WHAT IS BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION?
CAN WE TALK ABOUT AN INCIPIENT FIELD OF BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION?

WILMETTE INSTITUTE
AUG 28, 2022

This webinar will expand on the chapter on education from the collective volume "The World of the Bahá'í Faith" (2022) edited by Robert Stockman. The chapter was co-authored with Siyamak Zabihi-Moghaddam.

Filip Boicu – University of Nottingham

SSZPB@NOTTINGHAM.AC.UK

As preparation for the webinar:
Imagine you were asked to explain what Bahá'í education is. What would you talk about?

Zabihi-Moghaddam, Siyamak. 2019. 'Shaykh Tabarsi: A Turning Point in the Bábí Faith'. Wilmetteinstitute.Org/. 5 May 2019. https://wilmetteinstitute.org/shaykh-tabarsi-in-mazandaran/.

This presentation has two parts.

The first part sets out the context for the rest of the discussion. Some of the topics here are:

- What is education?
- What is Bahá'í education?
- What is the importance of theory and of models for theory building?
- And what are some of the ways in which we can look at science and religion?

In the second part I will briefly look at the theoretical models, theoretical sources, and the curricula of three distinct Bahá'í educational projects:

- FUNDAEC (Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias, or Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences),
- the Anisa Model.
- the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE)

- I would like to dedicate this presentation to a Christian friend of mine who passed away in her university years: Daniela Pălășan. Dana was preoccupied with what prevents us from and what advances us towards attaining Being.

What is Education?

Education can be defined as an academic discipline, a field of practice, an art, a form of ethics, and an expression of spirituality. More recently, learning analytics and AI (recommender systems, for ex.) have also come into the picture.

With this tentative definition we clarify one thing. Education is not just a practice, or just an area of economic and political governance. It is an academic discipline, with many subdisciplines, fields, paradigms, schools of thought, theories and so on.

Some of the sub-disciplines of education are:
- general education;
- educational technology and media;
- early childhood education;
- elementary education;
- secondary education;
- higher education;
- multilingual and multicultural education;
- special education;
- career and vocational education;
- adult and distance education;
- comparative and international education;
- sociology of education;
- philosophy of education;

- educational psychology
- curriculum development
- educational administration
- history of education
- educational economics

Thus, when we focus on … we can draw on

Children classes: early childhood ed, elementary ed, special ed, ed psych, curriculum dev, multicultural ed, philosophy of ed

Junior Youth: secondary ed, ed psych, sociology of ed, philosophy of ed, curriculum dev, general ed (liberal arts, multicultural ed, career and vocational ed, and higher ed).

University students and Adult Ed: almost all of them

different schools of thought & theoretical orientations → Fields of study → Sub-disciplines → Discipline

Sub-disciplines themselves could be constituted as an interdisciplinary field of study or several.

Peace Education and *Education for Development* = fields of study in the process of becoming sub-disciplines?

Educational Informatics (the application of technology to discovering and communicating education information) = a new field of study?

Religious Education = a field of study or just an area of study? Not quite an academic discipline or sub-discipline like *Religious Studies*.

Each sub-discipline has different schools & theoretical orientations. For the sub-discipline of Higher Education see the article by Malcom Tight.

Tight, Malcolm. 2008. 'Higher Education Research as Tribe, Territory and/or Community: A Co-Citation Analysis'. *Higher Education* 55 (5): 593–605.

We have defined education as an academic discipline. But what is the specific nature of this discipline?

Gert Biesta (2011): there are at least two distinct traditions or paradigms in how education has been constructed as a field.

1) The dominant tradition is the Anglo-Saxon one. Here education emerges in relation to concerns with teacher education and as an interdisciplinary field that draws on the theories and insights of disciplines such as psychology, history, philosophy and sociology etc. In this tradition, education is not granted the status of a discipline because it draws its theory from elsewhere and "requires no theoretical synthesis." (see Paul Hirst as the main advocate of this position):

"It is clear that 'education' is a field subject, not a basic discipline; there is no distinctively 'educational' way of thinking; in studying education one is using psychological or historical or sociological or philosophical ways of thinking to throw light on some problem in the field of human learning" (cited Tibble 1971b, 16).

2) The Continental tradition emerges in Continental Europe (Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Poland). In this tradition education is concerned with the process of becoming a human being → this implies becoming part of the life of society as a mature and autonomous human being. The key concern is to safeguard the right of the child to a certain degree of self-determination. In this tradition, education "is an autonomous discipline with its own forms of theory and theorising." "One way to put this predicament is to say that while the psychology of education will ask psychological questions about education, the history of education historical ones, the philosophy of education philosophical ones and the sociology of education sociological ones, the question that remains is who will ask educational questions about education." (Biesta, pp.189-190)

The Western-based reality of the discipline of education is, therefore, mixed: both autonomous and not. Where does this leave us? **As an autonomous discipline - education must constantly produce "theoretical syntheses" that focus knowledge from many different disciplines onto problems specific to the educational field.** This leads to two observations.

Biesta, Gert. 2011. 'Disciplines and Theory in the Academic Study of Education: A Comparative Analysis of the Anglo-American and Continental Construction of the Field'. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 19 (2): 175–92. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681366.2011.582255.

I. First, that the emergence of Bahá'í education depends on contributions in other Bahá'í fields of study such as:

- Bahá'í hermeneutics (Bahá'í religious studies) – how to interpret the Sacred Texts
- Bahá'í philosophy (Bahá'í epistemology, for ex.),
- Bahá'í psychology,
- Bahá'í ethics,
- Bahá'í law,
- Bahá'í social sciences (sociology, anthropology, political science, economics)
- Bahá'í history, etc.

Examples:

1. If pedagogy depends on the nature of the learner and the nature of the learner depends on a theory of human nature, then a theory of pedagogy needs 1) a philosophical theory about the nature of human beings, 2) a psychological theory about what is human nature (mind, soul, body) 3) a psychological and social theory about the the developmental stages of human beings 4) a theory about the values (ethics) which are essential to human life or even to human nature, and so on.

2. I might want to introduce spirituality in education but what is spiritual in human nature in psychological, sociological, or philosophical terms, i.e., as expressed in the terms of those disciplines? How does one explain the nature of the soul and its relationship with the mind and body, virtues and so on in the terms of the disciplines of psychology and educational psychology?
I cannot just ask non-Bahá'í scientists to study the Bahá'í revelation and work out what such religious teachings might imply for concepts within their academic discipline. The Bahá'ís have to open these spaces of inquiry, and the Associations for Bahá'í Studies, and the research institutions, in particular.

Bahá'í educationalists cannot work without such contributions from other Bahá'í inspired fields of study, except by attempting to cover many of these other academic disciplines by themselves (which would be hazardous to health).

<u>What happens if we do not develop Bahá'í inspired fields of study, if we do not develop Bahá'í scholarship in these areas?</u>

We activate fundamental assumptions about human nature, human development, knowledge and learning that we remain unaware about and never question. We risk to reinterpret Bahá'í revelation in the secular and religious terms of the national cultures we have inherited. Whether aware of it or not, we always activate existent theoretical positions and discourses from outside of the Bahá'í Writings. One cannot read the Bahá'í Writings from a neutral, a-theoretical position, or from a purely Bahá'í standpoint.

As with an actual building, a theoretical structure that has only been given little thought in the planning stage and which does not therefore have a solid foundation will either eventually entrap us because of its lack of scope or will collapse if we try to add more complexity. What happens when we have constructed an educational system based on a limited set of aims or a limited view of human nature, or a-theoretically, and later we come to identify other aims and views of human nature as more fundamental? The whole system must be reconstructed. Before educational practice or educational action is initiated, therefore, the key issue is establishing what the educational theory behind it should be.

Since any conception of education is a way of arranging knowledge, of constructing a social environment (and institutions), and of planning a sequence of educational experiences based on the particular nature of a certain group of learners (and live interaction with them), it is hard to imagine how any educational initiative can run in a sustained and coherent fashion without a theory of education to underpin it.

Without such a theory of education an educational initiative could never reach the basic level of complexity required to challenge other more-established educational forms and institutions dominant in society (which some might argue are in crisis). **To create an educational program and then to attempt to find for it theoretical foundations (or justification) after it has been built is not the way to proceed. It creates insurmountable problems**. (if one approached writing a MA education thesis in this manner that would likely lead to a fail.)

2. The fundamental importance of 1) theory and of 2) models for theory building is <u>the second important observation</u> here.

How does educational theory get formed? If we oversimplify things:

From the academic disciplines (this can be through reliance on one academic discipline or subdiscipline, one school of thought, and even one main thinker, but, ideally, through reliance on a multidisciplinary approach), or from a particular philosophy, a theory of education is either derived or synthesized that can then inform curriculum, pedagogy, evaluation and even the administrative system.

In reality, this is a much more complicated, fragmented, and messy affair. For example, competing educational theories are being advanced from different locations, jostling with management ideologies and governance and economic decisions. And there is a lot of disciplinary fragmentation which means the curriculum is made mainly at the level of the module rather than at that of the academic program; and not much thought of as a departmental or institutional overall problematic, and therefore, at a holistic level. Nevertheless, in the name of simplicity we can think of it as in the diagram below:

Philosophy and/or the Academic Disciplines (one or a multidisciplinary approach)

↓

A Theory of Education

↓

Curriculum, Pedagogy, Evaluation,

↓

Administrative System (each lower level reflects all the ones above)

What happens if we do not develop Bahá'í inspired fields of study? Then we cannot derive a solid theory of Bahá'í inspired education.

Another point is of importance here. As there are many theoretical sources (including religion) this means there can be many different ways to establish an educational theory. **The issue then becomes of what specific model for theory building is being employed to formulate an educational theory.**

Are we going to rely on tradition (how things have always been done), a single subdiscipline (like Neuroscience), a particular discipline (like Psychology), a particular branch of philosophy (say, analytical philosophy), or a particular religion?
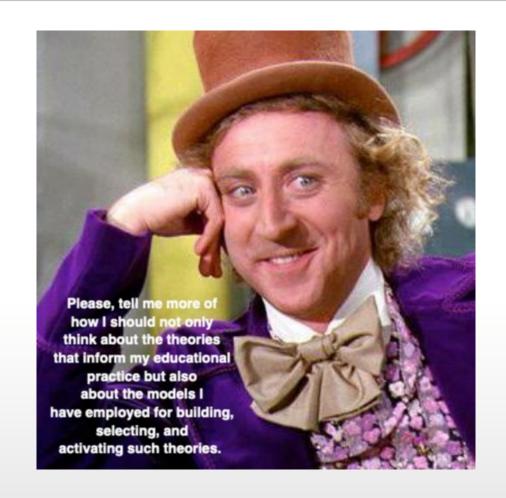
For example, in the last two decades, neuroscience has become a key source of inspiration for educational psychology and the field of education in general. Nowadays, Master degrees in **Neuroscience and Education** or **Educational Neuroscience** are popular offerings in Schools of Education. Neuroscience → A Theory of Educational Psychology/ A Theory of Learning → Pedagogy

With the rise of learning analytics and nudging, a sort of digitalized return to the Behaviourism of B. F. Skinner is now also beginning to cut across societies. New Behaviourism → A Theory of Educational Psychology/ A Theory of Social Learning → Pedagogy

In such cases, the specific model for theory-building is reliance on a single interdisciplinary subdiscipline under medical science (Neuroscience) or on a single field of study within the discipline of psychology (Behaviourism).

Or, are we going to draw on two disciplines, or several disciplines, or on many disciplines together with philosophy? Or, on the many academic disciplines together with both philosophy and religion – and in which way?
In such a case, which strands from which academic disciplines will interact with which branches of philosophy and religion, and through what type of combinations, to give us the educational theory we need?
What theoretical models will support such theory building and what thinkers and schools of thought will such theoretical models draw on?

With this introduction we can now go to the question I have asked at the beginning:

Imagine you were asked to explain what Bahá'í education is. What would you write about in 6000 words?

When I was approached to write on the theme of 'Education in Pedagogy and Practice' there were three sets of expectations I encountered (with three corresponding camps):

1. focus on current developments relating to the culture of learning and growth in the Bahá'í community.

2. give a general account of generally known key educational Bahá'í principles or statements.

3. outline the key propositions of a Bahá'í theory of education ("elements of a conceptual framework"). This is akin to developing the initial contours of a philosophy of education:

Bahá'í Philosophy & Philosophy → Philosophy of Education/A Theory of Education → Curriculum and Pedagogy.

1. "Culture of Learning" - this is equivalent with a study of the Administrative Order (i.e, of the institutional structure of the Bahá'í Faith and its community-building processes) and of the Bahá'í field and practice of development.

I did not have the necessary institutional experience (OSED/BIDO, ITC and BWC), access to relevant centralized data, or time for direct research and observation of Bahá'i learning sites. (I have recommended, at the time, that if such an angle is needed on this theme, someone at OSED/BIDO, ITC or BWC should be approached instead.) The theme has been covered within the Routledge project, however: *The Bahá'í Administrative Order (Todd Smith); A Culture of Learning (Michael Karlberg&Todd Smith).*

2. give a general account of generally known key educational Bahá'í principles or statements.
To some degree this had been done by Boris Handal and Rodney Clarken. Four problems: a) Should educational principles be identified prior to an educational theory? b) To collect all the key educational principles from the Writings would mean reading all the Writings from an educational angle. c) Selection depends on interpretation, and both depend on prior theoretical perspective. d). The principles identified so far (see, Handal, for example) refer to the 1920-40s and not to the educational developments since. BTW, it is a constant surprise when I say to other Bahá'ís we have not yet identified the key Bahá'í educational principles. Yes, some are there but the work has not been done. The job is not only to identify explicit quotes but to draw out an educational vision, concepts and implications that link with each other in a coherent and systematic pattern.
To some limited extent, this theme was covered in our paper by Siyamak Zabihi-Moghaddam through a brilliant historical case-study of Bahá'í schools in Iran in the early XXth century.

