

PFDP National Roundtables on Higher Education in Palestine

Roundtable Six

**Teaching and Learning
The University Teacher as Reflective Practitioner**

**February 11-12, 2012
Ramallah**

**Caesar Hotel
Alexandra Room
6th Floor**

Background

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education identified the upgrade of university faculties' teaching skills as a major priority in the Education development Strategic Plan: 2008-2012¹. A report by the European Commission's Tempus Program in 2012 echoed this concern². The creation of the Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP) in 2005 reflected a thoughtful and sustained commitment by USAID, AMIDEAST and the Open Society Institute (OSI) to address this issue. PFDP's goal has always been to improve the quality of education in institutions of higher education in the West Bank and Gaza by promoting the expansion, retention, and professional development of young, promising academics teaching in such key fields as international relations/political science, social work, public policy/public administration, education, and urban planning. The overarching priority of PFDP is to revitalize the teaching of these disciplines by promoting an institutional culture of teaching and learning in all of Palestine's universities—including those in Gaza.

With generous and sustained support from USAID and OSI, PFDP has made substantial investments in several long-term programs to promote faculty development and the creation of a culture of teaching and learning at universities in the West Bank and Gaza. To cite just a few: 34 faculty members from 7 universities have traveled to leading universities in the USA to complete the PhD degree; 15 staff from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education have completed a master's degree in the USA; and 29 faculty members from 12 colleges and universities have completed short-term fellowships involving two separate visits to universities in the USA to enhance teaching and research skills with professional colleagues. In addition, PFDP has sponsored many faculty members and university leaders to participate in professional development workshops at Central European University in Budapest and awarded 32 small grants to university professors in Palestine to implement new programs or teaching strategies that contribute to innovation or quality enhancement in a student-centered environment.

PFDP's newest initiative has been to support the creation of two model national centers of teaching and learning at An-Najah University and Bethlehem University and support of a new and growing program at Hebron University. These centers have already made major contributions to faculty development and the creation of an environment for effective learning and teaching. Their partnership with Northwestern University and Portland State University has added an extra dimension of international perspective to their work.

In just one year, the two centers have stimulated broader discussions among universities in Palestine on critical issues and opportunities for creative approaches to learning and teaching in many disciplines. They have also laid the groundwork for establishing new directions for research by promoting the scholarship of teaching and learning as well as action research that focuses on real problems and issues faced by university faculty in the course of their teaching and work with students.

Note: To encourage more discussion of issues and challenges in learning and teaching at a national level and to invite all universities to share their experiences, the two centers will sponsor a National Conference on Excellence in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education on June 1-2 2012 in Ramallah. An announcement for the conference is attached to this program. For further details and information about submitting proposals for presentations consult the website of An-Najah University or Bethlehem University.

The Roundtable

Against this rich background of activity and progress in elevating teaching and learning to a level of higher prominence, PFDP will focus on the individual professor as teacher for Roundtable 6.

¹ Education Development Strategic Plan: 2008-2012 p. 40

² Higher Education in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2010 p. 7

February 11, 2012

The topic for discussion will be the *University Teacher as Reflective Practitioner*. Led by Torgny Roxa of Lund University, the first two sessions will focus on the individual teacher and the organizational culture within which he or she operates. The first session will assume that there is no best way to teach but there certainly are better and less able teachers. Becoming a good teacher is often a result of determination, interest in students, and hard work. We shall examine two perspectives on how university teachers develop as teachers. Both examples argue that university teachers develop as a consequence of personal experiences of teaching students specific subjects. The discussion will offer templates for personal reflection on individual experiences as teachers, and perhaps also on colleagues' development. Dr. Gregory Light of Northwestern University will also contribute to this discussion as will two local experts: Dr. Maher Hashweh of Birzeit University and Dr. Saqer Darwish of Al Quds University.

The second session will emphasize a more strategic approach to improving teaching and student learning in universities that are research-oriented or aspire to expand their investment and productivity in research. The literature on how to influence academic teaching is littered with examples. Most of these attempts have resulted in temporary successes, which, over time, have faded away into what could be labeled normal teaching again. The long term outcomes of these efforts do not match the size of the investments. To address this chronic problem, there is a need for an improved understanding of how academic organizations function and address the challenges of change.

