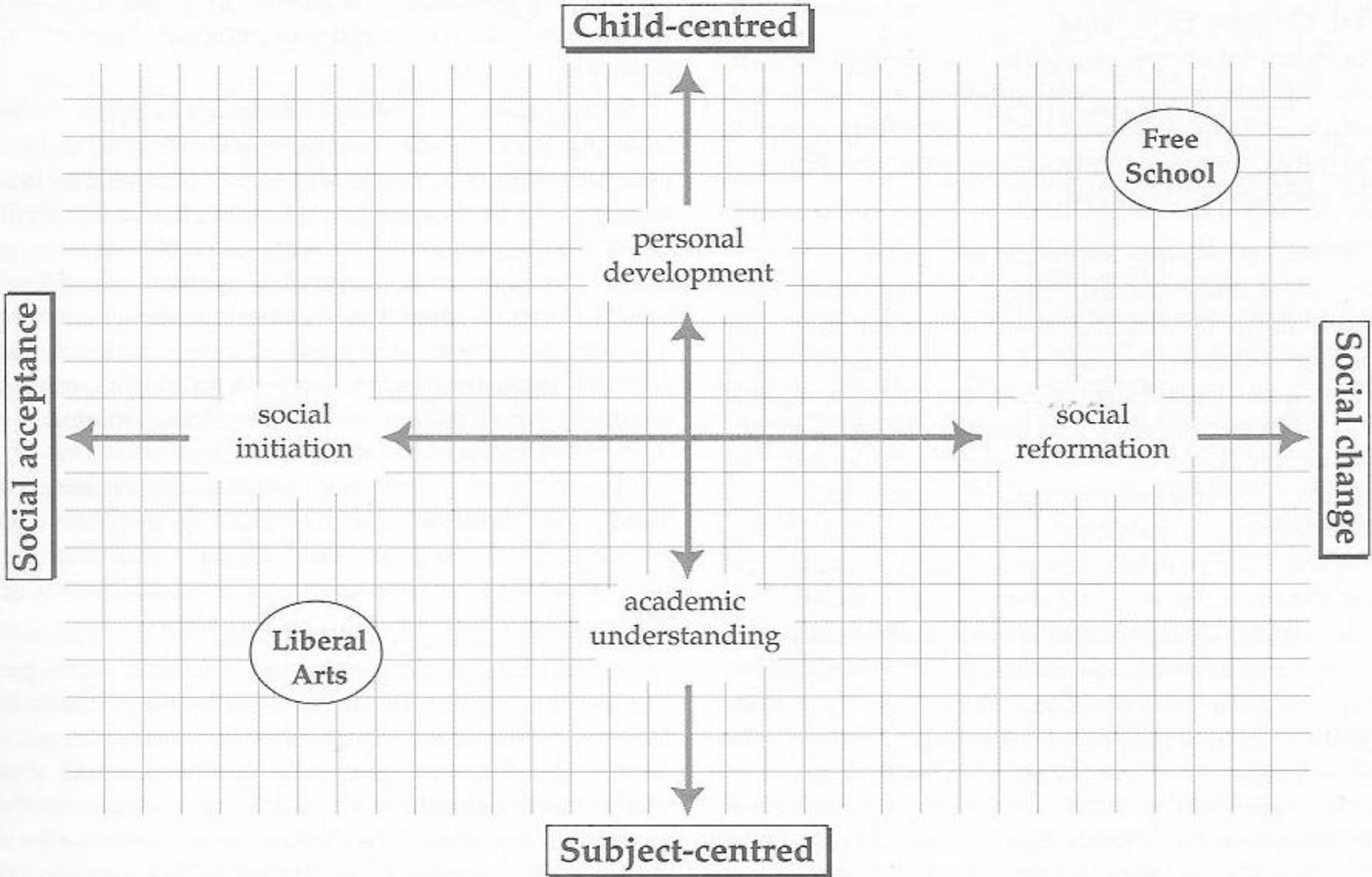
[Images of posters for walls in school classrooms with  
Scenes from a war and the French Revolution]