3. The integration of science, religion, and philosophy to develop key propositions for a broad, comprehensive philosophy (or metaphysics) which could then be used to derive a theory of education = huge task.

Another alternative here: to basically focus on extracting the propositions of a theory of education directly from the totality of the Bahá'í Writings (by starting from Handal, Clarken and the compilations on Bahá'í Education). This would imply gathering together any fragments from the Bahá'í Writings potentially relevant to a theory of education, only to then attempt to discern an order and organization that could be expressed in a system of particular propositions or principles. Too timely and depends on prior theoretical outlook for integrating science, religion, philosophy. If the initial theoretical outlook is not broad enough, the educational implications of the Bahá'í Writings will be missed. But it would be a useful attempt.

Handal, Boris. 2007. 'The Philosophy of Bahá'í Education'. 2007. https://bahai-library.com/handal_philosophy_bahai_education.
Clarken, Rodney H. 1998. 'Baha'i Principles of Education'. 13 April 1998. https://bahai-library.com/clarken_bahai_principles_education.

<u>What did I do instead? "projects" and "themes" rather than culture of learning, or key principles, or propositions</u>

I decided to focus on <u>three advanced educational projects</u> within the Bahá'í community, each with its own model for theory-building, its own educational theory (and theoretical sources), and its own curricula and pedagogy. The idea was to also investigate what key educational concepts or principles they have identified, and if any of these were shared in common. Maybe some of **these themes** or concepts could even serve to outline the key propositions of a Bahá'í theory of education. Maybe their theoretical insights could provide us with some degree of consensus regarding the formulation of conceptual models for theory-building and for curriculum development.

1) FUNDAEC →Fundaec inspired or related curricula: SAT, Preparation for Social Action (PSA), Ruhi, the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program and to some extent ISGP) – the FUNDAEC approach (Farzam Arbab) has shaped all current activities in the Bahá'í community.

2) BIHE →the curriculum at the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (the integrative curriculum and approach of Behrooz Sabet)

3) Anisa Model. Although, long discontinued, the Anisa Model has already received a considerable degree of recognition in the academia, as evinced by the 2016 decision of Stanford University to acquire "the archives that contain the life's work of educator, psychologist and philosopher Daniel C. Jordan, the creator of the Anisa Educational Model."

I have selected these educational projects not only because I thought that educationalists anywhere in the world might find them of interest, but also because I believe these curricula are an important part of what the Bahá'í community has achieved in the field of education over the last 60 years or so. This is our heritage, and it must be respected. The key issue in terms of their inclusion, however, is that these constitute some of the most complex examples of theory building models, educational theory, curriculum and pedagogy in the Bahá'í community.

Other projects I would have liked to include: the Wilmette Institute and the radical student-centered reform of the School of Education (admissions, curriculum, credits) led by Dwight Allen at the University of Massachusetts in the late 1960s.

Also identified were several themes or key concepts. In my initial stages I identified around 17 themes of interest. Out of these, I was only able to cover five in the paper due to word count limitations (the sixth I dropped midway). These were five themes these projects had declared to be central to their structure, vision and purpose (and essentially, to their curricula and pedagogy):

1. The Manifestation of God/the Word of God as the Structure of Reality – from which the 5 principles below are derived
2.The Harmony (or the Unity) of Science and Religion
3. The Unity of Knowledge
4. The Oneness of Humankind
5. Human Nature as the Actualization of Potentiality
6. The Importance of Ethics and Moral Development [the "double crusade" - regenerate the inward life of our own community and then assail the long-standing evils in the life of our nation; the "twofold purpose" – transformation of self and global society)
7. Epistemology (Foundationalism, Nonfoundationalism or Antifoundationalism, for ex.)
8. Evolution and Progressive Revelation
8. Church and State (Politics)
9. Social-Cultural Change (including the theme of a Bahá'í methodology for social change)
10. Social and Economic Development
11. Scientific method and research methodologies
12. Mysticism
13. Unity of religions
14. A World Civilization
15. Global knowledge, digitalization, and digital infrastructures for producing global knowledge
16. Freedom vs Discipline in Education
17. Universal participation in knowledge generation and application
I won't have time to discuss these first five themes here (although I will touch on the topic of science and religion,) but these have been covered in the Routledge paper; in another essay I have written on the principle of the oneness of humankind and this is available online:

https://bahai-library.com/boicu_principle_oneness_humankind

Before proceeding with the analysis of the three educational projects (FUNDAEC, Anisa Model, BIHE) two more observations are needed.

The 1ˢᵗ Observation is that when we use the term 'Bahá'í education' we tend to conflate three distinct types of education.

First, we have Bahá'í Education as Religious Education (this is education and training for how to be a Bahá'í or participate in activities that are building the Bahá'í community; but also, the study of the Bahá'í Writings when this is done without recourse to the academic disciplines)

Second, we have Bahá'í Education as Education for Development (this is education and training for community-building understood in the general sense of social-economic development)

Third, we have Bahá'í Education as formal education or as academic research (meaning as Bahá'í scholarship) that feature or could feature in primary-schools, high-schools, and universities. This is where the issue of theory tends to come in most strongly from the very beginning.

Why are these distinctions important?

Because these are domains regulated in different ways and which come with particular standards as to what is and what is not acceptable. The Bahá'í community has almost full autonomy in what it decides to do educationally within its own communities. There are almost no external benchmarks or standards, and no external oversight.

This changes with the field of social-economic development. Here, there is great sensitivity against anyone using development initiatives (whether consciously or subconsciously) to impose their own belief system, ideology (particularly when religious), or experiments, on a recipient and usually marginalized population, particularly when this is comprised of young learners. Nevertheless, there is also a sense that this is an experimental field where different initiatives can be tried out with little oversight. Theoretical foundations are not a key concern. What matters are results and solutions where there are none or where there is no investment.

Finally, to function in the formal educational and research system you need accreditation and to meet very high and detailed standards across the board and across all the academic disciplines being in use. This is the highest level of external oversight and regulation.
Within the field of education curricula are expected to be based on educational theory and educational theory is expected to be derived from a philosophical perspective that integrates the academic disciplines and is expressed in a highly abstract language. The reason for this is that the initial set of assumptions are seen as the key part of the entire edifice and if these have not been examined properly at the level of theory and in light of their overall consequences and their broadest philosophical implications, this is considered a questionable form of research or curriculum design.

So what you don't want to do is to approach these three different settings of Bahá'í Education unaware of the different criteria that apply to each space, or in a blurred and confused manner, – as that will most likely be perceived as the imposition of a religious agenda.

You do not want to approach the work of development as religious education, or the world of academia and scholarship as the work of development. But you also don't want to view these as disconnected forms of education that do not interact with each-other or do not display some possibility for transformation and convergence.

- "In attempting to reconcile what may appear to be conflicting obligations, it is important to understand that the Bahá'í community does not seek to impose its values on others, nor does it pass judgment on others on the basis of its own moral standards. It does not see itself as one among competing social groups and organizations, each vying to establish its particular social agenda."

- The Universal House of Justice. 2010

The Universal House of Justice. 2010. 'Homosexuality and Civil Rights'. 27 October 2010. https://bahai-library.com/uhj_homosexuality_civil_rights.

The 2nd Observation is of a different kind.

Any theory of education or curriculum will be fundamentally impacted by how it sees the relationship between science and religion. Therefore, a key question for any model for theory-building is how it envisages the relationship between science and religion.

Here I would like to introduce Ian Barbour's four-fold taxonomy of **Conflict, Independence, Dialogue and Integration. This is based on two books:**

Barbour I. G. (2000). When science meets religion. [San Francisco], HarperSanFrancisco.
Barbour I. G (1997). Religion and science: historical and contemporary issues. [San Francisco], HarperSanFrancisco.

The first perspective is that of Conflict

Here, the basic version states that only one of the two (science or religion) is a valid source of knowledge, only one is needed. The extreme version is that they are in conflict, and one must win against the other.

For example, both scientific materialism and Biblical Literalism "claim that science and religion make rival literal statements about the same domain (the history of nature), so a person must choose between them. They agree in saying that a person cannot believe in both evolution and God." (Barbour 2000, p.11).

In this stage, a Material perspective leads to a curriculum that embraces only the visible and the measurable as the domain of existence to be investigated. *The extreme version of this would state* that there is no place for religion, the divine, or revelation in education or in knowledge. Truth is only what can be observed and measured reliably. Love, morality, values, and consciousness etc. are just biological epiphenomena.

On the other hand, in this phase a Religious perspective → would lead to a curriculum that is divorced from the academic disciplines and maybe even from the scientific method. *The extreme version* here would state that Truth is dogma; that Religious truths are absolute, objective, foundational and transparent; that they must be internalized and obeyed, and society must be organized around them; and that science must be subservient to religion. I think it is very instructive here to look at the Nicene–Constantinopolitan Creed which stands at the center of the universe of Catholic dogma, and which has shaped Catholic education in a particular way (see O'Dea). A curriculum in this more extreme version would develop an immutable ideology and then select from theories and authors from the academic disciplines specific strands or aspects that could be reworked and used to reinforce this given ideology, while discarding the rest of academic contributions as materialistic or as dangerous and unhealthy knowledge. From this perspective, the university and the academia would be perceived as a corrupting influence on society and culture that must be resisted and combated.

The Creed of Nicea and Constantinople. http://web.mit.edu/ocf/www/nicene_creed.html.
Thomas F. O'Dea – *American Catholic Dilemma.*

The second perspective is that of Independence

Here, the view is that conflict can be prevented if science and religion are separated in "watertight compartments." This ensures the independence and autonomy of the two fields from each other. (Barbour 2000, p.17) However, as Barbour argues "Compartimentalization is motivated not simply by the desire to avoid unnecessary conflicts but also by the desire to be faithful to the distinctive character of each area of life and thought." *[this could be very important for someone very concerned with preserving the purity of their Faith from the influence of academic disciplines and of other forms of culture and practice in institutions of higher learning]*

The key argument here is that science and religion ask **different questions**, refer to **different domains**, and employ **different methods.**

Different Domains: physical, outer vs metaphysical universe, inner universe
Different Languages: science and religion are languages that are unrelated because their functions are totally different; they do totally different jobs, and neither should be judged by the standards of the other. (pp.19-20)

Scientific language = "primarily for prediction and control. A theory is a useful tool for summarizing data, correlating regularities in observable phenomena, and producing technological applications. Science asks carefully delimited questions about natural phenomena." (idem)
Religious language provides "an overall worldview, a philosophy of life, and a set of ethical norms." Also "expresses and leads to personal religious experience" and personal transformation: from "suffering and self-centeredness" to "peace, unity, and enlightenment." (pp.20-21).
Different methods: analytical reason vs. reason as heart (reason + ethics + emotions) + meditation, intuition, and mysticism

"**Finally, some authors refer to science and religion as complementary perspectives, invoking an analogy with complementarity in quantum physics**." (p.21) So, complementarity is the model that best describes this second type of perspective. From this perspective, science and religion are very different pathways to knowledge but equally valid. Both must be taken into account, side by side. A curriculum in this stage could consist of two types. One would be a composite curriculum: a part of it would be scientific, another part would be religious but these would be distinct parts and would not overlap except maybe in relation to ethical concerns. A typical example here would be sending kids to study in regular schools but then providing them with additional 'religious only' education outside of school. The second type of curriculum would be one that is mostly scientific but which incorporates instances of religious text, not in a religious language but in a moral language that mirrors it conceptually.

The third perspective is that of Dialogue

"Dialogue portrays more constructive relationships between science and religion than does either the Conflict or the Independence view," Barbour explains, "but it does not offer the degree of conceptual unity claimed by advocates of Integration." (p.23)

Dialogue may arise from considering the presuppositions of the scientific enterprise, from exploring similarities between the methods of science and those of religion, or from analyzing concepts in one field that are analogous to those in the other. In comparing science and religion, Dialogue emphasizes similarities in presuppositions, methods, and concepts, whereas Independence emphasizes differences." (p.23)

- **For a Bahá'í example of how the methods of science and religion are similar see the journal article by William Hatcher entitled 'The Science of Religion''. Hatcher, William. 1980. 'The Science of Religion'. Bahá'í Studies 2 (April). https://bahai-library.com/hatcher_science_religion.**

1. Ethical and metaphysical assumptions? → "ethical issues in the uses of science and presuppositions or conditions for the possibility of scientific inquiry"

2. Similarities in terms of methods of investigating reality? → "[scientific] theories do not arise from logical analysis of data but from acts of creative imagination in which analogies and [conceptual] models often play a role." + "both theories and data in science are dependent on the prevailing paradigms of the scientific community." However, religious traditions can be understood as "communities that share a common paradigm" and religious language as laden with metaphors and conceptual models. (pp. 23-37)

3. What are some parallels being developed between the concepts of science and religion then?

- First, it has been remarked that the concept of information (DNA in organisms, programs in computers, the neural structures in the brain) corresponds well to the notion of the Word of God. God envisaged as a "Communicator of Information." God acts in the world through 'an input of pure information' which can be understood as the action (including inspiration and revelation) of the Word of God (Barbour).

- Autopoiesis is the inherent tendency of the world of molecules "to move toward emergent complexity, life, and consciousness" This concept has led to theories that conceptualize God as the Designer of a Self-Organizing Process. (pp.164-167). This means that God makes the rules or the algorithm responsible for the self-organizing features of the universe. Some have identified this living algorithm with the Word of God.

- More recently, in *The Verge of the New* series of talks, the Bahá'í cosmologist Steven Phelps argues that "the conceptual pillars of modern physics map onto deeper spiritual principles". By this he is referring to relativity, complementarity and to symmetry and invariance, and he proceeds to show how these concepts are reflected in religious Scriptures.

- The overall point here is that the concepts of information and autopoiesis, relativity, complementarity, and symmetry and invariance provide valuable foundations for dialogue between science and religion. A curriculum based on exploring such methodological and conceptual parallels would be a curriculum corresponding at least to the third perspective of Dialogue. How would this look? For any academic discipline and its concepts - parallels would be found at every step in religious writings. And, of course, this would also happen the other way around.

