

BAMICHLALA

The College Voice

**Research, Essays and
Literary Works**

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* These articles have an English synopsis

Editor's Note

This issue of "Bamichlala: The College Voice" is devoted to an evaluation of "Hoffen," a teacher training program in open-experimental education, which the David Yellin Teachers College has been fostering for many years. The "Hoffen" Institute trains those who have academic degrees or senior teachers in search of a new approach.

On the following pages, those who have been involved in "Hoffen" since its inception describe their underlying beliefs, questions and dilemmas which arise from open education.

Open-experimental education, as it has developed over the years by a dedicated staff, is a theoretical and applied framework which relates to the child as a complete entity. Its curriculum is an integrated one and its methods are varied, stemming from a multi-disciplinary approach, constant reflection, and evaluation.

In this issue, we present questions which relate to "Hoffen's" structure and methods, many of which arose in a round table discussion with "Hoffen's" teachers. "The Purpose of Learning," an article by Prof. Moshe Caspi, one of the founders of open-experimental education in Israel, sheds new light on this subject. This approach has influenced, if not directly, then through osmosis, Israel's entire educational system, and continues to do so today. Many social changes, like the one caused by open education, do not necessarily occur openly, but rather happen gradually and indirectly.

We publish this issue of "Bamichlala: The College Voice" at the beginning of our 80th anniversary celebrations. The David Yellin

Teaches College, founded in 1913, is the oldest teacher training college in Israel. It has never stood still and rested on its laurels. Today, as in the past, an atmosphere of innovation and experimentation permeates our institution. It is no coincidence that, in our 80th year, we foster and promote "Hoffen," a program dedicated entirely to openness, experimentation and educational innovation.

Aron Shai

Milli Eisenberg, Michal Litvak

What Stands Behind The Curriculum of Hoffen

The Institute's study program is intended for students with bachelor's degrees in any field, with or without a teaching degree, and for teachers with senior teaching degrees. The period of studies continues one year. The Institute will grant a teaching degree to those who lack it, and a certification of specialized training for teaching in open education frameworks (according to chosen field of practice: early childhood, elementary or junior high education) to all graduates.

The open experimental education is a framework of educational thought and action based on the following principles:

- a. At school and in the classroom the child is related to as a person. The education process focuses equally on the areas of intellectual knowledge and achievement as well as areas of social, emotional, and creative development.
- b. The plan of studies is integrative; it employs different and varied methods of teaching with an emphasis on interdisciplinary thinking.
- c. The school is a community whose members include the pupils, the teachers and the parents. The interpersonal relationships, the work framework and the discipline within the school are established through discussion and mutual agreement between members of the community.

d. The starting point for the educational process is the child (or the student) as an individual and as a part of the group, and the developing needs of the individual and of the group.

The educational activity within this experimental framework is different than in the more conventional systems and requires a new kind of educator.

The "Hoffen" Institute offers a process of intensive self-education. This process involves more than acquiring knowledge and skills in various teaching methods. The principle of the process is in the creation of opportunities for learning and for self-development of each student in the Institute and for the student's self-preparation for educational work in open frameworks according to personal inclination and strengths.

The courses, workshops and practical experiences offered to students of the Institute are built so that each individual can invest his or her energy according to personal fields of interest — thus putting emphasis by choice on student teaching (pedagogical experience and personal initiatives) and workshops in a variety of fields (natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, the arts and multi-discipline workshops).

Technically speaking, the schedule can be divided into three parts with more or less 1/3 time devoted to each part:

Theoretical studies	Practical studies	Personal & group work
Creative Self-Education	Student Teaching	Students Workshop
Psychology	Guidance	Weekly Meeting
Philosophy	Teaching Methods	Self-Education Center
My Professional Me	"Good Morning Work"	Institute Evening
Differential Teaching	Learning Resources	Enrichment Workshops
	School Skills	

Nathan Gover, Moderator

**Our Educational Belief, or Why an Open
Education — Synopsis of A Discussion with Staff
Members of “Hoffen”**

This volume of “Bamichlala,” the David Yellin Teachers College annual, tells us a story of a very unique unit in the College, the story of “Hoffen”, the Institute for Teacher Training in Experimental Open Education. The Institute was established many years ago by Prof. Moshe Caspi, from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with no connection to the College; and now, thanks to the support and involvement of Dr. Itay Zimran, current Dean of the College and former Principal of the Experimental School in Jerusalem, “Hoffen” is a part of the College, not only administratively, but as a partner to the pluralistic trends in teacher education, which we try to develop here, in order to provide different and new approaches to education in general, and to teacher education specifically.

The story of “Hoffen” is a story of permanent experimenting in educating future teachers to try to turn schools into sites, where children can develop their individuality and creativity to the maximum, while experiencing schooling not as a burden, but as a pleasure.

Since the end of the 1960's, the crisis in open education in the West, which was rooted in political, rather than educational domains, motivated the staff of “Hoffen” to approach open education in more experimental, non-rigid methods. The idea

was to adapt the vision of open education to the educational reality in Israel, to the abilities of both children and parents to cope with a more open approach.

This volume presents articles written by the teachers of "Hoffen" about our unique conception of teacher education, a comprehensive dialogue between some teachers about open education, a paper by Prof. Caspi in which he describes his models of good teaching, of education as a process of re-making, and some evaluations, memories and criticism of some of our graduates, most of whom are now teachers in regular or experimental schools.

"Hoffen's" conception of teacher education is quite different from other institutes, by focussing on the developmental process of the student as a human-being along the period of his training, and not only on his skills of performance.