# So...

- Schooling as a political choice
- Official curricula as political-ideological texts
- Educators as political actors-agents (Ross, 2009)

The question is not *whether* but *which*  
(political and other) values  
we *choose* to promote

## **Analytical Tools I from Curriculum Theory**



# Citizenship education-curriculum philosophical directions

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Source: Clark & Case, 1999

# Curriculum perspectives on subject matter

- Academic Rationalism
- Humanism
- Social Efficiency
- Social Reconstructionism

(Deng & Luke, 2008)

## **Where on the matrix could we locate:**

- An official curriculum which aims at developing pupils as active citizens with a critical consciousness who are committed to social change with regards to diversity
- An official curriculum which aims at developing pupils as obedient citizens, conscious of their rights and responsibilities as these are defined in their social contexts (tolerant/intolerant of diversity)
- An official curriculum which aims at exploring the different ways in which pupils can personally experience democracy in their class and school when they become interested in it
- An official curriculum which aims at transmitting knowledge on democracy drawing from disciplines such as social and political science, sociology, social psychology.

## Goodlad (1977)

- Ideal curriculum
- Formal curriculum
- Perceived curriculum
- Enacted/operational curriculum
- Experienced curriculum

**Analytical Tools II:  
Levels of curriculum analysis (but  
not as deterioration of a '*privileged  
ideal*' (Doyle, 1992))**

# Approaches to history

## (Lowenthal, 1998)

### *'History' as heritage*

- Omission
- Thrives on ignorance and error
- Purpose: prejudiced pride
- Exclusive myths of origin & continuity
- Dogma of roots to be accepted as faith
- Past as weapon

### *'History' as history*

- Disinterested and universal
- No group claims truth
- Bias as a vice to eliminate
- Works on evidence
- Subject to debate
- Altered by time and hindsight
- How to question historical accounts and assess it in relation to others

- The collective memory/"best story" approach
- The disciplinary approach: history as a way of learning
- The postmodern approach

(Seixas, 2000)

**Approaches to history and History**

# The Disciplinary (New History) Approach in History Education

- Emerged in the 1970s based on Hirst's idea that every discipline is not only a body of knowledge but also a distinct form of knowledge with its own methods and logic
- For History Education it aims to develop both:
  - Substantive (factual) knowledge in terms of what happened in the past (past events, names, dates, concepts etc)
  - Historical thinking in terms of the ways in which the discipline of history explores the past (concepts of time; change and continuity; accounts; evidence, cause and consequence; historical empathy; historical significance)

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(Chapman et al., 2011)

# Aim of the subject of history in Greek-Cypriot primary education previous history curriculum: phil.orientations?

“to help pupils learn and appreciate the historical life and cultural heritage of Cyprus and Greece and develop a national consciousness as members of the *Greek nation* and *inhabitants* of semi-occupied Cyprus”

(Ministry of Education and Culture, 1996, p. 133, emphases added).

## **Studies in curriculum history: the case of History as a school subject?**

“Subjects are not monolithic entities but shifting amalgamations of sub-groups and traditions. These groups within the subject *influence and change boundaries and priorities*”

“...in the process of establishing a school subject (and associated university discipline) base subject groups tend to *move* from promoting pedagogic and utilitarian traditions *towards the academic tradition*”

(Goodson, 1987, p. 3; emphases added)

- A transition period of re-definition?
- But the debate does not focus on *whether* it should be a school subject, but on *what* and *how* it should be taught
- Need for sociohistorical approach to curriculum studies: case-study of History as a school subject in Greek-Cypriot official curricula

**At a turning point?**

## **Part II**

# **Challenges for history education and 'A Look at our Past' as an example of taking them up**

# A LOOK AT OUR PAST

## ΜΙΑ ΜΑΤΙΑ ΣΤΟ ΠΑΡΕΛΘΟΝ ΜΑΣ

### GEÇMİŞİMİZE BİR BAKIŞ

Chara Makriyianni & Meltem Onurkan Samani  
Association for Historical Dialogue and Research