The Fourth Perspective is that of Integration.

Integration: three distinct versions

1. In **Natural Theology (or Arguments from Design)**, it is claimed that the existence of God can be inferred from (or is supported by) the evidence of design in nature, of which science has made us more aware.

Examples: the universe needs a First Cause; the orderliness (or harmony) and intelligibility of nature points towards the existence of design.

A version of this theory – Intelligent Design suffered greatly once the self-organization (autopoiesis) processes of nature were discovered. (pp.28-29) A more recent version is the Anthropic Principle in cosmology: "The universe seems to be 'fine-tuned' for the possibility of life." If quantities such as "the mass of the electron, the strength of gravity, or the lifetime of the neutron" were "slightly altered, then no form of complexity of life could exist in the universe." (Encyclopedia Britannica)

2. **Theology of Nature** – starts not from science but from theology – the idea is to bring religion in harmony with science by drawing on the findings of science. Nature is viewed as a "dynamic evolutionary process … characterized throughout by chance and law."

God is seen to create "through the whole process of law and chance". (pp.31-33). There are different theories here:
"God as Top-Down Cause" (Arthur Peacocke) and "God as Determiner of Indeterminacies" – where God is operating at quantum level. (see Barbour).

3. Systematic Integration or (Systematic Synthesis) – the articulation of a metaphysics:

"Metaphysics is the search for a set of general concepts in terms of which diverse aspects of reality can be interpreted. An inclusive conceptual scheme is sought that can represent the fundamental characteristics of all events. Metaphysics as such is the province of the philosopher rather than of either the scientist or the theologian, but it can serve as an arena of common reflection." (Barbour 2000, p.34)

In the 13th century, the impressive metaphysics of Thomas Aquinas → combined the thought of Aristotle with Catholic Christianity to provide a conceptual foundation for Western Christianity.

Today, the most notable example of systematic integration is the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead: nature is evolutionary, dynamic and emergent with different degrees of complexity: material, life, mind and culture. Organisms and ecosystems are interdependent and in constant interaction and change→ the law of change = the transition from actuality to potentiality. See here Kluge, Ian. 2004. 'Process Philosophy and the Bahá'í Writings'. 2004. https://bahai-library.com/kluge_process_philosophy

Other traditions:

The integral tradition of thought started by Ken Wilber represents another attempt at open and systematic synthesis that has made inroads within the field of education, through works such as those of Zachary Stein:
Stein, Zachary. 2019. *Education in a Time between Worlds: Essays on the Future of Schools, Technology, & Society.*

Systems theory represents another tradition of thought that could also maybe fit here (at systematic synthesis but not in terms of articulating a metaphysics). As an example, we can think here of the Club of Rome and the 'No Limits to Learning' report.
Botkin James W et al. *No Limits to Learning : Bridging the Human Gap : A Report to the Club of Rome. 1st ed. Pergamon Press 1979*

Barbour I. G. (2000). When science meets religion; 'Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "anthropic principle." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Accessed 21 June 2022 https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropic-principle; Barbour I. G (1997). Religion and science: historical and contemporary issues. [San Francisco], HarperSanFrancisco.

Process Philosophy and Implications for Curriculum

I am going to try to super-simplify process philosophy for you.

Process philosophy sees processes and events as the key features of reality. This means that me, you, an institution like the Wilmette institute, the Baha'i community itself, or even the cosmos or Nature are best represented not as static, self-contained realities with fixed features, but as dynamic processes of transformation in interaction. In this perspective, change and activity are the laws of the universe and everything is in the process of becoming. What is this becoming? It is the translation of potentiality into actuality, a seed becoming a tree or a caterpillar a butterfly, except there is no end to the process.

As these metaphors suggest, "the basic analogy for interpreting the world is not a machine, but an organism, which is a highly integrated and dynamic pattern of interdependent events." "Each level of organization – atom, molecule, cell, organism, community, – receives from and in turn influences the pattern of activity at other levels." Barbour I. G.

So I am not alone in my process of becoming. My processes of transformation are linked with yours, and with those of institutions, societies, cultures, economies, and even with those of Nature as a whole. We are all constituted by relationships, we are all interconnected, and everything is in a process of change. I am changing as part of everything changing.

But this does not mean we are simply determined by larger processes of transformation. We are not just the intersection of wider processes of change; we have our own individuality. **Each of us is a center of spontaneity and self-creation trying to direct and integrate its relationships in its own way, and becoming a unique synthesis of the influences we encounter.** All entities, from the atom to the cosmos are such self-creating entities. However, while we are not swallowed by the whole, (meaning there is unity and interaction without the loss of individuality) we are part of the whole.

"Which is more important," asked Big Panda, "the journey or the destination?"

"The company." said Tiny Dragon.

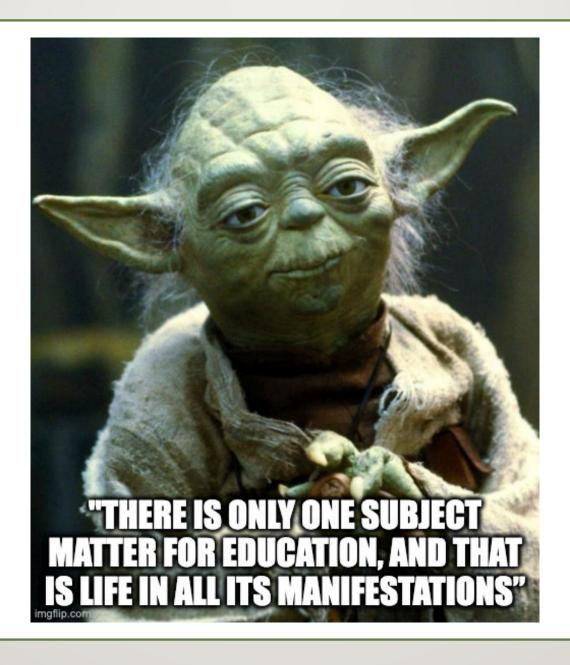We can already see how these sort of ideas would impact education:

The process of becoming and the idea that we are each unique unfolding syntheses become key for conceptions of the human learner and learning → for example, by emphasizing Individualized learning.

If my becoming is part of the becoming of everything else and all of these interactions form an organic whole, living becomes about relationships → which gives an essential role to relationships in education. (Donald Streets used to always say **"Relationships! Relationships! relationships!"** when highlighting the essentials of education – a comment he would follow by pointing to the story of friendship between the prince and the fox in Saint-Exupéry's "Little Prince.")

But my education must also be concerned with understanding this organic whole → knowledge, therefore, must become holistic in nature. It is for this reason that Whitehead states:

"**The solution which I am urging, is to eradicate the fatal disconnection of subjects which kills the vitality of our modern curriculum. There is only one subject-matter for education, and that is Life in all its manifestations.** Instead of this single unity, we offer children – Algebra, from which nothing follows; Geometry, from which nothing follows; Science, from which nothing follows; History, from which nothing follows; a couple of Languages, never mastered; and lastly, most dreary of all, Literature, represented by plays of Shakespeare, with philological notes and short analyses of plot and character to be in substance committed to memory. **Can such a list be said to represent Life, as it is known in the midst of the living of it?** The best that can be said of it is, that it is a rapid table of contents which a deity might run over in his mind while he was thinking of creating a world, and has not yet determined how to put it together." Aims of Education, pp.6-7.

This simple idea demands interdisciplinary curricula in which science, religion and philosophy are integrated, in which the natural sciences, the social sciences, the humanities and arts, the technological and applied sciences, and the various fields of practice come together into a coherent whole.

Process thinkers try to comprehend civilization or humanity as a whole and capture it as knowledge that can be represented as a curriculum. This is an open-ended process of self-discovery in which the student is the key protagonist. This sort of integration of knowledge is expected to produce harmony in the self of the learner but also at all levels of society. Why? Because it teaches us to connect with the whole of reality at all its levels: from the atom and the molecule, to cultures, the planet, and the cosmos. The knowledge or the system of thought a particular civilization produces has been represented through a new concept: that of cosmology. A cosmology is the integrated philosophy or the holistic scheme of thought that best describes the major dimensions and character of a civilization. It is not simply knowledge, it is knowledge synthesized into a holistic representation; it is meta-theory, it is meta-narrative supposed to help us navigate through the fragmented worldviews around us "that impede us in making meaningful sense of anything"(Stein 2019, p.57). As Zachary Stein (26) points out: "it is no longer the single ideological meta-narrative of modernity that inhibits the moral evolution of the species (such as Capitalism, Communists, and the Church, etc.). It is now the absence of any explicitly shared meta-narrative or meta-theory that inhibits enlightenment."

As individual and cultures we are always in the process of constructing cosmologies. For process educationalists like Donald Oliver and Kathleen Gershman, the mapping, exploring, composing, and comparing of cosmologies belonging to different civilizations or even to the same civilization across time should be a key aspect of curriculum development. "How do we educate ourselves and our children to generate more balanced and authentic cosmologies? How do we come to see more clearly the missing dimensions of our modern cosmology? How do we begin to think across cosmologies, comparing whole systems of meaning, one with the other?" they ask. In this thinking, Cosmology becomes that broad comprehensive philosophy or meta-theory from which a Theory of Education that could inform Curriculum and Pedagogy should be derived. Oliver, Donald W., and Kathleen Waldron Gershman. 1989. *Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning: Toward a Process Theory of Teaching and Learning*. SUNY Series in Philosophy. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Cosmology → Philosophy of Education (A Theory of Education) → Curriculum and Pedagogy

I am not suggesting here that we are in desperate need to formulate fully fledged cosmologies…but simply pointing out that a curriculum in the process thought tradition would attempt to explore the system of thought of our particular culture in overall terms, starting with a holistic scheme of thought. As mentioned before, however, process philosophy is not the only theoretical approach that mirrors the perspective of integration.

- To conclude with, what is important at this level is not necessarily to have a metaphysics that can structure all knowledge and guide the curriculum, or a curriculum that can examine different cosmologies, which are very complex goals that many doubt are even possible to attain or worth pursuing, but to have a curriculum that can act as an exploratory device for the continuous integration of knowledge in this holistic and open and creative manner.

Why is the taxonomy of Ian Barbour important for Theory-Building or Curriculum Building in Education?

Historians of science and religion like John Hedley Brooke and his followers have convincingly argued that the history of science and religion is much too complex for it to be represented in terms of the four stages of conflict, independence, dialogue or integration (be they considered individually or together).

"Much of the writing on science and religion has been structured by a preoccupation with either conflict or with harmony. It is necessary to transcend these constraints if the interaction, in all its richness and fascination, is to be appreciated" (Brooke 1991, p.68)
"Serious scholarship in the history of science has revealed so extraordinarily rich and complex a relationship between science and religion in the past that general theses are difficult to sustain. The real lesson turns out to be the complexity." (p.6).

Although historians of religion have shown that Barbour's taxonomy cannot capture the complexity of the historical interaction between science and religion, no form of curriculum building could exist without utilizing similar categories.
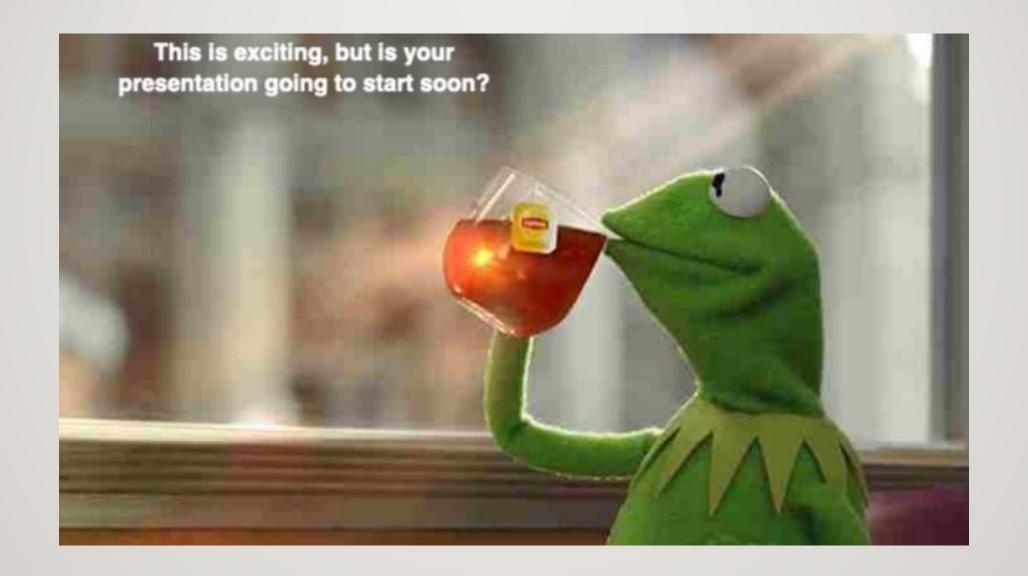
- There are times or contexts when we might need curricula that are only scientific or religious (conflict). These are the easiest and the cheapest to develop and run and require only basic expertise.

- Curricula that adopt a perspective of complementarity, that is, of independence with weak features of dialogue, again might be useful in certain contexts, particularly in development or technical-scientific programs where the focus is on application.

- Integrative curricula are extremely complex and expensive to formulate and run and they require a very high level of expertise. These could be introduced at high-school and especially university levels but would be harder to introduce into community life. There is very little experimentation with integrative curricula in the educational world currently (where this happens, it does not include ethics, religion or arts). But without them you will not develop a serious research capacity in the community in an age in which knowledge, knowledge (digital) infrastructures, prediction and foresight are key to planning ahead, foreseeing global challenges and the global flow of events, and maintaining autonomy and independence in the face of subtle and manifold exploitative and even colonizing processes through data colonialism and the use of secret algorithms and forms of AI.