Milli Eisenberg, the Principal of "Hoffen" for the last seven years, explains this concept in her article and in the dialogue. She claims that the basic assumption of open teacher education is that only teacher-students who develop themselves and discover the potential for development, can become teachers who will be able to help children to develop and to carry out their creativity and potential. Hence, the training process in "Hoffen" is aimed to give different kinds of opportunities to the students, in which they can reveal and exercise their real capacities and inclinations. It is a process of growth and self-awareness, and we believe that such a process leads to better teaching.

As one of our basic beliefs is that teachers will perform in schools in very similar ways to the ways in which they have been trained, in this volume we present a comprehensive discussion on open education that members of the staff held in the summer of 1992. In this discussion, we present "Hoffen's" vision of education, a vision which we hope our students implement in the teaching.

The main issue we discuss is the concept of freedom in open education and the many implications of this concept to other issues of education. In spite of differences between the participants, we all agree that our ultimate goal is to increase the ability of our students to grow and to develop as free agents, who can control themselves and become less dependent on external motivation and regulations. We agree that we should not view freedom as total permissiveness, but as a gradual quality, which the student has to get used to without going astray. In the discussion, we point out the significance of open education in our era, as a humanistic way of educating independent and free citizens in our democracy.

In their articles, Ada Svidovsky-Vengosh and Ariella Gidron, senior teachers at the Institute, describe our special methods of teaching the practicum. The common features, as Ada and Ariella define them, are: 1. Refraining from teaching methods and techniques as general theories, by insisting on understanding the personal meanings, difficulties and abilities of the student in performing in classes. 2. Reflecting together with the group of students and with the individual student about the proper methods of teaching, which suit each student in a specific class differently. This is the reason we teach most of the subjects in workshops rather than classes to create and invent the attitudes and the teaching methods, rather than dictate and order them.

Typical of "Hoffen, we rely on the creativity and participation of the students in shaping and inventing their own methods and ideas, as well as designing at least part of the curriculum and the syllabi of their own training. Ada and Ariella give examples from their workshops of several methods of involving the students in their own education, by reflecting, discussing and discovery.

Rachel Deitcher demonstrates in her paper her original methods of teaching mathematics without raising the resistance of the

students, and increasing their interest in mathematics, as a result of non-alienated approaches to this difficult subject.

Prof. Moshe Caspi analyses in his article the different approaches and motivations to learning and the pluralistic styles of teaching that should be created as a result of these differences. He also presents his own conception of re-making as a sublimation and a substitute of teaching and instruction. Caspi's ideas are the grass-roots of "Hoffen's" philosophy, and in this volume we learn from him about the importance of recognizing that there are different types of learners and, accordingly, that we should design different approaches to teaching.

The volume ends with comments by some of our graduates. The main spirit of these comments is that being a "Hoffen" student means a deep change in self-understanding and in relating to their potential to grow, develop and change. They do not save us from criticism as well... but we are proud that they give a testimony of "Hoffen" as a place that offered them a chance not only to become teachers, but also, to a certain extent, to become richer persons, who continue the process of becoming...

Rachel Deitcher

Mathematics and Open Education Go Hand in Hand

The work being done on math at "Hoffen" has its underpinnings in the widespread developments in math education that have been gaining acceptance over the past few years both in Israel and abroad, and in the principles and practices that have, over the past two decades, been part of the progressive education movement in general and the work at "Hoffen" in particular.

In the math education community, thinking has begun to be seen as the main component of mathematical activity at all levels of performance, from that of very young children on up. Instead of learning blind techniques to solve paper and pencil problems, today, children are expected to understand what they are doing. This understanding is constructed by the children themselves, based on previous experience they have had with the physical world. Children can and should be involved in problem-solving and mathematical inquiry from a young age, instead of supposedly preparing themselves for these activities by learning their "tables" and meaningless rules by heart.

In the same way, and basically congruently, good work in math is based on the principles and goals of open, progressive education. The emphasis is placed on openness, curiosity, independence, creativity, self-awareness, reflection, and communication — all those things that encourage the cognitive,

emotional and social development of the child in all areas, including that of mathematics.

Probably, the most important goal for the math work we do is to change people's attitudes toward the subject. The most common problem of math work with any representative sample of adults today is that of "mathophobia". This inability to deal with numbers results in feelings of helplessness and insecurity among many sufferers, and their immediate reaction when faced with a numerical situation is to run. The main idea of the work we do at "Hoffen" (and similarly with the work they will do with children at school) is, therefore, to get them to do math — to solve real problems with the help of logical thinking, openness and creativity, to play with materials and numbers in order to discover their mathematical properties, and to begin to look at the world around them with an awareness of the mathematics hidden in every corner. All this is done in a non-threatening, play-like atmosphere that encourages experimentation and appreciates the high learning value of reaching dead-ends. It is through making mistakes that we learn. Situations in which adults or children receive negative feedback for their mistakes are situations where only the strongest can work to their potential, whether this feedback comes in the form of harsh words, impatience or low marks. The principle we have at "Hoffen" of giving constructive verbal or written feedback as opposed to numerical grades is, for math education, of prime importance, and one that has yet to be accepted by the math education community at large.

In summary, mathematical ability and power represent power and control over one's own life. A person who doesn't know how to estimate amounts quickly, to read and understand graphs and diagrams, to figure out the statistical magic that politicians delight in feeding us, to figure out the worthwhileness of a

particular insurance policy is at the mercy of innumerable others who do not necessarily have his/her best interests at heart. The work that we do in math at “Hoffen” is not only meant as professional training, but is also seen as important for the personal development of the students. We hope that both the students at “Hoffen” and their future pupils will benefit from the augmented personal power of these teachers.