# A look at our past

- **What is it?**
- A set of supplementary teaching and learning materials for school history in 3 languages. **PRODUCT**
- An outcome of teacher training events, exchange of ideas and expertise (European and local); a tangible product of dialogue; Writing undertaken after in-depth seminars with teachers and teacher trainers Cypriot teachers from across the existing divide in Cyprus with the help of Council of Europe experts and AHDR, on the relevant topics over a period of 5 years. **PROCESS**
- **Expertise of the writing team?**
- Expertise in materials preparation, teacher training, classroom practice and assessment of learning and teaching.



- **Working towards bringing people and ideas together**
- **to create educational materials that encourage further learning and research as **A look at our past** does,**
- **is part of AHDR's contribution to the advancement of historical understanding amongst the public and more specifically amongst children, youth and educators.**



# A look at our past

- Which topics are presented?
- Which phil. orientations can we locate?

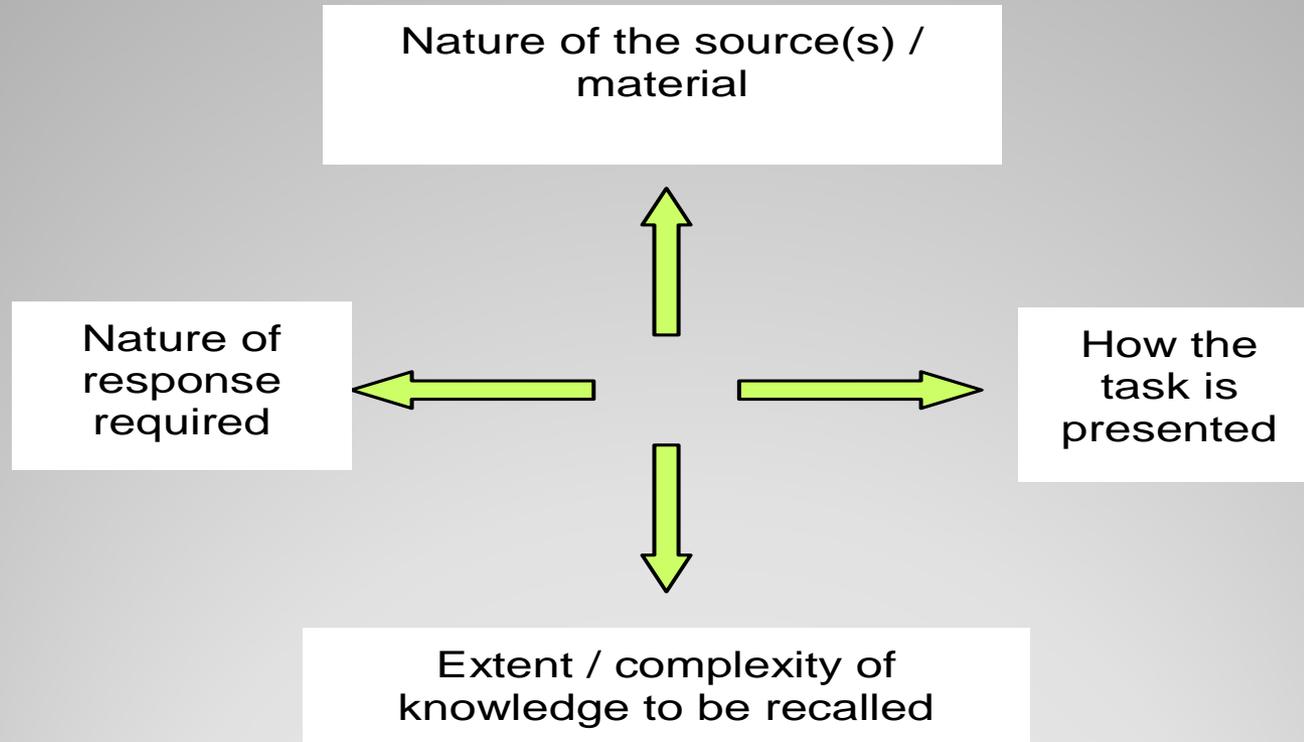
Topic:	Θέμα:	Konular:
1  Wedding traditions and the role of women in Cyprus	Οι γαμήλιες παραδόσεις και ο ρόλος των γυναικών στην Κύπρο	Kıbrıs'ta evlilik gelenekleri ve kadının rolü
2  Children in the mines in Cyprus	Τα παιδιά στα μεταλλεία της Κύπρου	Kıbrıs'ta madenlerdeki çocuklar
3  Bazaars in Cyprus as seen by travellers	Τα παζάρια στην Κύπρο μέσα από τα μάτια των περιηγητών	Gezginlerin gözüyle Kıbrıs'ta pazar yerleri
4  Life in bazaars in Cyprus	Η ζωή στα παζάρια της Κύπρου	Kıbrıs'taki pazar yerlerinde yaşam
5  Buildings in walled Nicosia	Κτήρια στην εντός των τειχών Λευκωσία	Lefkoşa Surlarıçinde binalar
6  Coffee shop traditions in Cyprus	Παραδόσεις των καφετειών της Κύπρου	Kıbrıs'ta kahvehane gelenekleri
7  Fashion in Cyprus	Η μόδα στην Κύπρο	Kıbrıs'ta moda
8  Education in Cyprus	Η εκπαίδευση στην Κύπρο	Kıbrıs'ta eğitim
9  Housing traditions in Cyprus	Οικιστικές παραδόσεις στην Κύπρο	Kıbrıs'ta konut gelenekleri