For a critique of Barbour see: Brooke, John Hedley. 1991. *Science and religion: some historical perspectives*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Dixon, T., Cantor, G. and Pumfrey, S. (eds) (2010) Science and Religion: New Historical Perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

The Taxonomy of Ian Barbour: Concluding Remarks

All four types of curricula (conflict, independence, dialogue and integration) are present in the Bahá'í community currently, although we have not invested as much in developing Dialogue types of curricula. It would be a great achievement if a curriculum based on Steven Phelps's take on the concepts of relativity, complementarity, symmetry and invariance could be formulated to add to the other three types. All four types of curricula have a role to play in the Bahá'í community at this point in time. Each has pros and cons. Every Bahá'í inspired curriculum in existence has important lessons from which the others could learn. To this extent we should be doing our best to support them, to try to understand them, and to archive that knowledge for future generations.

What should be a conclusion here?

That complementarity, or Independence with Dialogue features, is not the only way to think about the Bahá'í principle of the harmony of science and religion. Dialogue and Integration are theoretical perspectives that also adequately reflect this key principle. When formulating a new curriculum (particularly when religious inspired) it is important to not let these options activate themselves subconsciously (and culturally), but rather to consciously think about them and the implications of selecting any one of them beforehand. At the same time, diversity of types of curricula is needed within and across the categories provided by Barbour's taxonomy, in my view.

- Here we go!

- The aim will be to explore these three educational projects in terms of their models for theory building, educational theory, theoretical sources, and curricula:

1. FUNDAEC, (Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias, or Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences),

2. the ANISA Model.

3. the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE)

FUNDAClÓN (Fundación para la Aplicación y Enseñanza de las Ciencias, or Foundation for the Application and Teaching of the Sciences)

More than any other agency FUNDAEC provides the original model for the conceptual framework coordinating all Bahá'í efforts in the areas of expansion and consolidation, education, public discourses and academic discourses, and social economic development or social action. It has inspired the central paradigm for many key activities in the Bahá'í community since the mid-1990s and has shaped its management and administrative system and institutions.

Essentially FUNDAEC started in the early 1970s as a rural education or rural development program in Colombia. The flagship program of FUNDAEC is the alternative secondary school program for rural education known as SAT (or the Tutorial Learning System - Sistema de Aprendizaje Tutorial). The program was established in the late 1970s. Since 2006, a version of it entitled Preparation for Social Action (PSA) has been adapted to respond to diverse social issues outside that of rural education and development, for example, in the areas of public health, education and the environment.

Sidenote: Climate change/Environmental Degradation, Urbanization, and Food Production are anticipated to constitute three of the most serious challenges of the decade 2040-2050 according to UN (UNESCO, UN-DESA, UN-HABITAT) reports. See UNESCO, Rethinking Education: Towards the Common Good, 2015, p.22-23. At least theoretically, SAT has the potential to aid in reversing rural-urban migration, and to do so in a way that would contribute to addressing the other two challenges.

Also in the early 1970s, some of the same people from FUNDAEC (Farzam Arbab, in particular) employed educational insights from their rural education and development initiatives to create a Bahá'í institute for large-scale expansion of the Bahá'í Faith in Colombia. This led to a new curriculum entitled the Ruhi curriculum.

Source: The Ruhi Institute. 1991. Learning about Growth: The Story of the Ruhi Institute and Large-scale Expansion of the Bahá'í Faith in Colombia

■ Book 1 Reflections on the Life of the Spirit

■ Book 2 Arising to Serve

■ Book 3 Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 1

■ Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 2:
A branch course of Book 3 (pre-publication edition)

■ Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 3:
A branch course of Book 3 (pre-publication edition)

■ Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 4:
A branch course of Book 3 (material in development)

■ Book 4 The Twin Manifestations

■ Book 5 Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth

■ Initial Impulse: The first branch course of Book 5 (material in development)

■ Widening Circle: The second branch course of Book 5 (material in development)

■ Book 6 Teaching the Cause

■ Book 7 Walking Together on a Path of Service

■ Book 8 The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh (pre-publication edition)

■ Book 9 Gaining an Historical Perspective (pre-publication edition)

■ Book 10 Building Vibrant Communities (pre-publication edition)

■ Book 11 Material Means (material in development)

■ Book 12 Family and the Community (material in development)

■ Book 13 Engaging in Social Action (material in development)

■ Book 14 Participating in Public Discourse (material in development)

The Main Sequence of Books for the Ruhi Institute

The Ruhi curriculum was initially aimed at achieving large-scale expansion and consolidation, meaning, at teaching the Bahá'í Faith to new populations. Once adopted as the main educational curriculum for all Bahá'í communities worldwide in 1996, its functions multiplied. Alongside large-scale expansion and consolidation two more features were added in the last decade or so: '**engaging in social action**' and '**participation in public discourses**'. Over the years the Ruhi curriculum has unfolded into a main sequence of courses comprising 15 books. This sequence revolves around the three features mentioned and also includes materials for children's education.

The Ruhi curriculum has also developed auxiliary branches to this main sequence, the most famous of which is the **Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program** aimed at youth of ages 12 to 15.

Since 1999, the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, an agency of the Bahá'í International Community (itself a United Nations NGO), seeks to contribute to public discourses and the field of development while also extending the FUNDAEC approach into a sort of university-level curriculum. Starting from 2007, ISGP has been running training seminars for university students, graduates (both undergraduate and postgraduate) and young professionals.

Let us now examine in brief the models for theory-building, the educational theory, the theoretical sources, and the curricula and types of pedagogy at play.

The FUNDAEC model for theory building

The FUNDAEC model for theory building is based on the view that science and religion are complementary systems of knowledge and practice that are each constantly evolving. This perspective of complementarity (the key exponent of which is Farzam Arbab) largely corresponds to Barbour's Independence stage with some areas of overlap between science and religion, such as in relation to ethical and moral concerns, etc. But it also displays some incipient Dialogue features because of discussing the metaphysical presuppositions of the scientific enterprise.

FUNDAEC is an agency that has specialized in rural education or rural development. So, what we are talking about here is Bahá'í Education as Education for Development (that is, education and training for community-building understood in the general sense of social-economic development).

Both SAT and PSA and the Ruhi curriculum were created to generate results in the field of action (the first in the area of rural social and economic development, the second in the area of expansion and consolidation). Explicitly developing a theory of education was not a key concern until 2016, so only retrospectively.

"The Ruhi Institute has not subscribed to a particular educational theory, nor has it pretended to contribute to the formulation of a 'Bahá'í theory of education' …" we are told by the Ruhi Institute in 1991. (*Learning about Growth*, p54)

According to Haleh Arbab in 2000 the FUNDAEC approach does not identify with any particular theory in the field of development or in other fields, but rather only uses "theories as sources of insights". "The degree of detachment from theory that we have tried to achieve," Haleh Arbab observes "is not without its dangers. For, it could readily lead us to haphazard and frenetic activity". However, in her view such problems are avoided because FUNDAEC has proposed a conceptual framework consisting of "our assumptions, our ideals, our aims, our values, our approach to life, and our methodological perspective." And coherence is ensured because this evolving framework is constantly being scrutinized through processes of action and reflection. (Haleh Arbab 2000, cited in *Revelation & Social Reality by Paul Lample, 2009, pp.137-138*)

Talk given by Haleh Arbab at the Colloquium of Science, Religion and Development, November 21-24, 2000, India International Ceentre, New Delhi, pp.1-2.

Farzam Arbab adds to this view in 2016: "This [conceptual] framework would be informed by current theories in various fields, but it would not be attached to any; it would use theory as a source of insight and not as a final word on truth. This view we applied consistently, particularly in the field of education …" (Preface to Sona-Farid Arbab, p.x)

Sona-Farid Arbab, Moral Empowerment. In Quest of a Pedagogy. Bahá'í Publishing, 2016.

Does that mean that FUNDAEC's conceptual framework is a-theoretical, or theoretically neutral? Certainly not.

FUNDAEC was formed in the early 1970s, in a particular ideological context in which radical forms of Marxism and Catholicism coalesced (see Roosta and Townsend 2002) into a specific brand of South American Third Worldism. It is my assertion that due to the context of the time, FUNDAEC's early external theoretical sources drew to some extent on several bodies of radical thought:

1. The first is the intellectual tradition running from Marx to Antonio Gramsci and from there to Paolo Freire and his 'Pedagogy of the oppressed" (which, if you remember, was aimed as a solution to rural education).

2. The second is the tradition represented by a Catholic thinker highly critical of Western forms of development and education, namely by Ivan Illich and his work "De-schooling Society." A radical Catholic, Ivan Illich was not only left-anarchist in orientation and friends but also the organizer of a network of radical Latin American theologians that would eventually initiate liberation theology. So, we are talking here about two traditions: liberation theology and Ivan Illich's theory of development and education. Illich saw Western forms of education, Western academia and the academic disciplines, and Western development agencies as channels for oppression, or circuits through which cultural hegemony (to use Gramsci's terms) was being imposed. The only way forward, in his view, was to reject such Western forms, weaken their influence, and create totally new approaches from within the Third World.

3. The third tradition of thought and practice is that of "Participatory Action Research", a Third World research methodology founded in the early 1970s by Marja Liisa Swantz and Budd Hall in Tanzania, and by the Colombian left-wing intellectual and activist Orlando Fals Borda in Colombia. In 1971, the version of PAR established by Swantz was directly observed by Paolo Freire in Tanzania, who then chose to promote it internationally.

To what extent these have constituted indirect or direct ideological sources for FUNDAEC in its first decades it remains unclear. What is clear, however, is that until 2016 key members of FUNDAEC have been aligned with "critical pedagogy" and names such as Paolo Freire, Elizabeth Ellsworth, Henry Giroux, Patti Lather, Ira Shor and Monisha Bajaj.('critical pedagogy', of course, is an outgrowth of critical theory).

Roosta, Manigeh and Townsend, Lucy F. 2002. *Hope for the poor in the "Mad Country": the Rural University of Colombia, South America*. Paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Lisbon, 11-14 September 2002.

Three examples:

1. Marx-Gramsci-Freire:

Oppression is the key concern of Farzam Arbab as it is also the key concern of the critical tradition: "Yet, several of us were overtaken by the fear that, no matter how successful, our university could never address the real challenges of the vast majority of the Colombian people. At the root of the problem was oppression, and oppression is perpetuated when knowledge is the possession of the few and not accessible to most segments of society." Foreword to Sona-Farid Arbab "Moral Empowerment".

Gramsci's concept of 'cultural hegemony' is also clearly of importance to Arbab and FUNDAEC, as is also the notion of an 'organic intellectual' (which it could be implied is what Arbab and his team became when they founded the Rural University and SAT):

"For me, what was most striking about my new community was not material poverty per se but the wealth of talent that went uncultivated, together with the dreams of noble futures that went unfulfilled, as injustice systematically blocked the development of potentialities. Over the years, I have become increasingly convinced that what I originally perceived as a matter of personal choice — to learn to see the world from inside the population I wish to serve and become a participant in their endeavours to transform the world — represents in fact a fundamental issue inadequately addressed in development theory."
  (Farzam Arbab, The Lab, the Temple and the Market, p.154)

On Gramsci and Cultural Hegemony – fragment from *Contributing to the Advancement of Civilization:* TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK, UNIT 1 Justice and the Oneness of Humankind, pp.32-33:

Finally, it will be worth your while to deliberate with your group on some of the ideas developed by Antonio Gramsci. He was a Marxist who opposed Stalin's version of communism. Although we would not endorse some of his materialistic assumptions, we admire the extraordinary insights he had into the life and culture of the masses of humanity. Many of these insights can be of great value to you. From Gramsci's perspective, the superstructure of society could be divided into two parts: the civil society and the State. Civil society is made up of institutions, such as schools, churches, mass media, and political parties, which form the worldview of a people. The State, on the other hand, constitutes the coercive powers of government such as the police, army and legal courts. The ruling class uses the civil society to legitimize its power by giving the populace a worldview where the status quo is presented as being natural. Gramsci calls this feature of the civil society "hegemony" and considers it to be much more powerful than the State. He then argues that for historical change to occur, ethical individuals have to systematically work to raise the consciousness of the populace and give them a more just worldview. Economic crises serve to facilitate this process. As cultural hegemony is replaced, fundamental change takes place, and history progresses.

γ   **Reflections (2.9)**

Should the opportunity ever arise for you to read some of Gramsci's works, we recommend that you take advantage of it. For now think of the fact that many of your contributions to the building of a new civilization will be made in the context of civil society.
♣ Does the concept of hegemony help you understand its operation better?
♣ Can you think of strategies that could be used by the organizations of civil society to offer the populations they serve a worldview more than just the one which the dominant culture is disseminating through its elaborate propaganda machine?

2. Ivan Illich Part 1:

On Industrialization and Urbanization as Western Forms of Development

"Colonialism transferred to the emerging cities of the South the abhorrent conditions that characterized so many European cities at the dawn of industrialization. Five decades of development have brought about the multiplication and growth of these cities whose problems seem insurmountable, despite the combined efforts of thousands of institutions toiling indefatigably to overcome them. But the victims of these erroneous policies are not only the broken families living partly in the village and partly in the slums of the city. The entire planet has suffered from its infatuation with a certain brand of industrialization and urbanization, as its leaders and policymakers, following their dreams and living in islands of prosperity, have lost touch both with the soul of the masses and with nature. Their relentless pursuit of what they have defined as progress is not sufficiently influenced either by the power of rigorous scientific inquiry or by the spiritual insights of religion."

