

## **SYMPOSIUM**

### **COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE**

**University of Cyprus, 12-14 October, Nicosia, Cyprus**

#### **International Symposium**

#### **Recreating Linkages between Theory and Praxis in Educational Leadership**

This symposium will discuss at least two national reform processes as works-under-progress to focus discussion on the complexities of national system reforms. The symposium will highlight the interplay of historical, cultural, political and economic factors that tend to drive national educational reform agendas, while also reflecting the presence of common factors; principally the impact of information and communication technology (ICT), the globalization of economies, and the wilfulness of reflective and determined leaders.

#### **Paper 1**

#### **Establishing links between theoretical models of educational effectiveness and theories of educational leadership with the development of national policy on evaluation in Cyprus**

**Draft Abstract:** The relationships between policy and research, even in a period when commitment to developing evidence-informed policy is strong, are highly problematic. To demonstrate this argument, we refer to the results of a research program that attempted to draw from theoretical models of educational effectiveness research and theories on leadership implications for the development of a reform in the national teacher and school evaluation system in Cyprus. The main value assumptions and theoretical principles upon

which the current evaluation reform in Cyprus is built will be presented. Moreover, the extent to which stakeholders' reactions to the proposed system were associated with their personal interests and concerns will be examined. It will be shown that stakeholders were critical of proposals which they thought could reduce their professional power. Finally, it will be argued that consensus could yet be reached if policymakers establish procedures to ensure clear understanding among stakeholders of both the theoretical assumptions of the proposed system, and the type of concerns that they have for the system.

## **Paper 2**

### **Recreating Linkages in the United Arab Emirates between a National Theory of Modernization and a Praxis of Educative Leadership**

**Abstract:** This paper will establish the context of reform by summarizing a highly critical evaluation of the national system of schooling in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It will identify the theory of modernization that lies behind the reform program just allocated AED 48 billion (USD 13 billion) for the next three years. The paper will explain how Abu Dhabi University (ADU) has developed two new masters programs (in teaching and learning, and in educational leadership) to address directly the needs of the nation's current professionals. It will be argued that a fresh blend of theory and praxis unique to the UAE will be developed as lead teachers and school and system managers are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential to whole system reform. The most immediate challenge is to engage a critical mass of current professionals that are committed to educative leadership.

# **Recreating Linkages in the United Arab Emirates between a National Theory of Modernization and a Praxis of Educative Leadership**

**Reynold Macpherson, Pieter Kachelhoffer and Medhat El Nemr<sup>1</sup>**

**Paper given to the Commonwealth Council of Educational Administration and Management Conference, University of Cyprus, 12-14 October, Nicosia, Cyprus.**

**Abstract:** This paper will establish the context of reform by summarizing a highly critical evaluation of the national system of schooling in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It will identify the theory of modernization that lies behind the reform program just allocated AED 48 billion (USD 13 billion) for the next three years. The paper will explain how Abu Dhabi University (ADU) has developed two new masters programs (in teaching and learning, and in educational leadership) to address the needs of the nation's current professionals. It will be argued that a fresh blend of theory and praxis unique to the UAE will be developed as lead teachers and school and system managers are encouraged to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes essential to whole system reform. The most immediate challenge is to engage a critical mass of current professionals that are committed to educative leadership.

## **INTRODUCTION**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2005, the readers of the most popular Arab newspaper in the UAE, the *Al-Ittihad Daily*, were startled to read about eleven major problems in the nation's education system, including unsuitable curricula, collapsing school buildings and low salaries.<sup>2</sup> In the following days, the readers were told that AED 46 billion (USD\$ 13 billion) would be spent in the next 10 years on rectifying the problems,<sup>3</sup> that current spending was

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<sup>2</sup> Problems Face Education: Unsuitability of Curricula, Collapsing School Buildings, and Low Salaries, *Al Ittihad*, (translated from Arabic), 19 November 2005, pp. 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> 46 billion dirhams will be spent developing the education system in the next ten years, *Al Ittihad*, (translated from Arabic), 20 November 2005, p. 8.