One informative case study is Lund University in Sweden, which has earned an international reputation for its strategic attempt to enhance teaching and students learning. The case study will include teacher-training, student evaluation of teaching, monetary rewards for good teachers, and ambitious departments. It is firmly anchored in a cultural understanding of higher education organizations and culture. The aim is to inspire universities and professors to reflect on their own organizations and on future strategic attempts to develop teaching for the benefit of student learning.

Dr. Sami Basha of Palestine Ahliya University, Ms. Rima Dabdoub of Bethlehem University, and Ms. Leila Ayyad of Al Quds University will offer comments and suggestions following the presentation.

February 12, 2012

Brother Peter Iorlano of Bethlehem University and Dr. Ciaran Sugrue of University College, Dublin will lead the final sessions of the Roundtable. Together they will focus on two important issues that are too often placed on the margins of discussions of teaching and student learning: the ethics of teaching and the professional responsibilities of the professoriate. Not only must a university teacher reflect on his or her development as a teacher within an organization; there must also be discussion and consensus about professional responsibility to the university, to colleagues and to students and about the values and principles of ethical professional behavior. Too frequently, heavy workloads, administrative burdens, financial challenges and—for Palestine especially—the stress and pressures of working in an environment of occupation distract attention from open discussion of those core issues.

Dr. Saida Affouneh of Al Quds Open University and Dr. Mudar Kassis of Birzeit University will offer comments in response. As always, participants in the Roundtable will have ample opportunity for questions, answers, discussions and even debates on these important topics in break-out groups focused on specific topics.

Program

Saturday, February 11, 2012

Caesar Hotel

Introductions and Welcome

9:00 am -9:30 am

Dr. John W. Shumaker

Chief of Party

PFDP

Session 1

9:30 am- 11:00 am

Mr. Torgny Roxa

Lund University

Sweden

*The Individual Teacher Level of Intervention:
The Current Basis of Professional Academic Development*

11:00-11:30

Break

Session 2

11:30-1:00

Response and Discussion

**Dr. Maher Hashweh
Birzeit University**

**Dr. Saqer Darwish
Al Quds University**

**Dr. Gregory Light
Northwestern University**

1:00 pm-2:00 pm

Lunch

Session 3

2:00 pm-3:30 pm

Torgny Roxa

*A Case Study in Multi-Layered Strategic Academic Development
Lund University*

3:30 pm-4:00 pm

Break

Session 4

4:00 pm-5:30 pm

**Panel of Respondents
And
Open Discussion**

**Ms. Rima Dabdoub
Bethlehem University**

**Ms. Leila Ayyad
Al Quds University**

**Dr. Sami Basha
Palestine Ahliya University**

7:00pm

Dinner

**Roma I and II
1st Floor**

Sunday, February 12, 2012
Alexandra Room
6th Floor

Session 5
9:00 am -11:00 am

Brother Peter Iorlano
Bethlehem University

The University Teacher: The Ethics of Teaching

Dr. Ciaran Sugrue
University College, Dublin

The University Teacher: Professional Responsibility

Respondents

Dr. Saida Affouneh
Al Quds Open University

Dr. Mudar Kassis
Birzeit University

11:00-11:30 am
Break

Session 6
11:30am -1:30 pm
Work Groups and Reporting

1:30 pm
Evaluation

2:00 pm

Lunch and Departure

**Sixth National Roundtable on Higher Education in Palestine
Palestinian Faculty Development Program (PFDP)**

**Teaching and Learning:
The University Teacher as Reflective Practitioner
February 11-12, 2012**

**Caesar Hotel
Ramallah**

**Featured Speakers
And Panelists**



Torgny Roxa

Torgny Roxå has been an academic developer since 1988, and is currently at the Faculty of Engineering at Lund University in Sweden. He holds a Masters in Higher Education from Griffith University in Brisbane (Au). His current interest is Strategic Educational Development in Higher Education, a socio-cultural approach where the essentialist and the socio-cultural perspectives are used in combination. He has developed several major measures for change, both at Lund University and nationally in Sweden. Previously, Mr. Roxa supported development of PBL-curriculum (Dentistry), introduced a university-wide concept for training of researchers in oral presentation, and initiated a strategic faculty-wide initiative for the development of teaching and learning in The Faculty of Engineering. This initiative has gained international recognition for its integrated use of rewards, evaluation, and pedagogical courses.