(Farzam Arbab, The Lab, the Temple and the Market, 159-160)

2. Ivan Illich Part 2:
On Western HE Systems and Academic Disciplines (Social Sciences, in particular)

"Given the paucity of good curricula for rural youth, the FUNDAEC group had only vague notions of what they should teach. They decided not to divide the curricular content into the subject matter disciplines as was habitual in the high schools. They viewed the disciplines as reflecting the fragmented industrialized societies that had produced them, not Colombian rural society." (Roosta and Townsend 2002, p.14). There is clearly a concern with Western based academic disciplines, and this is particularly true for the social sciences if we read Farzam Arbab carefully:

"The creation of the institutions of a global society, a web of interconnected structures that hold society together at all levels, from local to international — institutions that gradually become the patrimony of all the inhabitants of the planet — is for me one of the major challenges of development planning and strategy. Without it, I fear, globalization will be synonymous with the marginalization of the masses. I do not see how, in their present state, the social sciences can adequately address this challenge." (Farzam Arbab, The Lab, the Temple and the Market, 161-162)

"When I move away from the modern natural sciences into other components of the intellectual basis of, say, Western civilization—the civilization that appears to have had the most vitality in modern times—I cannot help but become more skeptical. I still hold in great regard the social sciences and philosophy that uphold this civilization, but I see too many of the fantasies of childhood in them. Something much better has to emerge, albeit well informed by some of the greatest philosophical thinking of the past, something new upon which social, political, and economic thought appropriate for the age of the maturity of the human race can be built." (Farzan Arbab, the Intellectual Life of the Baha'I Community, p.16)

The concern applies to HE institutions as a whole – again reminiscent of Illich:

"In its relation to regional development, then, the university is an institution present in almost every instance of social action, accompanying the population, systematizing existing knowledge, generating new knowledge, incorporating the results of systematic learning into programs of formal and nonformal education, and providing decision-making bodies with insights and enlightened perspective. Establishing such an institution and defining its mode of operation are crucial components of capacity-building in any region — a challenge that calls for creativity and the ability to innovate. Traditional models of an already stagnant higher education have little to offer." (Farzam Arbab, The Lab, the Temple and the Market 217)

Arbab, Farzam. 2016. 'The Intellectual Life of the Bahá'í Community'. 2016. https://bahai-library.com/arbab_intellectual_life_community.

3. Participatory Action Research:

This should sound familiar to many passages in Farzam Arbab but also in different guidance documents referring to participation, participatory approaches and universal participation:

"PAR is an innovative approach to economic and social change, which goes beyond usual institutional boundaries in development by actively involving the people in generating knowledge about their own condition and how it can be changed. PAR requires a strong commitment by participating social scientists to deprofessionalize their expertise and share it with the people, while recognizing that the communities directly involved have the critical voice in determining the direction and goals of change as subjects rather than objects."
Fals-Borda, Orlando, and Md Anisur Rahman, eds. 1991. Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research. New York : London: Apex Press ; Intermediate Technology Publications.

Although the book was published in 1991 – it covers reflection and articles from the early 1970s onward:
"This book is the result of field work and reflection inspired in Participatory Action-Research (PAR) techniques and philosophy during the last twenty years, when this form of study-and-action was first proposed and tried." (Preface)

But to return to our topic of theory, in 2016 Farzam Arbab confirmed that the conceptual framework put forward by FUNDAEC had finally received the theoretical or philosophical grounding it needed through the work of Sona Farid-Arbab entitled "Moral Empowerment: In Quest of a Pedagogy". In fact, according to Farzam Arbab, Sona's work lays the groundwork for the elements of the conceptual framework in the field of Bahá'í inspired education (a larger claim that deserves further investigation).

Theoretically, however, Sona Farid-Arbab's work operates a major switch, moving away from the historical connections with critical pedagogy, critical thought and more radical traditions in favour of an alignment with analytical philosophy, and in particular, with the London School of Philosophy of Education philosophers such as Richard Stanley Peters and Paul Hirst, etc. This is a relatively recent huge shift in the theoretical underpinnings of the conceptual framework of FUNDAEC and of the Bahá'í Faith that is yet to receive scholarly attention. It also significantly alters notions of pedagogy, distancing FUNDAEC and Baha'í inspired education from learner-centered (which have a long history within Baha'í educational thought and practice from Stanwood Cobb to Montessori Schools, through to Dwight Allen, Daniel Jordan and Donald Streets), problem-posing, constructivist, and critical pedagogy approaches in favour of approaches from analytical philosophy which prioritize knowledge, ontological truths, a language that mirrors reality, and knowledge transmission and retention. How will FUNDAEC manage to balance out these two very different theoretical traditions? What are the implications of this recent general shift for the Bahá'í community? These are interesting questions to ponder on.

Except for this shift, however, Sona Farid-Arbab's work – an essential read for Bahá'í educationalists – does not really alter the original conceptual framework of FUNDAEC, which proceeds as before. Her book is first and foremost in my view a critique of current educational practice from the perspective of religion and from the standpoint of analytical philosophy. It calls for the introduction of spirituality and spiritual values into educational practice and for granting religion and religious language a more central, direct and independent role in shaping education and educational content, side by side with science and the academic disciplines.

The discussion so far should not obscure the fact that when it comes to the theoretical foundations of FUNDAEC, Farzam Arbab's thought or theoretical perspective on development is absolutely key. In terms of "Education for Development," FUNDAEC has had a developed theoretical perspective from early on, which resembles the sources I have highlighted on the secular side. This is expressed clearly in Farzam Arbab's 1984 "Rural University: Learning about Education and Development": http://hdl.handle.net/10625/7716 However, this is more akin to a development theory. As we shall see, the recent work of Sona Farid-Arbab has come in to provide a philosophical foundation to this perspective that is also an educational one (curriculum, pedagogy etc.); and this account is more explicit in terms of the theories and sources invoked.

Why is there a need for two types of theoretical accounts? Because one is primarily addressed as a model in the field of development and the other in the formal field of education. And in the field of education you need to have a philosophical foundation, while in the field of development you need to have an economic, political, and sociological (about social change) one.

Are these two the same if one is grounded in analytical philosophy and aligned with Conservative thought and the other inspired by radical Third World leftist movements from the 1970s? If both are part of a wider unitary conceptual framework how are these ideological poles reconciled? Could it not be said that at one point we looked at what Bahá'í education should be about through a Gramscian lens (collective effort to reshape society's culture and then society as a whole through an ideological/'ethical' program, i.e., asserting 'counter-hegemony' in a manner similar with that of Gramsci) and that now we are looking at the same topic from the point of view of analytical philosophy (recovering or safeguarding objective, foundational and true knowledge and focusing on preserving perennial values and tradition)? Have the two been combined into one identical framework? Is that how the two poles are being reconciled? Paying attention to this is important because such analysis can help us understand better how we have engaged with theory-building until now and where we could take this into the future.

<<**Counter-hegemony** is an attempt to critique or dismantle hegemonic power.[1] In other words, it is a confrontation or opposition to existing status quo and its legitimacy in politics, but can also be observed in various other spheres of life, such as history, media, music, etc. Neo-Gramscian theorist Nicola Pratt (2004) has described counter-hegemony as "a creation of an alternative hegemony on the terrain of civil society in preparation for political change".[2] >>Wikipedia

In fact, it could be said that Farzam Arbab's influence has given rise not only to a central paradigm but to a school of thought in the Bahá'í community. Many talks, articles and even books from prominent Bahá'í intellectuals or figures are simply further expositions or developments of the concepts he outlined in his chapter from "The Lab, the Temple and the Market" (2000) entitled 'Promoting a Discourse on Science, Religion and Development'. This text is key and seemingly provides the blueprint for the current conceptual framework guiding all Bahá'í activities (although a clear research project to investigate and validate the accuracy of such a statement has not yet been undertaken and might reveal a more complex and nuanced perspective).

This blueprint has been expanded upon and applied directly to the reality of the Bahá'í community by Paul Lample in "Revelation and Social Reality" from 2009 – an equally important text and a must read for every Bahá'í.

Ultimately, the conceptual framework guiding all Bahá'í activities is the one underlined in the documents of the Universal House of Justice, and this is an important point to remember despite even the obvious key role of Lample's book. One's take, or an agency's take (be it FUNDAEC, the ISGP or even the ABS) on the conceptual framework of the Bahá'í Faith might not be the same with the conceptual framework of the Universal House of Justice (or of the Bahá'í Faith), even when the attempt is to mirror it most faithfully. All these conceptual frameworks are distinct but interrelated and evolving through relative experimentation. It is, therefore, key not to confuse the two categories, while also important is to have an open space where different interpretations or ways to employ the conceptual framework of the Bahá'í Faith can be tested out and mistakes be made. In different domains, the theoretical foundations would look very different, and the discussion within each domain will be very dynamic – until we have a comprehensive Bahá'í philosophy that can underpin such complex diversity. Will the particular and the general need to develop in parallel? It all depends on where advances in theoretical development occur first as that level will influence the other.

Let us now turn to the issues of curriculum. What are some of the key features of the FUNDAEC curriculum?

First, the perspective of complementarity which states that religion and religious language should be given its own independent and equally valid domain next to science. The religious element is asserted in two ways:

1. Spiritual principles and spiritual qualities are emphasized through direct quotations from the Bahá'í writings or from other sources. In SAT these are asserted indirectly as moral principles and moral qualities, in PSA they are more directly asserted.
2. In both programs, spirituality is given a central role in the curriculum through the notion of acts of service to the community. This is derived from the concept of "service to humankind" associated with the Bahá'í principle of the oneness of humankind and asserted as such. The two are linked through the notion of community-service capabilities. **Developing community-service capabilities becomes therefore the core of the entire curriculum, as shown by the diagram on Capabilities.**

Second, the curriculum is not primarily directed to the needs of the individual or to the needs of the national economy or of employers. Rather, the focus of the curriculum is on the needs of a particular collective community. **This community can mean a village 'or the neighborhood of a city in a micro-region with clearly definable social and economic challenges."** (p.268) As Sona Farid-Arbab explains: "The arena of action where the educational process unfolds is, to a large extent, the community in which the student is immersed and **many of the educational goals are related to the social, economic, cultural, and spiritual development of the community**." (p.248)

Third, the key organizing category for the curriculum is the notion of capability, but this is determined in connection with the needs of a specific community. This notion of capability differs from the general notions of Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen and, also, from the learning outcomes of competency-based curricula (or outcome-based curricula). In particular, the FUNDAEC capabilities are constituted from diverse elements: skills, assimilated information, the understanding of concepts and, then, attitudes, habits, and spiritual qualities – all these interacting and generating meaning in the context of action in the community. (p.266)

- FUNDAEC: Capabilities

There are three types of capabilities:

1. that relate to the moral dimension of the path of service (I would describe them as **moral capabilities**)
2. that relate to actual acts of service designed to meet the program's aims, (I would describe them as **service capabilities**)
3. And that ensure the transmission of the intellectual heritage of humankind (I would describe them as **knowledge capabilities**: mathematical capabilities, scientific capabilities, technological capabilities, and language and communication capabilities).

The capabilities FUNDAEC highlights have a unique degree of specificity and composition when compared with other notions of capability. For example, let's consider **the moral capability** of "building unity of thought and action while pursuing a common aim." This implies understanding **concepts** like unity, diversity, unity in diversity and unity versus uniformity; it requires **skills, abilities and habits** like listening to others, humbleness, detachment, love and selflessness, and **knowledge** such as that accumulated systematically about a community while serving. Other capabilities also relating to the moral dimension are: managing personal and community affairs with rectitude of conduct, participating effectively in processes of community consultation, and accompanying others in service. (267)

What about **capabilities relating to acts of service**? Some examples are: assisting with the production of food in small farms, preserving the environment, helping with the socialization of children, the formal education of children and youth, and with individual and community healthcare; assisting in secondary production such as the processing of food and the buying and selling of primary and manufactured goods, and finally, being able to participate in artistic performances and other forms of cultural enrichment. (p.268-269).

Clearly, moral, service, and knowledge capabilities cut across each-other. For example, the problem of preserving the environment requires both the **scientific capabilities** to diagnose the state of an ecosystem, **knowledge of the science** of agriculture and animal husbandry, and the **moral task** of raising the consciousness of the community which also implies **language capabilities**.

Integration in the FUNDAEC curriculum? – this account below is just to suggest this theme has been highlighted but would need an in-depth analysis of the SAT texts to bring in clarity and detail- an activity in which I have not been able to engage.

Although the idea is that these capabilities provide integration for the curriculum in my opinion this would seem to depend on the specific capabilities relating to agricultural and rural production and the knowledge associated with those functions.

"Instead of simply layering a few basic rural vocational skills, such as animal husbandry or soil chemistry, onto a traditional urban education that emphasizes an academic, often theoretical approach to mathematics, literature and science, FUNDAEC wrote the SAT curriculum from scratch. For example, rather than dividing subjects up into traditional categories, like biology, mathematics and social studies, the SAT curriculum takes an integrated approach that combines all three subjects in, say, a discussion of how insect populations reproduce (biology) exponentially (math) given the right conditions (social studies and ecology). The result is an integrated curriculum that makes sense to campesinos raised in rural areas - and still covers the same subjects without losing any rigor. In addition, the curriculum contains a strong measure of moral education. Some of the founders of FUNDAEC are Bahá'ís and Bahá'í principles are incorporated in SAT. The curriculum is organized around the all-important concept of service to the community, for example. It also emphasizes the importance of basic moral values like honesty, trustworthiness and trusteeship, as well as basic ecological principles."
https://www.onecountry.org/story/rural-learning-helps-stem-urban-migration

"An initial question was how to design the curriculum, it is Murphy-Graham's (2012) observation that the curriculum is not designed around "traditional academic subjects" (p. 42), although conceptually it can be described as having five areas: mathematics, language, science, technology, and community service (Arbab, Stifel, 1982, p. 513). The SAT program is made up of nearly eighty books which FUNDAEC has written since its inception that are all organized around developing a particular capacity within the individual, drawing from multiple disciplines in order to achieve development of said capacity." FUNDAEC and Fragmentation, Thaddeus Benjamin Herman, p.10.

My feeling is that as Bahá'ís and even educationalists we probably do not know as much as we should about SAT and PSA, although there is a small body of literature.

The Ruhi Curriculum

Now, when it comes to capabilities, we can think in the same way about the Ruhi curriculum as we did with FUNDAEC. **Of course, here the focus is on capabilities that would serve the Bahá'í community**. Here some capabilities revolve around acts of service to the community, some around knowledge capabilities and some around administrative capabilities to which we have recently added those relating to participating in social action and public discourses.