60% less than of international standards,<sup>4</sup> that new salary scales and a long-term contract system were to be introduced,<sup>5</sup> and the state intended to modernize Islamic curricula.<sup>6</sup>

It is rare for the public in the UAE to be told that one of their key public services is obsolete. It is rare for an Education Minister to make such an intervention using commissioned research findings to demonstrate the need for a radical reform programme. It was a major turning point in the history of education in the UAE deliberately created by the then Minister; His Excellency Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan. The reform agenda he set has been fully adopted by his recent successor; His Excellency Dr. Haneef Hassan Ali.

Is systemic reconstruction on this scale and depth actually warranted? As indicated above, the evidence bluntly summarized by *Al-Ittihad* had eleven dimensions:

1. Unsuitable Curricula. The traditional, repetitious, fragmented and redundant content, disconnected from community and national needs, is encouraging closed attitudes.
2. Ineffective teaching methods. Rote learning is preventing the interaction needed to develop research, analysis and communication skills required for higher learning.
3. Inappropriate assessment methods. Memory is being tested rather than skills and understandings, ability is not being taken into account, and the tests are encouraging the proliferation of private lessons outside school.
4. Little use of ICT. Few schools use modern teaching and learning technologies. Computers tend to be old, unused, or used only for non-teaching purposes.
5. Poor libraries and learning support. Libraries are poorly stocked, textbooks are rigid and unrelated to learning processes, and laboratories are badly maintained.
6. Short school days and a short school year. Students in the UAE spend about half of the time in learning compared with students in other countries.
7. Ineffective school culture. Discipline is weak. Truancy is high, especially by male students. Healthy meals are not available. The learning environments are unattractive.

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<sup>4</sup> Spending on education is 60% less than international standards, *Al Ittihad*, (translated from Arabic), 21 November 2005, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> New salary scales and long-term contract system, *Al Ittihad*, (translated from Arabic), 22 November 2005, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> The full development and modernization of Islamic curricula, *Al Ittihad*, (translated from Arabic), 23 November 2005, p. 9.

8. Poor facilities. Many school buildings are aged, poorly designed, badly equipped and maintained, with few facilities for sports and cultural activities.
9. Low levels of professionalism. Teachers have low skills, qualifications, pay and status. They rely on traditional methods and do not use computers, libraries or other information resources. They are not interested in professional development and show little loyalty to their students and schools. The system provides no training, evaluation or incentives, and discourages creativity.
10. Ineffective school system. The Ministry is highly centralized, has no clear vision and suffers from job inflation. School principals need intensive training and continuous follow-up support if they are to lead the reforms. The Education Departments in each geographic zone are, in general, dysfunctional.
11. Inadequate budgets. The budget is about one third of comparable international systems. The largest part of the current budget goes to salaries with little allocated for support, activities or developmental programs.

After consultations with international consultants and the current principals, teachers and communities in the UAE, the Ministry of education proposed five strategies - each with specified purposes:

1. Clarify an educational policy - to stress the development of understanding, character formation and community values to prepare students for an active role in a modern knowledge society, and to mobilize social and political support for investment in education in order to achieve national prosperity and development
2. Set internationally benchmarked performance expectations in all aspects and levels of education – to reflect the nature and needs of the UAE community in a global context
3. Launch a national 10-year reconstruction plan - to bring all school facilities, curriculum, pedagogy and outcomes up to international standards
4. Restructure educational management – to have the Ministry focus on improving performance levels, replace Education Departments with regional support centers, merge small schools to raise their viability and quality, and boost leadership capacities in school communities
5. Mobilize appropriate resources and support – to achieve all of the above.

The reform program exhibits a neo-pluralist theory of modernization since it gives simultaneous priority to four meta-values; that the UAE needs

1. a strong and diversified economy,
2. a full and successful involvement in the ICT revolution, and
3. an open Arabic and Islamic knowledge society, all of which stress a fourth meta-value;
4. the need for an educational system of international character and quality.

The first dimension of this theory of modernization, economic diversification, makes good sense - most of the Emirates have exhausted their oil, Dubai has about 10 years worth proven and Abu Dhabi has about 130 years proven. Diversification is unfolding first in the construction sector. New construction projects to be tendered in 2006 and 2007 are predicted<sup>7</sup> to exceed AED 47 billion, including commercial and residential buildings, roads, airport infrastructure, industrial parks and government institutions. This total approximates the cost of the education reforms over the next three years, as noted above.