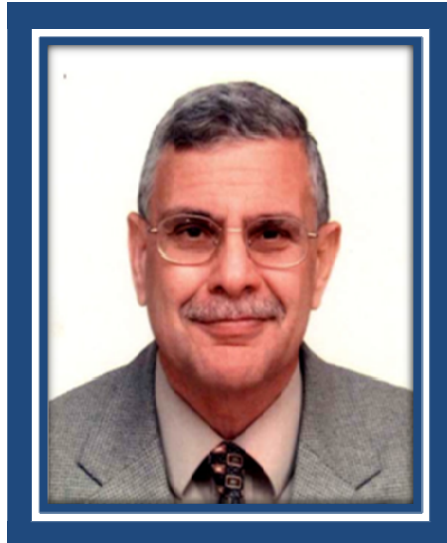
Mr. Roxa has won the Lund University award for distinguished pedagogical achievements and has also been recognized as an Excellent Teaching Practitioner by the Faculty of Engineering there. He has served as an external examiner for the Postgraduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching at Oxford University and has served at Central European University in Budapest as a workshop leader and advisor for future academic developers of the former Soviet Union and Palestine. In 2011 he was elected as Vice President (Europe) of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.



Gregory Light

Dr. Gregory Light is the director of the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University. The Searle Center provides a wide range of programs on learning and teaching for faculty, graduate students and undergraduates. Prior to Coming to Northwestern, he was on the faculty of the Institute of Education, University of London in the U.K. where he was deputy head and then head (chair) of the department of Life Long Learning. He started the Professional Accreditation of Teaching in Higher Education program. He has taught graduate courses in higher and professional education and consulted across the higher and professional education sector in North America, Europe and Asia. His research and scholarship focuses on the theory and practice of learning and teaching in higher and professional education.

Dr. Light has published over 40 papers and chapters in national and international peer-reviewed publications and given almost 100 invited talks and conference presentations in North America, Europe and Asia. He is currently the principle investigator (PI) or co-investigator on four major research projects studying critical areas of teaching and learning in the sciences, engineering and medicine. His research and his publications are focused on student learning and the professional development of teaching in higher education. He is author of the book *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: The Reflective Professional*, (Sage 2001, 2009).



Maher Hashweh

Maher Hashweh is an Associate Professor of Education in the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Birzeit University and the Dean of the Faculty of Education. He received his B.Sc. in physics and M.A. in Education degrees from the American University in Beirut, and his Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University. He worked as a teacher of physics and science after he received his bachelor's degree. Dr. Hashweh has worked at Birzeit University since receiving his Ph.D. degree in 1985, and he has assumed many administrative positions including Library Director, Head of the Masters Program in Democracy and Human Rights, and was the chairperson of the Psychology and Education Department several times.

He worked in school improvements and in-service teacher education, and facilitated the establishment of AlMawrid Teacher Development Center. He was a visiting scholar at Stanford University and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching during 2001/2002 and at Berlin Free University during the summer of 2006. Dr. Hashweh has published many articles and books in science education, democracy education, and teacher professional development. He recently established Ibn Rush Unit for Educational Research and Development at Birzeit University, the Faculty of Education (which accepted its first group of undergraduate students last year), and was the national coordinator of the Teacher Education Strategy in Palestine.



Saqer Mohammad Darwish

Saqer Mohammad Darwish, Associate Professor of Physics, graduated from West Virginia University in 1988 with a PhD degree in condensed matter physics and worked at Shenandoah University in Virginia (1990-1997) as a physics professor. Dr. Darwish joined Al-Quds University in 1997 and served as a chairman of the physics department (2000-2002) and as a dean of the faculty of science and technology (2002-2005) and currently he is the dean of graduate studies.