First, there are the capabilities to organize core activities such as **devotional gatherings, children's classes, junior youth groups, and study circles, and generally to teach the Faith and accompany a seeker** (these are capabilities that revolve around acts of service). **Basic knowledge of the history of the Bahá'í Faith, of the Covenant (meaning of the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith – that is, of the key Figures of the Faith, the UHJ, of the Institution of the Counsellors and so on), knowledge about spiritual growth, and about the Fund** are all important knowledge capabilities. **How to collaborate and integrate administrative activities simultaneously, how to consult, and how to serve as an Area Teaching Committee** are another set of capabilities that are of use in administration. Finally, the last two Ruhi books have a different role from the rest: **that of preparing the Bahá'í community to engage in social action and to participate in public discourses.**

However, we might be wrong to think of capabilities primarily as individual characteristics. In 2004, Farzam Arbab pointed out that the Ruhi materials were created to develop the capabilities of communities, expressed through the growth of clusters:

"The acts of service treated in the main sequence of courses, then, are intended to set in motion a process that will lead to the sound development of local communities or, as envisioned in the Five Year Plan, of clusters. **A plan of growth for the cluster is, in some sense, embedded in the sequence of courses, a fact that by now must be apparent to you**." Arbab, Farzam. 2004. 'The Training Institute and the Main Sequence of Courses'. 2004. https://bahai-library.com/arbab_training_institute

From this angle, the main aim of Ruhi as an educational program is, therefore, growth, expansion, or entry by troops. This view is backed up by one of the ISGP materials which states that "**Perhaps the most important capacity that the Ruhi materials are designed to cultivate is the ability to participate in learning how to advance the process of entry by troops." pp.**86-88 ISGP UG Year 2

The same material observes that "the Ruhi materials were the most practical and effective tool available" for contributing to growth and that such materials will evolve and be supplanted by other courses but that **"Such an evolution, however, can only be driven by the experience of those intimately involved in the ongoing efforts for expansion and consolidation."** What this seems to suggest is that our future educational programs and conceptual paradigm will likely continue to be driven by efforts in the area of expansion and consolidation, meaning, constructed around the goal of entry by troops.

At the same time, however, we know that from now until Riḍván 2046 "the Baháʼí world will be focused on a single aim: the release of the society-building power of the Faith in ever-greater measures." (UHJ, 2021) While this seems to include the goal of entry by troops, this is, however, a new type of goal and it is this new goal that I would expect will primarily drive the development of the conceptual framework. This, of course, depends on exactly how this new type of goal will be conceptualized and on how the goal of 'entry by troops' will relate to this new framing.

As can be seen, the Ruhi curriculum attempts to cover the basic individual and institutional capabilities a person might need to live a Bahá'í life and to serve the needs of the Bahá'í community. This is a human training resources program which for decades sought to address the needs of the community while highlighting entry by troops, or expansion and consolidation, as the primary goal (although the focus now seems to have broadened to that of 'releasing the society-building power of the Faith').

As this is education and training for how to be a Bahá'í or participate in activities that are building the Bahá'í community, and inasmuch as the curriculum relies exclusively on excerpts from the Bahá'í Writings or from Bahá'í agencies (so without recourse to the academic disciplines), this can generally be considered an instance of Bahá'í Education as Religious Education, to which, however participants from all ways of life and backgrounds are welcome. It is important to state here that the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Programme is an exception from this (see next slide)

However, recent changes suggest an initial opening both towards Bahá'í Education as Education for Development and towards Bahá'í Education for academic or public discourses. In this set-up, how to integrate all these types of education within the same theoretical framework becomes a key challenge. But this is a very positive development in my view, because it represents a higher level of complexity.

As mentioned before, thee the auxiliary branch of the Ruhi curriculum known as the **Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program** (aimed at youth of ages 12 to 15) is an exception. The Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program consists of two types of materials:

1) the first are aimed at a general audience and are comprised 10 books – their description says that "though the moral concepts in the materials in the first category are drawn from the Bahá'í teachings, they are not religious in nature, nor do they treat subjects that are specifically Bahá'í." This sort of focus occurs only in the second set of materials comprised of only 2 books.

1) In the second set of materials the focus is explicitly on developing a Bahá'í spiritual identity and on introducing adolescents to specific Bahá'í-related subjects that relate directly to religious teachings: from spiritual teachings, moral issues, and religious laws to the building of a world civilization. However, these sources also employ materials (ideas and quotations) from other religions and are generally structured as open dialogue.

As such, JYSEP is employed both in the field of development and as part of religious training and education for Bahá'í youth if the two books 'Spirit of Faith' and 'Power of the Holy Spirit' are added to the first ten. In the first instance we have Bahá'í Education as Education for Development and in the second we have a less emphasized variant of Bahá'í Education as Religious Education.

By the way, the Juniour Youth books are written as stories and/or dialogues. These materials approximate in a way the children's books by Patricia Polacco. This was brought to my attention by Donald Streets who was adamant that many of the books by Polacco could be used to great effect in the Bahá'í community because they reflected the same spiritual principles. He even made donations of such books to the Bahá'í community, and I can see why.

All of the titles are concerned with developing language skills and the power of expression. Some in the first category also address mathematical concepts and social issues, while others seek to prepare young people to approach the investigation of physical, social and spiritual reality in a scientific manner. Though the moral concepts in the materials in the first category are drawn from the Bahá'í teachings, they are not religious in nature, nor do they treat subjects that are specifically Bahá'í. Many kinds of organizations, including academic institutions, will therefore find them useful for their educational programs with junior youth. The current titles in this category are:

- Breezes of Confirmation
- Wellspring of Joy
- Habits of an Orderly Mind
- Glimmerings of Hope
- Walking the Straight Path
- Learning About Excellence
- Thinking About Numbers
- Observation and Insight
- The Human Temple
- Drawing on the Power of the Word

In its own work with young people, the Ruhi Institute includes the items in the second category, which address Bahá'í-related subjects. Among these subjects are those with which adolescents most often struggle, such as, free will and predestination and the complex relationship between will and knowledge. Currently, the following titles are in this category:

- Spirit of Faith
- Power of the Holy Spirit

<u>The Sequence of Books for the Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program</u>

About the ISGP Curricula

As mentioned before, the ISGP sequence of courses seeks to extend the Ruhi and FUNDAEC approach to the undergraduate and postgraduate levels of higher education. But these courses might also come to fulfil another role in the future. As tends to happen when only one type of high-level human resource training program is in operation, such courses might unintentionally come to be seen as providing the highest level of administrative training and accreditation available in the Bahá'í community. Both types of seminars are developed based on materials prepared by either ISGP or FUNDAEC.

In my experience, the graduate seminars are at least in part an attempt to correlate the Bahá'í teachings with key thinkers from the academic disciplines. Statements from the Bahá'í Writings are studied, then similar concepts from different academic thinkers are introduced. For example, the theory of justice of John Rawls features heavily in exploring the Bahá'í notion of social justice and the principle of the oneness of humankind. Why? Because, as ISGP tells us: "Justice is a question that needs to be pondered in our hearts, but to understand it we also need to benefit from the ongoing exploration of the subject in moral philosophy, law, and in many other fields of the social sciences." *Contributing to the Advancement of Civilization:* TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK, UNIT 1 Justice and the Oneness of Humankind p.72

Although this attempt to correlate the Bahá'í writings with the academic disciplines is still in an incipient phase this is a very exciting development in the Bahá'í community. This is where I see experimentation with a university type of Bahá'í or Bahá'í inspired curriculum being developed and it is this approach that I recommend be extended to the ISGP undergraduate seminars.

ISGP Postgraduate

Because it starts from FUNDAEC's experience in the field of social action and development, but it tries to also bring in theory and the academic disciplines, the ISGP graduate seminars can be classified as a form of education transitioning from Bahá'í Education as Education for Development (this is education and training for community-building understood in the general sense of social-economic development) to Bahá'í Education as formal education or as academic research (meaning as Bahá'í scholarship).

However, a note of caution here. A conceptual framework, in my view, is an incipient theoretical formation used to make conceptual distinctions and organize ideas and action. Such a framework is meant to function as an experimental, fluid, and likely temporary device for exploring the development of propositions or concepts that could form a comprehensive theory in the future. Therefore, it is somewhat risky to equate the conceptual framework with a belief system, and particularly with a belief system comprised of 'immutable beliefs" (*Contributing to the Advancement of Civilization:* TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK, UNIT 1 Justice and the Oneness of Humankind, p.7).

Why would this be problematic? First, because this could lead in time to the crystallization of dogma. A conceptual framework framed in this manner could become a frozen list with articles of faith comprised of immutable beliefs which, because they are immutable and ontologically foundational, cannot be questioned. Second, because the belief system of the Bahá'í Faith has already been outlined by the Key Figures of the Faith and does not need and cannot be applied a reconceptualization.

ISGP Undergraduate

The materials for the undergraduate ISGP seminars are organized like an undergraduate program. They are presented as representing the crystallization of a four-year undergraduate program, which is gradually being put in place by the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, again with aid from FUNDAEC.

Unless the materials have changed a lot in the last couple of years, my view is that this Bahá'í educational program needs scrutiny and maybe a restart at the conceptual level. Exceptions here are the final section on Culture in each book and several other sections such as the two written in the style of analytical philosophy by, I am pretty sure, Sona Farid-Arbab – one on "understanding concepts versus assimilating information" and the other on "integration." Maybe this is an area in which the National Spiritual Assemblies of the countries supporting the delivery of this program at the level of resources (especially those of the United States and Canada) could assist. This is essential because these materials are likely to have to support key processes at the global level of the Bahá'í community for the purposes of the current 9 Year Plan. But also, and maybe even more so, because they are the materials targeting our youth and young researchers in a key phase in their development – and this is what will shape our research capacity as a community for the next 20-40 years.

It would also be extremely helpful if university students were allowed to co-create the materials (as is now increasingly the norm in Western universities), if those creating the materials would be deeply familiar with the university culture and environment as as these are right now and free of bias towards them, and if the necessary steps were taken to make sure the experience of marginalized peoples and communities is not missing from the curriculum. In my experience, having a curriculum design team with representatives from different racial groups with higher education experience or experience in social transformation (particularly Indigenous and African-American in North America – this is a must as even one person could bring contributions that would expand the entire set-up) and representative of each continent (particularly of Africa – which seems to me has the weakest voice in shaping central Bahá'í educational discourse at the moment but very rich epistemological and philosophical traditions and perspectives that remain unknown in the West) would be a worthwhile experiment and, more importantly, an effective way to correct current limitations. At the same time, if ISGP is a programme to be applied globally in the Bahá'í community, non-Western Bahá'í countries should have a say in the design of the materials or at least be able to scrutinize them and see how they would fit their youth, who face both social and cultural challenges and opportunities that differ very significantly from those in the West.

Although the ISGP undergraduate materials are aimed at delineating the three core areas of activity: expansion and consolidation, social action, and participation in the discourses of society – it is the first area of activity around which the materials seem to be mostly organized. For this reason (but not only), the ISGP Undergraduate program seems very much an instance of Bahá'í Education as Religious Education.

The word Anisa refers to an ancient symbol meaning the "Tree of Life." it represents the concept of continuous growth and fruition in the context of shelter and protection.

Anisa Model

The first thing to say about the Anisa Model is that it is a formal education program for primary, middle and secondary schools that can be extended back to pre-school children. The key text is by Daniel Jordan and Donald Streets (1972) and is entitled:

Releasing the potentialities of the child: A new conceptual basis for comprehensive educational planning.
Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts. http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/anisa/ (Many other resources can be found here!)

Let us now examine in brief the model for theory-building, the pedagogy, the curriculum and the theoretical sources of the Anisa Model.

In terms of Barbour's taxonomy of conflict, independence, dialogue and integration, the Anisa Model falls into the category of integration. I will explain why.

Oftentimes, a major theme in the Bahá'í community is that the conceptualization and design of social structures and processes (including educational ones) should start with the question of human nature. The Anisa model does exactly that.
 "What is the essential nature of human beings?" 'How dare we create a lesson plan for this child, [when] we don't even know him?' are the initial questions of Daniel Jordan. "

Anisa Workshop Lethbridge 1982 Part 1." mins 9-10, 42-43, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ6MTxBvNnY

Theory building depends on the research design. The approach usually taken is to attempt to investigate human nature from one field of study, or several, and attempt to build a theory of sorts that way.

Daniel Jordan and his team, however, developed a research methodology aimed to continuously extract the most up-to-date knowledge about human nature, human development, and the nature of the learner from all the academic disciplines and in combination with the religious, artistic, and philosophical traditions of the world (both Eastern and Western).

The main focus, of course, was to extract from all these domains of knowledge interrelated insights about the nature of the child. This was a huge challenge. A greater challenge, however, was to integrate the resulting insights and information into a coherent theory about human nature that could guide education. This was also achieved, which is why the Anisa model belongs to Barbour's category of integration. See the resources listed here: http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/anisa/

So what is the theoretical model that has resulted from this methodology?

The First Principle

At the top of this structure lies 'the first principle' – a principle around which the entire model is organized, and which every other part of the system reflects. The first principle is not a supreme value or the most significant principle; it is just the principle that allows for the development of a comprehensive theoretical structure around it, the cement that keeps all the diverse elements of a particular theoretical structure together.

As Daniel Jordan explains:

"And Whitehead observed along with all of his predecessors, many of them, that the fundamental characteristic of the universe is change. When you think of change you are considering process. And when you entertain the idea of process you are presupposing potentiality, and that's a concept you need to keep in mind throughout the day. Because it is the actualization of potentiality that educational systems ought to be committed to. Whitehead says that the fundamental activity in the universe is the translation of potentiality into actuality. And he said: that, fundamentally, is what is meant by creativity, 'the universal of universals'. So, the first principle, the principle on which the organization of this philosophy [is based], and the science of education is based, and the model, which is a reflection of that science, is based, is this fundamental principle: the translation of potentiality into actuality. It is the first principle underlining the organization of thought on which the model is based. Whitehead made the assertion that if you want action to be organized, the thought on which it is based must be organized. And if you want your thoughts to be organized, they have to have an organizing principle, a first principle. And the chief characteristic of clean good organization is coherence. And that incoherence arises out of incompatibility, disconnectedness, or absence of the first principle." "Anisa Workshop Lethbridge 1982 Part 1." mins 13-29 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ6MTxBvNnY

What we have here is theory building in the tradition of the grand systems of philosophy, 'system building' as some would call it.