Diversification has been enabled by a change to property law. In mid-December 2005, Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of Abu Dhabi's Department of Planning and Economy, announced<sup>8</sup> legislation that will allow 100% private ownership in the Emirate's Higher Corporation for Specialized Economic Zones (HCSEZs) during the second phase of the 'Industrial City of Abu Dhabi' initiative (ICAD 2).

ICAD 2, as Sheikh Hamed explained,<sup>9</sup> is intended to diversify the Abu Dhabi economy into "high value strategic and industrial clusters in sectors such as steel, aluminum, petrochemicals, automotive components, oil and gas services and pharmaceuticals." About a dozen industry-specific clusters are to be established in the HCSEZs. The driver, he said, is that "Abu Dhabi's industrial base is composed of individual companies in fragmented

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ameinfo.com/72661.html>

<sup>8</sup> Haseeb Haider, A. (2005) "New Abu Dhabi law allows 100pc foreign ownership", 15 December, see <http://www.khaleejtimes.com/detect.asp?section=business&col=>

<sup>9</sup> "Industrial evolution," *Gulf Business*, January 2006, p. 30.

industries. But now, our goal is to create high value industry clusters and transform the emirate into an industrial, services and logistics hub."

This diversification requires the immigration of a large number of professionals, as well as urban housing and infrastructure developments on an unprecedented scale. The mega projects already underway include the Al Raha Beach Development (AED 53.94 billion), Al Reem Island Development (AED 34.86 billion), the Abu Dhabi Airport Expansion (AED 24.9 billion), the Mohammed Bin Zayed city and the Shams Abu Dhabi project.

To be sustainable, diversification on this scale requires international capital investment and engagement in the Abu Dhabi economy. They are being actively encouraged<sup>10</sup> by the Emirate's Government and are already acting as economic multipliers<sup>11</sup> with evidence accumulating in exponential national growth numbers. The UAE's economy is expected by the International Monetary Fund<sup>12</sup> to record a gain of USD 30 billion in nominal terms for 2005 and become the third largest economy in the Middle East and Central Asia. The country's gross domestic product reached USD 104.2 billion in 2004 after rising by more than 17 percent over the 2003 GDP of USD 88.5 billion. It is expected to record growth of 28.5 percent in 2005 to USD 133.8 billion and to continue its expansion in 2006 to achieve USD 150.9 billion.

When this four-part theory of modernization was translated by the Ministry of Education into reform initiatives, nine priorities were identified;

1. Develop learning criteria suitable for the UAE that meet international standards
2. Moving to student-focused learning environments
3. Devolve responsibility and accountability to schools and improve professionalism
4. Integrate ICT with learning, managing schools and evaluating the system
5. Develop a national system of rebuilding and refurbishing school buildings
6. Reform hiring, incentives, evaluation and development of all school staff

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<sup>10</sup> [http://www.tradearabia.com/tanews/newsdetails\\_snCONS\\_article98578\\_cnt.html](http://www.tradearabia.com/tanews/newsdetails_snCONS_article98578_cnt.html)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.uaecontractors.com/default.asp> AUE Contractors Association, GM Humaid Alem Salem, 6461613, Wk 065567444, P.O. Box 44925 Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Tel: (9712) 6711844, Fax: (9712) 6711855

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=10&categ\\_id=3&article\\_ID=20984](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=3&article_ID=20984)

7. Boost investment and accountability to create successful public schools
8. Ensure private schools offer safe and legal environments, and quality for value, and
9. Offer adult literacy as a pathway to higher education, technical training or continuous learning for employment.

The next issue is how? This set of priorities anticipates the availability and effectiveness of educational professionals with two distinct sets of knowledge, skills and attitudes;

- *educative managers* who can help professional colleagues learn how to reform a human system comprising national support systems, regional centers and schooling communities, and
- *educative teachers* who can help professional colleagues learn how to reform teaching and learning in classrooms and in schooling communities.