In addition to his research in physics, his interest in science education came as a result of holding administrative positions and his active roles in the establishment of the science interactive museum, academic support committee, mentorship program, quality assurance committee and the teaching and learning center at Al-Quds University.



Rima Dabdoub

Rima Dabdoub started working as an English instructor at Bethlehem University in 1980. After obtaining her Master's in TESOL from Boston University, Ms. Dabdoub returned to Bethlehem University as a teacher for ESP and TEFL courses in both the English Department and SAT (Subject Area Teaching) program in the Faculty of Education. She also teaches two modules on Ethics and Writing Standards for the MICAD (Master's in International Cooperation and Development) and Master's in Biotechnology at BU. Ms. Dabdoub has just completed a 3-year Master Trainers' course developed and offered by PFDP, trainers of the Central European University's (CEU) and Curriculum Resource Center (CRC), and is involved in conducting workshops and in teacher training in the Bethlehem area. She is also a teaching fellow at the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at BU. In the past two years, she designed and delivered two e-courses on Business English and Project Reporting/Communication. In 2011, Ms. Dabdoub received the PFDP Teaching Excellence Award.



Leila Ayyad

Ms. Leila Ayyad is the Director of the Language Center at Al-Quds University and teaches English as university requirement courses, English for Special Purposes courses, and also coordinates the English Language Skills electronic courses. As a Director of the language Center, her responsibilities include organizing the English Language Placement Test for the new comers at Al Quds University.

Ms. Ayyad has a Masters degree in Teaching Methods from Al-Quds University. Also, she is one of the first alumni of the PFDP Seminar for Excellence in Teaching, a PFDP Master Trainer, and a member of the steering committee of the National Roundtables on Higher Education in Palestine. She believes that enhancing the students' integrative motivation and improving the learning environment are corner stones in the learning process.



Sami Basha

Sami Basha is the President Assistant for Quality and Scientific Research and director of the Special Education Center at Palestine Ahliya University College in Bethlehem. Dr. Basha is a professor of pedagogy and special education and pedagogical consultant for local and international institutions. His main research interests include: intercultural studies and minorities, and special and inclusive education. Dr. Basha was born in the town of Jenin, Palestine, and completed his master's and doctoral degrees at the Faculty of Sciences of Education at the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome, Italy. He is a member of the professional Board for Clinical Pedagogy and special education union in Italy since 2006. Dr. Basha has different national and international publications, among which is the “Basha Behavioral Autism spectrum Disorder Screening test (BAT) ©, which he has developed and published in different languages after 3 years of work.

Dr. Basha was main project director of a grant addressing special needs education with the AMIDEAST, through which he has developed the first academic program networking with university professors who met to rethink how academia can better address the education of special needs persons. A Focus of his work brought to the development of the very first MA Academic program in Special Education where currently there is no special education degree program in Palestine. He is also a recipient of the PFDP Teaching Excellence Award in 2011.



Brother Peter Iorlano

Brother Peter Iorlano, FSC is a member of the De La Salle Christian Brothers and is from New York City. Brother Peter has a BS in Biology and Religious Studies from Manhattan College, a Masters in Social Work from the University of Rhode Island, and a Masters in Human Development from St. Mary's University. .

Currently, Brother Peter is the Coordinator of Institutional Values at Bethlehem University where he also teaches students in the Intensive English program and Developmental Psychology to nursing students. He is the Chairperson of Bethlehem University's Cardinal Martini Leadership Institute and also teaches in some of its programs.

Immediately prior to coming to Bethlehem University, Brother Peter served on the Leadership team of the Long Island-New England Province of the Brothers. His other professional experiences include counseling with delinquent adolescents and their families, teaching and providing student services in a K-12 school, school administration, and work with young adults (university students and graduates) in career counseling and faith formation. He has been active in offering programs in professional ethics for Bethlehem University's Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.