"We redefine education as the process of translating potentiality into actuality while creating further potentiality," Jordan and Streets write in "Releasing the Potentialities of the Child" (p.10).

This is, of course, what Jordan also defines as **spirituality.** The key idea here is that human beings have infinite potential and must be able to "mould out of the past a dynamic present" (he calls this "immanence") and to constantly surpass who they are and advance into the unknown by creating themselves anew (he calls this "transcendence").

Transcendence is also defined as "the capacity to extend potentiality indefinitely" (p.79) with learning being a reflection of this transcendent quality.

Observe how the following definition of spirituality combines religion, science, and philosophy into a language that integrates all three: "**The qualities of immanence and transcendence reflected in consciousness and self-awareness make man a spiritual creation**." p. 11 This is a definition of spirituality both a secular and a religious person can agree too.

Notice also how the first principle, or the notion of spirituality, is very closely connected with creativity. To be creative becomes a most fundamental aspect of spirituality: "From the Whiteheadian perspective," Jordan and Streets (p.153) tell us, "no growth takes places without creativity." "From this view," they continue, "all children and human beings are creative; each act of learning is in a sense an act of self-creation."

Let us note here that this first principle represents a synthesis between the spiritual teachings contained in the Bahá'í Writings and the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead.

As every Bahá'i knows, the principle of the transformation of actuality into potentiality corresponds to a key Bahá'i passage on education from Bahá'u'lláh:

"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom" (Gleanings CXXII).

It is for this reason that in my Routledge paper I have stated that this principle could be considered the first principle of a Bahá'í inspired pedagogy.

"A teacher who accepts the spiritual nature of man as we have defined it," Jordan and Streets observe, "will view each child as an open-ended question – a creature of unlimited potentiality who can never be classified as uneducable." (p.12)

Self-actualization is "the chief dynamic characteristic of man and the most eloquent testimony of his reality." "The quality of any educational system," Jordan and Streets (p.36) emphasize, "is determined by the extent to which it is in touch with that reality."

The ability to believe in the unknown potential of others and of ourselves, redefined by Jordan as "faith," becomes therefore key.

To help make this point Jordan uses the analogy of the acorn for the relationship between teacher and student:
"… if you hold an acorn in your hand and you do not know or believe that the oak tree is potentially within the acorn, do you think you will be in touch with the reality of the acorn?' And the answer is 'No'."
Anisa Workshop Lethbridge 1982 Part 1." mins 9-10, 42-43

If we are not able to believe in the potentialities of those around us, we do not fully acknowledge them, we do not really connect to their reality. How could good education take place in such an environment? True acceptance is "when you are accepted on the basis of what you might become." This implies, according to Daniel Jordan, "an activation of faith." But this ability to encourage the development of potentials in others must be guided by real scientific insights, meaning by a theory of development that draws on all the academic disciplines and traditions of thought.

A Theory of Development

The second element of the Anisa Model, and which stems from this first principle is, of course, a theory of development that could account for the nature of the human being in the process of becoming. As Jordan explains:

"So, we have this basic idea, the translation of potentiality into actuality, and we now are faced with the job of creating a theory of human development that would explain the nature of human potentiality, what those potentialities look like when they're actualized, and what you have to do to promote their actualization at an optimum rate. And that was the next step, a theory of development. Then, from that theory of development we created a comprehensive theory of curriculum, and a theory on teaching, on pedagogy, which shows how those two are related."

"Anisa Workshop Lethbridge 1982 Part 1." mins 13-29

So, we could say the theoretical model of the Anisa Model looks like this:

First Principle - the process of translating potentiality into actuality while creating further potentiality
↓

A Theory of Development about the Nature of the Learner
↓   ↓

A Theory of Curriculum / A Theory of Pedagogy (on Teaching) and Evaluation
↓

Administrative System

(in this scheme each lower level is a reflection of all the above and especially of the First Principle).

Or like this:

Integration of Process Philosophy with the Bahá'i Teachings (A Comprehensive Philosophical Theory)→
↓

A Theory of Development (about Human Nature) drawing on the Academic Disciplines via a multidisciplinary approach
↓

A Theory of Curriculum, A Theory of Pedagogy, A Theory of Evaluation
↓

Administrative system

(in this scheme each lower level is a reflection of all the above and especially of the First Principle).

The theory of development of the Anisa Model is too complex to describe here.

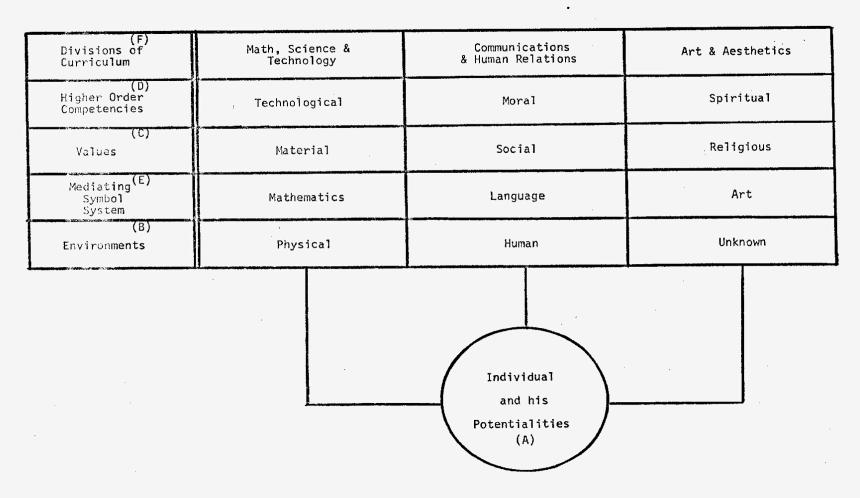This theory of development relies on four key notions:

I. That the development of potential comes with sensitive and critical periods that must be anticipated and prepared for.

II. That key to the learning and the development process is a learning competence described as learning to learn.
This is defined philosophically as "the process of differentiating experience, whether internal or external, into separate parts and reintegrating them in a new way, thereby providing new information, new feelings, new skills, new perceptions, which may or may not become expressed immediately in some form of overt behavior." (p.72) Learning to learn means being able to understand the processes of differentiation and integration of experience and being able to "utilize and consciously direct them." (p.73).
The basics of this is that in order to learn things we need to analyze and break them down and then put them together in a new way or integrate them, to generate new meaning. This is too complex to explain here because it means something else for each discipline or area of inquiry. A key aspect of this is that the learner needs to experience a huge diversity of stimuli, and especially face different but relating experiences that can be compared against each-other; in order to differentiate and then integrate you need to have a lot to differentiate between or from.

Explaining Learning to Learn (the learning competence) as differentiation and integration

"Consider, for example, the very common experience most babies have of being given a rattle and having it shaken as their hands are held to it, presumably so they can learn to shake it themselves. Most babies will rattle it a few times and throw it out of the crib. We may presume that this happens because the baby is not 'advanced' enough for the experience, and therefore won't pursue it because it's 'over his head' intellectually, or because the experience itself is vacuous or very limited in its capacity to draw out human potentialities. On the face of it, we can assume the latter to be the case. Why? Because the most obvious possibilities for differentiation and integration are missing. The association of muscle movement that produces the 'shaking' to the sound that is heard is made very quickly by most babies and there's really not too much else to be gained from that experience without help from a 'teacher.' Let us focus on the perceptual aspects of the experience, select audition as the perceptual mode through which the learning experience is being mediated, and see what kind of help a teacher might give. Immediately we see a variety of similar but yet different sounds are needed. One rattle isn't enough because it does not provide sounds which can be differentiated or contrasted. What is needed are, say, three rattles, each of which is filled with a different kind of material (such as salt, rice, or dried beans) that will make sounds different from the other two. The three rattles provide him with an experience which he can differentiate on the basis of sound. But what about integration? Three more rattles, just like the first three, are needed. A game can then be initiated. The object of the game is for the baby to listen to the teacher's or mother's rattle and find the one rattle that matches the sound of the teacher's rattle. Matching is one form of integration. If the rattle can be of different colors (which introduces the use of another sensory mode – vision), the child will perform another integration function by associating color with sound so that he can use visual means to select the rattle that can match the sound of any of the three rattles the teacher may wish to use. Other contrasting variables can be introduced, such as speed of the rattling, loudness (or amplitude) of the rattling, or weight of the rattle. Ultimately, one can become as sophisticated or complex as one may wish. The richness of the latter experience with six rattles when compared to a 'one-rattle experience' is obvious. That richness makes it a vastly superior learning experience which can be extended in a variety of ways. For example, new rhythms can be introduced (which require dealing with the dimension of time) and the relationship of the rattle to other instruments such as the maraca, frequently heard in Mexican or Latin American music. Dealing with the dimension of time involves cognitive operations; making the rhythms require psycho-motor skills, playing such 'music' in a group involves cooperation – a social or moral component. With a little imagination and knowledge of the principles underlying the development of learning competence, an extraordinary 'potential-releasing' set of relating experiences can quite easily and naturally be planned and carried out over a period of time." 76-78

III. That according to the human sciences (as these were developed in the 60s and 70s), human beings have certain certain basic competencies:

1. **Psycho-motor competencies** – "refers to the capacity to coordinate, control, and direct the movement and position of the voluntary muscles". p.82
2. **Perceptual competencies** – "refers to the capacity to differentiate sensory information and then to reorganize and integrate it into patterns which constitute interpretations of reality that prepare the organism for decision-making and action. " p.87
3. **Cognitive Competencies** (for example, inference, analogy, metaphor, induction, deduction, concept formation, classification)
4. **Affective competencies -** sensations, feelings and emotions; a key theme is the management of anxiety (provides energy)– a feature essential to the release of potentiality: "The lifestyle of a competent learner consists of moving through anxiety-creating experiences rather than moving around them or retrenching in the face of them." p.(136)
5. **Volitional Competencies -** the will or volition = the realization of intention into action, of bringing a goal to fruition; purpose = "a higher-order operation that gives man greater choices within a wider boundary of situations and enables him to be transcendant by projecting himself beyond the limitations of the present moment"; attention = the seat of the will?; goal-setting – consciously anticipating and organizing one's future; fantasy = "a mode of attention in which the data are potential rather than actual" – another way for attention to support the will.
6. **Creative Competencies** (divergent thinking = "starts from a single point and then spreads out", "searching for data that may be only remotely related to the original starting point"; toleration of ambiguity; intuition – often depends upon overlearning & "appears to involve a kind of scanning followed by a sudden integration of elements heretofore unrelated"; etc.)

IV. That basic competencies constitute the building-blocks for "higher order competencies." This is the second level of the theory of development. These higher order competencies are comprised of: technological and mathematical competencies, moral and language competencies, and spiritual and artistic competencies. As these are curricular concepts, in order to understand them we need to take a look at the curriculum of the Anisa Model.

ANISA MODEL CURRICULUM DESIGN

(F) Divisions of Curriculum	Math, Science & Technology	Communications & Human Relations	Art & Aesthetics
(D) Higher Order Competencies	Technological	Moral	Spiritual
(C) Values	Material	Social	Religious
Mediating (E) Symbol System	Mathematics	Language	Art
(B) Environments	Physical	Human	Unknown

Individual and his Potentialities (A)

POTENTIALITIES BECOME ACTUALIZED THROUGH INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT

Three Environments

I recommend reading this figure from the bottom up. The curriculum starts by distinguishing three environments for the learner. The first two are the physical environment and the human environment, but then comes in an interesting innovation: that of designating the third environment as that of the unknown. **What is this environment of the unknown? First, the unknown environment relates to the ultimate concerns of existence or the ultimate unknowns of the universe and to the yearning of every human being to find their place in the cosmos.** Developing assumptions about the ultimate unknowns is essential to human existence because it leads to the construction of ideals for individuals, societies, and cultures. Developing such assumptions "may transcend reasoning, but not oppose it" (p.197). As we contemplate these ultimate concerns, we identify ideals that we feel we can strive toward – and this allows us to take action in the direction of fulfilling our destiny, action which actualizes and expands our potential.

Contemplate ultimate unknowns → identify ideals → affirm one's being by taking action in relation to an active set of ultimate concerns or ideals

Mediating Symbol Systems

So, we have three environments. "Mathematics is the symbol system of science; it provides a means of understanding our interaction with the physical environment and on it rests our technological competence. Human language (French, Swahili, English) is the basic symbol system used to mediate our interaction with the human environment. Without it social values and moral competence would not exist. Finally, **the arts (i.e., music, dance, the graphic and plastic arts, and the theater arts [also poetry and literature]) constitute a very open-ended symbol system that mediates our interaction with the unknowns in our environment and underlie the development of religious values and spiritual competence."** (p.180)

Values and Attitudes

In short, values are abstract ideals integrating a large number of related attitudes. p.173. In the view of the Anisa Model "the formation of a value system is the structuring of potential as it becomes actualized." This is "so central to the development of character and the continual release of human potentialities that it is unthinkable for educators [and schools] to avoid the 'teaching' of values." (p.177) Moreover, cultures who tolerate injustice and discrimination structure "the actualizing potentialities of the child into a value system which limits the rate of actualization." p.179 Values (and attitudes) are classified by environment: material or scientific values for the physical environment, moral values in the human environment, and religious values in the unknown environment. However, the Anisa Model describes the term 'religious' not through a religious language but through a philosophical-scientific language that integrates the languages of science, religion and philosophy.