The first point to be drawn is that both sets of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes are founded on a common philosophy of *educative leadership*,<sup>13</sup> that is, their primary task will be helping co-professionals learn how to achieve reforms in their practices through creating continuous professional learning, in learning organizations.<sup>14</sup>

The educational managers, who are to be made responsible for developing new support systems at national, regional and schooling levels, must be able to facilitate evidence-based strategic and tactical planning processes if they are to both determine and achieve internationally comparable educational aims, goals, objectives, measures and targets. It is helpful that the capacities of the managers required at different levels of the system are functionally very similar, although they can be differentiated by scope and degree of devolved responsibility.

Those appointed into the reformed Ministry will need to be able to create national policy and programs that evaluate, accredit and improve public and private schools and support services. To be more specific, they will need the educational understandings, technical skills and

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<sup>13</sup> Duignan, P.A. and Macpherson, R.J.S. (1992) (eds.) *Educative Leadership: A Practical Theory for New Educational Administrators and Managers*, Basingstoke: Falmer.

<sup>14</sup> Senge, P. (1990) *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*, New York: Doubleday.

educative attitudes to set criteria for student achievement, establish and manage support systems, develop a national students' learning assessment system, develop and manage a national education budget, create a national executive information system with databases of staff, student and financial resources, develop criteria for technical and adult education, accredit public and private schools, set the academic calendar, and account to the National Committee for Public Schools.

Those appointed to manage regional service centers will need to facilitate similarly collaborative planning in order to deliver the logistical support needed by schools to achieve national goals. They will be expected to help principals and service managers to learn how to provide leadership services, logistical services, evaluation and planning services, human resource and financial management services, and public relations services.

Similarly, principals managing schooling communities will need to facilitate school community planning so that the teaching and learning programs reflect international best practice and help each school achieve national goals. Principals will be expected to do this through collaborative work planning, participative budgeting, promoting interactive pedagogy, developing extra-curriculum activities, evaluation and community communication, and engaging parent and other community representatives in governance. Again, the most fundamental theme of their service, as a leader, will be their capacity to help their co-professionals and their students' parents learn.

The nature and scale of national demand for educative leaders who can actually help deliver systemic reforms encouraged Abu Dhabi University to develop two new masters degrees; a Masters of Education in Leadership, and Masters of Education in Teaching in Learning. They were designed for current employees of the Ministry of Education to build a fresh nexus between the national theory of modernization and a practical theory of educative leadership.

The rationale and content of each of these degrees will be presented in the two coming sections. The final section will reflect on how professional engagement might be facilitated.

## LEADERSHIP

The first challenge for ADU’s curriculum design team was to identify a standards-based form of educative leadership that will meet the needs of the UAE. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) were eventually adopted for benchmarking purposes because they use “a vision of leadership based on the premise that the criteria and standards for the professional practice of school leaders must be grounded in the knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning.”<sup>15</sup> The standards also value cultural and ethical leadership, professional and curriculum leadership, and community leadership, much as proposed by research in Australia that identified practical forms of educative leadership.<sup>16</sup> The ISLLC standards follow.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC)	
Standard 1	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
Standard 2	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
Standard 3	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.
Standard 4	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.
Standard 5	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
Standard 6	A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the wider political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.umsl.edu/~mpea/Pages/AboutISLLC/AboutISLLC.html>

<sup>16</sup> Duignan, P.A. and Macpherson, R.J.S. ‘Educative Leadership: A Practical Theory’, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 29, 1, 8-33, 1993.

These standards were used to indicate how the assessment of student learning in the MEd in Leadership will be achieved. The assessments will focus on six measurable student learning outcomes, expressed as the following six standards of leadership:

**Standard 1: Strategic Leadership**

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and the ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of an institution’s vision of learning.

**Standard 2: Instructional Leadership**

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and the ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning and designing comprehensive professional growth plans.

**Standard 3: Organizational Leadership**

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient and effective learning environment.

**Standard 4: Community Leadership**

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by working with families and other community members, and responding to diverse community interests and needs.

**Standard 5: Ethical Leadership**

Candidates who complete the program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly and in an ethical manner.

