



# Abstracts

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## The social status of teachers in Israel

Izhak Gilat, Niva Wengrowicz

The social status of teachers has received considerable attention in the public discourse in Israel in the past six decades. This article compares the social status of teachers in Israel to that of five other professions – doctors, lawyers, high-tech employees, career army personnel, and social workers – on the basis of a study conducted on a representative sample of the Jewish population over the past three years. The sample comprised 1502 participants who were asked to evaluate seven aspects of the prestige and social status of six professions in Israel (such as contribution to society, and fairness of remuneration). The main findings are: (a) The social status of teachers is lower than that of doctors, lawyers, and high-tech employees, and higher than the status of social workers; (b) the variability of the aspects of teachers' status is higher compared to other professions, e.g., contribution to society is evaluated as high, whereas attractiveness of teaching is very low; (c) teachers who participated in the study perceive their status similarly to respondents in other occupations; (d) the social status of teachers has remained stable in the past three years. The discussion highlights the methodological and theoretical implications of the findings.

**Keywords:** social status scale, teachers in Israel, teachers' social status

**Email:** [gilati@netvision.net.il](mailto:gilati@netvision.net.il)

[nivawen@gmail.com](mailto:nivawen@gmail.com)

## Cultural background, personal characteristics, and academic achievements

Leehu Zysberg

This study tested a relatively new model to explain academic underachievement among cultural minorities by focusing on psychological processes. We hypothesized that academic self-efficacy, locus of control (LOC), and emotional intelligence (EI) would mediate the association between cultural background (minority vs. majority) and academic achievements among freshman students.

126 students were sampled in a purposive sampling method (to over-represent minorities) from the freshman year at a university in northern Israel. They filled out measures of self-efficacy, LOC, and EI, as well as demographic background details, and gave their permission to access their academic records at the end of the semester. The results provided partial support for the hypothesis: minorities scored higher on external LOC and lower on EI, but not on self-efficacy. A path analysis supported a mediation model as hypothesized. The results are discussed in theoretical and practice-oriented terms.

**Keywords:** academic achievements, cultural background, minority vs. majority groups, personal characteristics

**Email:** leehu@gordon.ac.il

## **Meaningful experience stories: Israelis of Ethiopian origin on the verge of entering academia**

Rina Brenner, Esther Kalnisky

The present study describes a supplemental pathway for screening and accepting candidates of Ethiopian origin who choose to study education and teaching. The study focused on texts written by the candidates that engage with a meaningful experience in their life. Analysis of the texts revealed three main themes: personal change processes, living in two different cultural landscapes, giving and growth. The study can help to provide a new, sensitive, and respectful view of candidates for academic studies among Israelis of Ethiopian origin, and to formulate insights concerning the potential inherent in their acceptance and integration as school and kindergarten teachers in the education system.

**Keywords:** Israelis of Ethiopian origin, meaningful experience, teacher education

**E-mail:** Rina.Brenner@smkb.ac.il

kester@macam.ac.il

## **The relationships between perceptions of principals, teachers and students of parent involvement and mathematics achievements in TIMSS assessment in Israel**

Erez Zavelevsky, Orly Shapira-Lishchinsky

The aim of this study is to uncover perceptions of parent involvement, and their relationship with academic achievements. Data were collected from the 2011 TIMSS study in 8th grade mathematics, and a multilevel SEM analysis was conducted based on a sample of 151 schools, 4,699 students, 508 teachers, and 151 principals in Israel. One of the main findings is that there is a positive relationship between the students' perceptions of their parents' involvement and their achievements in mathematics. At the same time, a negative relationship was found between teachers' perceptions of parent involvement and student achievements in mathematics. A negative relationship was also found between the students' perceptions of parent involvement and the teachers' and principals' perceptions of parent involvement.

The present study has shown that the concept of parent involvement is multidimensional, and emphasizes the importance of developing programs to encourage parent involvement in schools.

**Keywords:** academic achievements in mathematics, assessment tests, parent involvement, TIMSS

**Email:** [erez.zavelevsky@live.biu.ac.il](mailto:erez.zavelevsky@live.biu.ac.il)  
[orly.shapira@biu.ac.il](mailto:orly.shapira@biu.ac.il)

## **Predictable patterns: Literature teachers select poems**

Naomi De-Malach, Yael Poyas

The article examines how experienced literature teachers decide which poems to teach in their classes, and the implications of their considerations for teacher training. 30 junior high school literature teachers were asked to select two from a list of six poems that they would like to teach, and to explain their choices in writing. The study examined their responses in light of the concept of "pedagogical content knowledge" (PCK).