## Rationale of overall design and construction materials?

- **Each topic provides:** a range of opportunities for developing historical skills and concepts.
- **Groups of topics provide:** different pedagogical foci.
- **Overarching enquiry question:** pupils and teachers are encouraged to approach each topic by considering the question.
- **Learning intentions:** set out in relation to enquiry question and key methodologies, activities and assessment are also linked.
- **Scheme is progressive:** methodologies are introduced sequentially and exploited cumulatively.

## Dimensions of difficulty



**General Notes for the Teacher, p.7**



Example:  
Topic 3:  
Bazaars in Cyprus  
as seen by travellers

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Bazaar photo by J. P. Foscolo

(With permission for use in the CoE pack)

## Caption to J.P. Foscolo photograph of Bazaar

### Friday Bazaar, Nicosia

“Started with Gifford a little after 6 a.m. for Nicosia to see the Fair which comes everyday Friday. The scene was a curious one and well worth seeing, the variety of colour and costume being very pleasing to the eye. I saw nothing, however, worth buying. The embroidery is not worthy of the name and the mauves and sulferine and magenta colours made use (of) destroy their effect. It is curious what a number of **Negro** women there are in Nicosia. I saw a good deal of flax for sale, a product I was not aware that grew here”

(The comment on the photograph is an excerpt from the book ‘Cyprus 1878, the journal of Sir Garnet Wolseley’ published in 1991 by the Cyprus Popular Bank Cultural Centre. J. P. Foscolo was the official photographer of the British forces at the time)

flax=fibre from the stem of this plant, used to make linen

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Engraving of Bazaar in front of St Sophia-Selimiye Mosque 1878

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1. Describe exactly what you see.
2. What sort of people do you see?
3. What different groups are involved here?



8. What questions would you like to ask the people?
9. What other sources and information would help you understand the picture?

4. What are people thinking?
5. What do they think about the place?

6. What do you feel about the picture?
7. What makes you think this way?

# Plenary work: Vision frame

Example from June 2006 Seminar  
by Carvell, Philippou and Oguz

# Academic/Disciplinary AND social reconstructionist approaches to History could then enable teachers

- To *teach* rather than *preach*
- To engage diverse classrooms by supporting students
  - To historicise concepts
  - To interpret current issues and debates
  - To understand increasing diversity
  - To recognise and interpret different perspectives
  - To explore identities as multiple and hybrid

- Thank you
- Acknowledgements
- Comments and questions?

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