### **Standard 6: Cultural Leadership**

Candidates who complete this program are educational leaders who have the knowledge and the ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing and responding to the wider political, social, economic, legal and cultural context.

Together, these standards provide a profile of a person prepared appropriately to lead the reforms to school and system management in the UAE. The standards were elaborated as a total of 15 intended learning outcomes for 12 semester-length courses, to help prepare appropriate learning activities.

1. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze the body of theory most relevant to the high-quality practice of educational administration, and to specifically relate research and theory to practice in educational administration.
2. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze politics as it impacts educational administration. Using cases, current educational issues and political systems analysis, the student will be able to explain educational policy development in terms of change agency, interest groups, the media and other political players and processes.
3. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze the impact of positivism, subjectivism and functionalism, and critiques, in recent research on school organization and administration.
4. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze issues of policy and practice in educational administration in a seminar setting. The student will address value orientations, relevant research and policy considerations that shape decisions.
5. The student will be able to conduct a research project designed to generate or test theory.

6. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze a research project designed to generate or test theory.
7. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze the principles and practices of personnel administration. The emphasis will be on recruitment, selection, deployment, evaluation, staff development, manpower planning and employee relations in the schools.
8. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze the planning, design, construction, maintenance and evaluation of educational facilities. The student will develop awareness and skills related to needs assessment, educational specifications, site selection, maintenance and operation of educational facilities.
9. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze the principles and practices of public relations applied to education. The student will gain proficiency and skill in the improvement of relations between the school and the public through interaction and utilization of political, community and human resources and other social institutions in the organization, and improvement of public education.
10. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze the organization of the business management function in the public schools, including internal structure, office and personnel management, budgeting maintenance and operation, transportation, food services, legal relationships, insurance and safety.
11. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze issues involved in financing schools.
12. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze issues, problems and trends in the K-12 curriculum, from an administrative and supervisory point of view. Organizational leadership and strategies for stimulating, implementing and evaluating alternatives in curriculum and instruction will be learned.
13. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze the basic functions of school principals including; planning, programming, communicating and evaluating and the current issues and problems that confront the practicing educational administrator.
14. The student will be able to describe, apply, and analyze philosophical techniques and concepts in the solution of contemporary educational problems.

15. The student will be able to conduct applied research, disseminate new knowledge, and develop applications for existing knowledge.

In sum, the MEd in Leadership Program will be studied as twelve 3-credit courses:

<b>Major Area Course Work: (3 credits each) - 21 credits</b>	
1. EDA 501 Introduction to Educational Leadership	
2. CAI 511 Instructional Supervision	
3. CAI 515 Curriculum Development*	
4. EDC 516 Program Assessment	
5. EDT 519 Information Systems in Education	
6. EDC 514 Research Methodology in Education*	
7. EDA 570 Internship/Field Experience	
<b>Professional Course Work: (3 credits each) - 9 credits</b>	
8. EDA 540 Institutional Enhancement	
9. EDA 542 Professional Development	
10. EDA 580 Capstone Course / Research Project*	
<b>Two Courses of the Following Courses: (3 credits each) - 6 credits</b>	
1. EDA 519 Women in Leadership	
2. EDA 511 Philosophy of Education	
3. EDA 512 History of Education in the UAE	
4. EDA 521 Comparative Education	
5. EDC 525 Qualitative Research Design*	
6. EDC 527 Quantitative Methodologies*	<b>36 Credits Total</b>

There are common features to the two MEd degrees. The asterisk in the table above indicates courses common to both degrees. Both degrees are based on an educative leadership philosophy and both will use constructivist pedagogies. ADU's emerging teaching philosophy favours constructivism verified by cognitive science. Leadership research and experience tends to confirm that people deepen their understandings most effectively when they engage actively in developing personal meaning in order to solve problems of substance.

ADU is increasingly taking the view that the effectiveness of teaching is indicated by demonstrable learning outcomes, such as effective solutions, and developing Moodle online solutions to make more flexible learning opportunities available.