Ciaran Sugrue

Dr. Ciaran Sugrue is Professor of Education in the School of Education at University College, Dublin. Dr. Sugrue has worked in the Irish Education system in a variety of capacities including: teacher, schools inspector, teacher educator and researcher. Prior to his appointment in UCD, he worked at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, where he also had a leadership role within the Centre for Commonwealth Education, reflecting a long term commitment to, and involvement with, educational reform in the global south, sub-Saharan Africa in particular, working with agencies such as Ireland Aid, UNESCO and World Bank. This work has extended also to Egypt and Asia.

Dr. Sugrue was General Editor of Irish Educational Studies (1998-2008), serves on the editorial boards of several international journals, is a past president of the International Study Association of Teachers and Teaching, and was involved in creating the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN). Currently, he is external examiner for the Doctoral Program at the University of Bath, UK, and for the Masters in Leadership at University of Limerick. He is currently Head of School.

Dr. Sugrue research interests are wide-ranging and include: School Leadership and Educational Change, Continuing Professional Development, Teacher Educational Reform in developed and developing countries, and Educational Policy. He has expertise in qualitative research, particularly life history.



Saida Affouneh

Dr. Dr. Saida Affouneh is senior lecturer in teaching math and pedagogy, and researcher at Al Quds Open University. Dr. Affouneh received her PhD from UK in Planning for Education in Emergency Situation with a focus and involvement in the issue of improving the quality of education and e- learning development. Dr. Affouneh has published a book and over 4 papers in international journals and participated in many conferences and has gained three faculty and research grants from PFDP\AMIDEAST and PARC.

She was the director of Continuing Education Center and also the Planning Department at QOU. She is working now on her second book about educational reform.



Mudar Kassis

Mudar Kassis is a faculty member at Birzeit University since 1992. He graduated with a Ph.D. in philosophy - specialized in epistemology from Moscow State University in 1992.

Dr. Kassis teaches philosophy and cultural studies at his home department; transitions to democracy, reform and decolonization at the MA Programme in Democracy and Human Rights and at the MA Programme in Contemporary Arab Studies. He served as the Director of the Institute of Law, and as the establishing dean of the Faculty of Law and Public Administration. He was involved in curriculum development in most of the programmes where he taught and served. He currently serves as the co-director of the Initiative on Judicial Independence and Human Dignity - an initiative that involves the design and development of sustainable structures for continuing education within the Palestinian Judiciary focused on the concept of dignity.

Dr. Kassis research interests include the impact of higher education and the role of the intellectual as a leader for emancipatory change. Other areas of interest involve democratization, decolonization, and dignity as a transformative concept.



John W. Shumaker

John W. Shumaker is the Chief of Party of the USAID-funded Palestinian Faculty Development Program for AMIDEAST. Dr. Shumaker has served as a leader in education as professor, senior administrator at The Ohio State University and the University at Albany in the SUNY System. He also spent several years as president at Central Connecticut State University, the University of Louisville and the University of Tennessee. Since 2005, he has served as a senior advisor to ministries of education and higher education in Armenia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Morocco in projects funded by the World Bank, DANIDA, USAID, the Government of Saudi Arabia and the private sector in Rabat and Casablanca.

As a university president Dr. Shumaker was highly successful as a fund raiser and specialist in community engagement, change management, international programs and university-industry relationships for teaching as well as advanced research and knowledge transfer. In recognition of his service to the University of Louisville the university presented its highest award—The Minerva Award—in 2002 and subsequently dedicated the John W, Shumaker Research Building on its main campus in November, 2009.

Before coming to Ramallah, Dr. Shumaker served as team lead of an international group of experts responsible for creating a master plan for a new polytechnic university that will be at the center of a new Green City developed by a large industrial corporation north of Marrakech. Prior to his work in Morocco he was team lead of the Tatweer Strategy Formation Project in Saudi Arabia and served as Chief of Party of the USAID-funded Higher Education Commission/Financial Aid Development program in Pakistan for the Academy for Educational Development. This program involved developing a comprehensive financial aid system for higher education in Pakistan, as well as capacity-building for the Higher Education Commission and 11 universities to raise funds from the private sector for scholarships and other financial assistance programs.

His work at the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education in Kabul, Afghanistan focused on a range of areas including strategic planning, policy development, quality control, financial aid systems, national university entrance examinations, resource development and fund-raising, as well as capacity development.