The findings show that most of the teachers' responses (about 70%) were based on their PCK. About 20% of the responses related to the poems detached from pedagogical considerations, and only about 10% were related to the teachers themselves as readers of literature. The teachers' considerations relied mainly on one aspect in each poem, and they formed predictable patterns for "treating" literary works. On the one hand, these patterns – an expression of PCK – form an essential platform for teaching; on the other, they might narrow the potential inherent in the teaching of literature.

At the end of the article we make recommendations for teacher training programs with reference to the advantages and drawbacks of learning from the knowledge of experienced teachers.

**Keywords:** literature teaching, pedagogical content knowledge, teacher training

**Email:** [naomi\\_de@oranim.ac.il](mailto:naomi_de@oranim.ac.il)

[yael\\_p@oranim.ac.il](mailto:yael_p@oranim.ac.il)

# Literary representations of teachers' use of corporal punishment

Orna Levin

This article discusses the issue of corporal punishment as an educational tool as it is reflected in literary texts from different cultures and periods, and in light of the basic principles of educational psychology and law. The assumption is that literature reflects and represents the changes in the educational approach to punishment in general and corporal punishment in particular. The purpose of this article is to consolidate the status of the literary text as evidence of existential situations and examine them through the prism of literary criticism. Although corporal punishment is the common denominator of these texts, it is hard to ignore differences between them in an integrative perspective. In order to focus the discussion I will analyze the effectiveness of corporal punishment, the relationship between authority and corporal punishment, the principles that guide the use of corporal punishment, and the parent-student-teacher triangle as a paradigm of power relations.

**Keywords:** corporal punishment, education, literature, teachers and students

**E-mail:** orna\_l@achva.ac.il



## **Prisoners read themselves: The impact of the personal stories of illiterate or poor-reading criminal prisoners on their reading ability and their emotional and social worlds**

Amela Einat, Tomer Einat, Maya Gura, Adi Segev

The main purpose of this study, which is based on research conducted in two randomly selected medium-security prisons in Israel, is to explore the impact of success in reading Hebrew on the thoughts and feelings of illiterate or poor-reading native Israeli criminal prisoners. The key to success is a unique teaching reading method which incorporates a dramatic processing of personal texts. The main findings of the study reveal that learning processes lead to significant emotional and social changes among them, improved self-perception, and higher motivation for rehabilitation.

The authors conclude that opening an emotional-experiential channel for illiterate and poor-reading incarcerated populations improves their emotional and social state as well as their ability to read Hebrew.

**Keywords:** emotional and social changes, prisoners, teaching reading

**Email:** [amelaeinat@bezeqint.net](mailto:amelaeinat@bezeqint.net)

[tomer.einatt@biu.ac.il](mailto:tomer.einatt@biu.ac.il)

[mayagura1@gmail.com](mailto:mayagura1@gmail.com)

[segeva.d@gmail.com](mailto:segeva.d@gmail.com)

## **Education in search of meaning: The individual's vs. society's motivations, and contemplative pedagogy as a way of mediating between them**

Oren Ergas

This paper proposes a theoretical model for educational thinking and practice based on two theories of motivation. Based on the model the paper analyzes how contemporary education – usually examined from a social perspective – caters to the needs of individual motivations. Based on the models, problems in contemporary education will be identified and possible pedagogical solutions will be presented. The first part of the paper opens with the Aristotelean distinction between mechanistic and teleological explanations. These will enable conceptualization of two motivational poles: Maslow's theory of needs on the one hand and Frankl's understanding of our being pulled by meaning on the other. The second part of the paper will analyze contemporary Israeli education as rooted in the former, while making attempts to respond to the latter, by means of programs such as "Israel moves up a grade", which will be presented as unsatisfactory. The third part of the paper will demonstrate how "pedagogical islands of a search for meaning" can be introduced into the curriculum based on contemplative pedagogies including mindfulness. Such "islands" paradoxically require the nullification of "society" from the curriculum so that meaning will have meaning.

**Keywords:** contemplative pedagogies, Frankl, Maslow, mindfulness, motivation

**E-mail:** orenergas1@gmail.com