Both degrees assume that lead teachers and school and system leaders will need to know how to clarify the intended learning outcomes of followers, motivate them to take charge of their own learning, provide them with access to relevant and trustworthy knowledge, enable them to interact with others so that the knowledge is examined thoroughly, and then to challenge them with opportunities to apply the knowledge. Adult learners on both degrees will be encouraged to use action research processes to deliver self-directed sole and group learning assignments.

This approach also reflects ADU's wider strategic interests. Tertiary education has a strategic opportunity regarding teaching and learning in the Knowledge Age. The exploitation of ICT for educational purposes is incrementally distributing competitiveness in the global higher education industry.<sup>17</sup> ADU remains broadly optimistic concerning the impact of ICT on education, while recognizing that technologies and applications are converging, and still in their infancy.

Hence, ADU is in the early stages of developing global ICT strategies to better achieve educational ends for both domestic and international students. Providing constructivist pedagogical principles retain primacy over the technological drivers, flexible learning could yet give young universities, like ADU, and small nations, like the UAE, strategic advantages in the global knowledge economy. ICT also enables ADU to benchmark against other private higher knowledge communities and achieve its vision as a premier university in the Gulf Region.

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<sup>17</sup> Oblinger, D.G. and Katz, R.N. (Eds.) (1999) *Renewing administration: Preparing colleges and universities for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Bolton, Mass.: Anker.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

The MEd in Teaching and Learning was also aligned with international performance-based standards; those developed by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC), and the Department for Education and Skills (UK).

These standards were used to guide the development of a professional preparation program, including content, developmental standards and candidate evaluation. Identifiable in all sets of standards was a commitment to (a) developing attention to how learners learn best, (b) understanding curriculum in terms of content, scope and learning activities, (c) adherence to ethical and moral principles, and (d) a commitment to professional growth. These standards were the basis upon which the program was built, unique to the cultural mores and expectations in the UAE.

The program was therefore conceived as a learning pathway of coursework and experiences that would link the growth of knowledge, skills and attitudes to the development of evidence-based professional practice. The design team took the view that making the links between theory (defined as an evidence-based set of understandings) and practice - to solve the real world challenges of the classroom and education system - is imperative for professional growth. Similarly critical, in the view of the design team, is incorporating ICT into the solutions developed.

Hence, ADU's MEd in Teaching and Learning will use a performance-based, standards-driven and evidence-based approach, incorporate the comprehensive use of ICT and exemplify life-long professional development. Consistent with this approach, ADU faculty will be required<sup>18</sup> to commit to, and demonstrate for advancement, high quality scholarship

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<sup>18</sup> Abu Dhabi University (2006). Professional Development Policy and Procedures, Abu Dhabi: ADU, and Abu Dhabi University (2006). Faculty Promotion in Rank - Policy and Procedures, Abu Dhabi: ADU.

incorporating discovery, integration, application and teaching.<sup>19</sup> In essence, it is intended that they will show their postgraduate students how to learn by scholarly example.

As a result of having completed the MEd in Teaching and Learning, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and professional attitudes that are effective in helping co-educators learn curriculum content and pedagogy. The MEd in Teaching and Learning has also adopted Ministry objectives and will prepare practicing teachers for leadership roles in a wide range of practical areas; curriculum development, modern pedagogy, assessment methods, learning resource management, ICT applications, teaching foreign languages, programs for distinguished and special needs students, sport and cultural activities, managing longer study hours and academic year, nutrition education, introducing obligatory K-12 education, attracting and managing more highly qualified teachers with new hiring and reward systems, managing continuous professional development programs for teachers, principals and other staff, managing effective school maintenance, developing new school management and community / parent communication systems.

Assessments will indicate that graduates have met the criteria established both by the ADU and the Ministry of Education. Assessment will be related to five intended learning outcomes, expressed as outcomes or competencies;

### **1. Content Competence**

The following performance-based standards will be expected of graduates:

- Understands the individual development of students
- Teaches effectively through the integration of content and pedagogy
- Uses current and advanced technology
- Adapts instruction to diverse learning styles
- Promotes a learner centred approach
- Promotes conceptual understanding
- Uses a constructivist teaching and learning approach

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<sup>19</sup> Boyer, E.L. (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass.

- Assesses learner's comprehensive growth and outcomes
- Conveys the nature of knowledge and knowing to the learners
- Communicates knowledge
- Engage in professional development.

## **2. Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills**

The following performance-based standards will be expected of graduates:

- Apply pedagogical content knowledge within a classroom setting
- Use multiple strategies to meet individual learner's needs
- Explore the relationship between content, personal pedagogy and assessment
- Develop portfolios which mirror self-reflection and foster critical thought relating to practice

## **3. Moral and Ethical Principles**

The following performance-based standards will be expected of graduates:

- Demonstrates sensitivity to community and cultural norms
- Promote a collaborative environment with teachers, parents and community
- Demonstrates a collegial attitude and works with others to improve the educational experience of students
- Establish and maintain a positive and safe classroom learning experiences for students
- Treats all students fairly and equitably
- Exhibits a commitment to planning, assessment and reflection as an on going process.
- Demonstrates flexibility based on needs and circumstances

## **4. Student Learning**

The following standards will be expected of graduates:

- Develop and maintain portfolios of practice
- Collect relevant student work.

Many of the teachers currently employed in the national education system are not UAE nationals and come from a variety of countries both within and without the region. They face all the difficulties of being expatriates. Those who were educated in UAE national schools have been found by research commissioned by the Minister to be ill prepared to manage the comprehensive reforms being considered.

The MEd in Teaching and Learning will seek to develop a network of reformers from current employees; a network that understands the culture of the society and the dynamics of the contemporary UAE and which, through their acceptance of greater responsibility, will have the knowledge, skills, values and power to lead the reforms in schools. The comprehensive nature of the reforms foreshadowed is reflected in the twelve 3-credit pathway offered:

<p><b>Major Area Course Work:</b> (3 credits each) - 21 credits</p> <p>CAI 500 Teaching and Learning in Context</p> <p>CAI 505 Classroom Behavior and Management</p> <p>CAI 506 Outcomes Based Teaching, Learning and Assessment</p> <p>CAI 515 Curriculum Development*</p> <p>CAI 510 Educational Futures</p> <p>EDT 518 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education</p> <p>EDC 514 Research Methodology in Education*</p> <p><b>Professional Course Work:</b> (3 credits each) - 9 credits</p> <p>EDT 550 Curriculum and Instructional Design and Technology</p> <p>CAI 504 Evaluation and Assessment in Education</p> <p>CAI 580 Capstone Course / Research Project*</p> <p><b>Two Courses of the Following Courses:</b> (3 credits each) - 6 credits</p> <p>DEC 515 Inquiry in Elementary Education</p> <p>DEC 530 Advanced Study in the Teaching of Science</p> <p>DEC 532 Advanced Study in the Teaching of Social Studies</p>
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DEC 533 Advanced Study in the Teaching of Mathematics	
EDC 525 Qualitative Research Design*	
EDC 527 Quantitative Methodologies*	<b>Total – 36 credits</b>

In addition to the asterisked courses, the common ground between the two masters programs are the standards used internationally to guide the development of professional preparation programs, including the content, developmental standards and candidate evaluation schemes. Identifiable in all such schemes is a commitment to develop in professionals an attention to the needs of learners (child, youth and adult) and to the host community, an understanding of curriculum in terms of trustworthy content, scope and technology, an adherence to ethical and professional principles, and a commitment to continuing professional growth.

International standards also provide a base upon which standards unique to the culture and policies of the UAE can be incorporated. As indicated above, the education policies of the UAE stress the need to introduce advanced educational techniques, improve the nation’s capacity to innovate, and enable students to become self-directed learners. Leaders and master teachers are needed urgently to enable the transformation of teaching, learning and curriculum development by ICT, national capacity building in entrepreneurialism, and the growth of life-long learning.

Further, the MEd in Teaching and Learning is based on a constructivist pedagogy that will enable professional educators to link evidence-based knowledge to daily practice. These links between theory and practice are both essential to solving problems in the real world of the UAE classroom and education system, and to continuing the professional growth of reform leaders. The program responds directly to the UAE Government’s call for the transformation of pedagogy using constructivist theory and methods. Similarly, ADU faculty will expect students enrolled in its MEd in Teaching and Learning to exploit ICT, as it will for its MEd in Leadership students. This is another priority for the UAE Ministry of Education.

The differences between the two masters programs will be most marked in focus. The MEd in Leadership will attend to team, school and system leadership in a community context. The MEd in Teaching and Learning will focus on pedagogy and curriculum development in a context of emergent ICT.

### **CREATING A CRITICAL MASS OF EDUCATIVE LEADERS**

There is an immediate challenge. This case started with the most popular Arabic newspaper in the UAE announcing, by association, that the current knowledge, skills and attitudes of its current leading professionals in school education were obsolete. The challenge is how to enable those who wish to drive the reforms move from where they are to a point where they can enter one of the two masters programs confident in the knowledge that they will succeed.

The answer developed by the ADU's Institute of Enterprise Development (IED) is to create a network of educative leaders; a community of scholars committed to preparing themselves and their co-professionals to carry through the national reforms. The bridging process managed by the IED will be initially socio-cultural in nature so that the development of fresh professional knowledge, skills and attitudes can occur in a highly supportive social environment.

Following the highly successful model developed at the University of Calgary by Professor Charles Webber and colleagues, a series of early evening events will be hosted by the IED at the ADU in an executive setting. Relatively regular events will use guest lecturers and panels of practitioners to analyze and respond to issues of immediate interest to participants, and then invite practitioners to develop their own understandings and practical solutions over a meal.

As demand crystallizes in particular areas, the IED will offer short courses customized to the needs of viable groups. Every effort will be made subsequently to bundle short courses and add assignments in order to create credit transfer into a masters program. In this way, a network and critical mass of would-be educative leaders will form and expand, and sustain engagement with advanced learning.

Another bridging device to be submitted to the Commission for Academic Accreditation will be to disaggregate the 12-course masters degrees into one third, that satisfy the requirements of a Graduate Certificate of Education, and two thirds that satisfy the requirements of a Graduate Diploma of Education.

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This case study has drawn attention to the convergence of historical, cultural, political and economic factors that triggered a national educational reform agenda, especially enabled at this point in time by the ubiquity and utility of ICT, the globalization of economies, and the determination of a thoughtful Minister and his successor. It also shows that an evidence-based and benchmarked assessment of the UAE national system of schooling triggered a national and holistic reform process. The process is being driven on a neo-pluralist theory of modernization that simultaneously values a diversified economy, a successful exploitation of ICT, an open Arabic and Islamic knowledge society, and thus, an educational system of international character and quality.

National priorities have been identified; internationally benchmarked national learning criteria, student-focused learning environments, greater devolution and professionalism, the integration of ICT, rebuilding and refurbishing school buildings, modern human resource management and development, successful public and private schools, and adult literacy as a pathway to higher education, technical training or continuous learning for employment. The next question is how are current lead professionals going to be prepared to lead these reforms in the classroom, the school and across the system?

It was argued that these priorities will require the presence of two types of *educative leaders*; *educative managers* who can help professional colleagues learn how to reform the management of a national system, and *educative teachers* who can help professional colleagues learn how to reform teaching and learning. The design of two MEd degrees at ADU for the nation's current professionals was in direct response to these requirements.

Current professionals wanting to prepare for educative leadership will be invited by the ADU's IED to join a supportive network. This community of learners will meet regularly over an executive meal on campus to explore professional challenges and practical solutions related to the reforms. As demand develops, the IED will also offer short courses and facilitate credit transfer into MEd courses.

The networking events, short courses and degrees at ADU will all need to remain true to a common philosophy of educative leadership. All will need to use constructivist pedagogies. All will need to facilitate the solving of practical problems of substance. All will need to help leaders embed organizational learning. All will need to encourage action research, particularly those incorporating ICT. As for ADU, it will need to service its wider strategic interests by ensuring that national priorities and pedagogical principles retain primacy over technological and financial drivers, as it positions itself as a premier university in the Gulf Region.

In sum, the national reform agenda is worthy of such support. As Sheikh Nahyan's research showed, the fundamental transformation of schools and the education system is required if the UAE is to become a knowledge society.