"Religious is used here" we are told, "in a generic sense and refers to man's search for unity and order in the universe and where he fits in that order, much of which cannot be known." (p.195). "Art is the expressive articulation of that yearning for order and its embodiment in ideals; it is meditation given external form." ... "Thus art activities and aesthetic activities are indispensable to the maintenance of spiritual values." (p.201)

Religious values and attitudes are formed by interaction with the unknown or unknowable environment. "These religious values order the unknown world by giving us basic postulates or assumptions about the unknown world, in essence, a search for our niche in the infinite cosmos." p.175 Jordan and Streets (p197) then provide examples of what they would tend to see as religious values:
- "faith" – defined as "the process of forming and sustaining an orientation to the unknown which eventually culminates in an active set of ultimate concerns (Tillich, 1958)",
- "reverence for life,"
- "an integrated set of assumptions about the unknown environment related to ultimate concerns, which may transcend reasoning but not oppose it; (also described as "the formation of a belief system")
- "an acceptance of death as a natural part of life"
- "meditation-reflection on the purpose of life and its relation to personal destiny."

Higher Order Competencies:
Technological Competence, Moral Competence, and Spiritual Competence

These are the competences corresponding to the second level of the theory of development, and which build on the basic competencies discussed previously. "Higher order competencies depend on [the] values and attitudes and the mediating symbols systems pertinent to each [environment]". pp.180-181. They are the outcome of higher-order processes born of the interaction with the three environments, processes which differentiate and integrate in a variety of ways the basic competencies discussed before: psycho-motor, perceptual, cognitive, affective, volitional, and creative. p.182.

So, when we develop all these basic competencies in the physical environment, we attain technological competence; when we develop them in the human environment, we initiate moral competence; and when we do so in the unknown environment, we develop spiritual competence. "Each higher-order competency is actualized potential structured into a set of values and attitudes." p.182 A few words here about moral competence and spiritual competence.

Moral development is described as "the acquisition of virtues." p.188. "The function of moral competence is threefold:
1. To enable one to relate to other human beings in a way which draws out or facilitates the release of their potentialities
2. To stimulate a reciprocity such that others help to draw out one's own potentialities
3. To sustain a social order in ways that release the potentialities of the society as a collectivity

Love is key here:

"The oneness of mankind remains an abstraction without an energizing force-love. If schools and educational systems are not places where children learn how to love and be loved, there is no hope of moral excellence. To be unloved is to have one's potentialities suppressed, for love is a powerful means of drawing them out; to be unable to love is to be the agent of suppressing the potential of others and inhibiting one's own development." p. 192

Spiritual competence is "approaching the unknowns in the future through the construction of ideals". Such ideals illuminate technological competence and moral competence and help one construct "one's interpretation of life." p.196

Spiritual competence also implies having the courage to "utilize the energy of ontological anxiety to affirm one's being by taking action in the direction of fulfilling one's destiny." p.198.

I should add here that the Anisa Model also mentions a fourth environment: that of the self. Interaction in this environment is with the self but constantly mediated through interaction with all the other three environments; this type of interaction leads to the creation of personal identity, character formation or what humanistic psychologists like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers have called self-actualization. p.205

Theoretical Source for the Anisa Model

Too many to mention because there are theoretical sources used for each level of the theoretical model: first principle (comprehensive philosophical theory), theory of development, theory of curriculum, theory of learning, theory of pedagogy, administration etc. There are also different PhD dissertations written in these areas.

At the philosophical level some key introductory sources are:

1. Whitehead, Alfred N. - *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* 1929
                                      - *Modes of Thought 1938; Adventure of Ideas 1933*
                                      - *The Aims of Education: And Other Essays.* 1929.(and others)
2. Lewis Mumford - *The Transformation of Man* 1962
3. Julian Huxley - *Knowledge, Morality and Destiny* 1960
4. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin - The Phenomenon on Man 1959; The Future of Man 1964
5. Thomas F. O'Dea – American Catholic Dilemma
6. Paul Tillich – Dynamics of Faith 1958; The Courage to Be 1952.
7. Abraham H. Maslow – Toward a Psychology of Being
8. Rollo May – The Meaning of Anxiety 1950, Love and Will 1969
9. Carl Rogers – On Becoming a Person 1961

Curriculum Theory:

Beauchamp, G.A. Curriculum Theory 1961,
Bruner, J.S. The Process of Education 1960,
Parker & Rubin Process as Content: Curriculum Design and the Application of Knowledge 1966,
Hilda Taba Curriculum Development: Theory in Practice
Foshay A. W., James B. MacDonald, R Tanner and D. Tanner

Daniel Jordan and Donald Streets are aware that such curricular categorizations are imperfect. They explicitly point out that "we should always be suspicious of such tidy formulations, for they are always simplifications."

Their work is remarkable if understood as an intervention in an age where Behaviourism dominated the human sciences and the discipline of education and in which the arts as well as religion and ethics had begun to be marginalized in the curriculum.
By introducing the notion of an unknown environment, Jordan and Streets provide the arts, aesthetics, philosophy and religion with an important position in the curriculum.

From a Bahá'í perspective of major interest also are:

- their integrative research methodology used to explore theory-building
- 'the first principle' identified which could form the first principle of a Bahá'í inspired pedagogy.
- the theoretical model developed for integrating science with religion and philosophy,
- the resulting philosophical-scientific language integrating the languages of science, religion and philosophy and the integrative concepts that result from such integration (see new definitions for spirituality, faith, moral competence, religious values, and creativity)
- finally, the curriculum that integrates science and religion through a paradigm that draws on process philosophy and the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith.

On the 18th of February 2016, the archives of Daniel C. Jordan and thus of the Anisa Model were received by the Library at the University of Stanford. https://library.stanford.edu/news/2016/03/stanford-libraries-acquires-historic-daniel-c-jordan-archives

The Integrative Approach to Scholarship and Learning of Dr. Behrooz Sabet

This theoretical model drove the curriculum at Landegg International University, a fleeting Bahá'í inspired university in the early 2000s. Starting in 2006, Sabet redeveloped and incorporated the same model into the integrative Core Curriculum program currently in use at the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) in Iran. We are very clearly talking here about Bahá'í Education as formal education or as academic research, namely, as real scientific education that meets the requirements of a modern university – as the discussion of the theoretical model and of the curriculum will show.
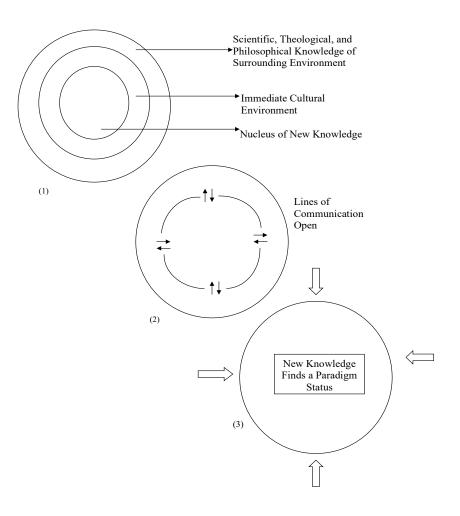
The key text is a 209 pages unpublished manuscript from 2002 entitled "Bahá'í Education: A Conceptual Perspective." This text is anticipated to a large extent by a lengthy article available online: "An Integrative Approach to Knowledge and Action: A Bahá'í Perspective" *Converging Realities. A Journal of Art, Science and Religion*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2000, https://bahai-library.com/sabet_integrative_approach

Like before, I will attempt to examine in brief the model for theory-building being employed, its theoretical sources, and the applications at the level of the curriculum that have resulted from this theory.

The theory put forward is too complex to analyze here (maybe in another Wilmette session with the author?). This unpublished manuscript is very rich territory which is why it is my hope that a Bahá'í publisher will take a look at this manuscript.

Nevertheless, I will attempt to schematically describe the model for theory-building which Sabet employed to construct his theory. This discussion must by necessity start with Sabet's model of the stages of scholarship through which religions unfold into a world civilization. The following is an excerpt from Sabet's unpublished manuscript (as also is the following diagram):

Stages of the Historical Development of
Education and Scholarship

Scientific, Theological, and
Philosophical Knowledge of
Surrounding Environment

Immediate Cultural
Environment

Nucleus of New Knowledge

(1)

Lines of
Communication
Open

(2)

New Knowledge
Finds a Paradigm
Status

(3)

"1- The first stage is the stage in which a new model for education and scholarship is inherent as a potential force in the teachings of religion. During this time, dialogue between the new religion and all other sciences, arts, and philosophies is significantly limited. The essential subject matters of education at this stage are the teachings of the religion; the scriptures and the assorted key writings [are] with no connection to the existing contemporary disciplines of the arts; and sciences [are] external to the religion. The isolation of the emerging religion from any external influence is so complete as to include physical separation, the place of education often not being distinguished from the place of worship.

2- Gradually, this relationship changes, and the new Revelation enters into a dialogue with the outside world and other branches of knowledge and philosophy. The content of education at this stage contains new subjects and conveys broader understanding that is enhanced by intercultural communication and translated works.

3- At the third stage, the religion becomes conceptually and numerically significant and capable of bringing in the outside world, reinterpreting it, and becoming the foundation for a new system of knowledge. In the third stage, once the new religion and its ideas have been conceptually solidified, there is a gradual influx of new ways of thinking, and new ideas and cultures into the educational system, though this interpenetration still has as its foundation the religion and its teachings. In Islam, for instance, the first stage of education was primarily focused on the study of the Qur'án. The second stage however involved an integration of traditional modes of thought with those of the new Dispensation and a separation of the place of worship *(masjid)* and school *(madrasa)*. The third stage witnessed an integration of Islamic worldview with great philosophical and scientific schools of thought that resulted in the creation of a progressive society that surpassed Western culture by every standard of civilization. In Christian history attempts by philosophers such as St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas to incorporate the message of Christianity with Greek philosophy opened new eras of integration and synthesis in the evolution of Western culture." pp.107-108

It could be said, therefore, that the Bahá'í community is now initializing the transition from the first stage to the second stage; that is, opening lines of communication with the academic disciplines, fields of practice, and with the other religions, a process from which advancement in the arena of public discourses and in the field of social action and social transformation could be expected to also proceed.

But Sabet's theoretical model builds on this in more specific ways by making a new suggestion. **The new model of knowledge or civilization, Sabet seems to maintain, is not only contained in the nucleus of the Bahá'í revelation, but is also actively crystallizing in the scientific, theological and philosophical knowledge of the surrounding environment.** In this sense, religion needs science to understand itself because advancing in knowledge requires drawing on both the spiritual and scientific traditions of humanity at the same time (and that is what the principle of the harmony of science and religion would seem to suggest).

So we have two active processes occurring simultaneously:

Process 1. attempting to understand the nucleus of the Bahá'í revelation and expand it into a new model of knowledge,
Process 2. the constant crystallization of a new model of knowledge in the surrounding scientific, theological and philosophical environment

"Both the spiritual and scientific bodies of knowledge are changing, progressive and dynamic."110 This being the case, Sabet suggests that both processes should become linked up in their common quest for a new model of knowledge and civilization.
This new model of knowledge, of course, should be a "a new paradigm of knowledge" "derived from the union of two evolutionary sources: the spiritual and scientific traditions of humanity". (p.108)

But how do you link up two such active or evolutionary processes? And the answer Sabet gives is that you need a process specifically designed for this task, and he calls this **an integrative approach to education and scholarship** (an approach that, he points out, already has a long history).

Now, Sabet has a particular view of this integrative approach. **To start with, he believes that the nucleus of Revelation itself (not some concepts, or some thematic area) should be placed in direct and constant feedback with the the core of knowledge across the academic disciplines.**

For religions, he also observes, it is dangerous to delay this process. Once the nucleus of Revelation, or rather the new ideas derived from it, have gained enough strength during the period of incubation, it is essential that opening channels of communication with the surrounding philosophical and scientific knowledge is not delayed. Why? Because too much of a delay can lead to dead and inert ideas and even to a rigid dogmatism.

But how do you prepare the nucleus of Revelation which has not yet constituted into a comprehensive philosophy to interact with the already developed core of knowledge (whatever its limitations and flaws) in the surrounding scientific and cultural environment? And how do you identify what the core of knowledge across the academic disciplines is? The answer that Sabet gives to both is that we should develop an integrative model that would foster "the dialogue between science and religion and between the natural sciences and the social sciences" (p.109).

And Sabet proceeds to do just that in four steps (this is my interpretation):

To very much simplify his thought let us say that Sabet introduces four ideas for developing an integrative model of scholarship and education.

1. **The first step is that of proposing a set of incipient philosophical considerations regarding the key concepts and propositions that could organize the internal domain of a religion (in this case, the Bahá'i Faith) into the philosophical framework of a knowledge system**. This is the internal dimension of this integrative model of scholarship, or integrative process.

This is very much the Bahá'i Faith looking at itself inwardly, or studying itself, – but in light of two principles: a) that analysis should reveal a dynamic interaction between the teachings of the Bahá'i Faith and b) that the goal should be to "enable the learner to see a reflection of the whole message of Bahá'u'lláh in every part of His teachings" (p.113). **As Sabet summarizes it, "this internal dimension is about the development of a synthesis of ideas within the universe of the Bahá'i teachings" (pp.110-111).** Here Sabet proposes 8 initial propositions that could lead to the development of such a conceptual framework.
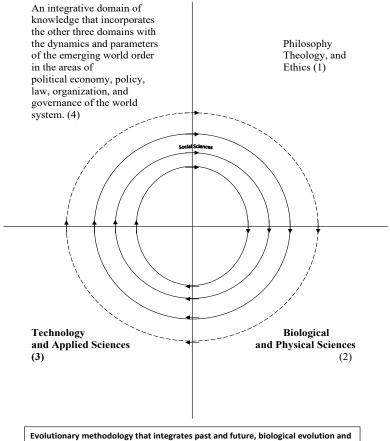
2. The second step requires preparation for interaction with the knowledge of the outside world. There are several issues here. First, how do you understand the core of knowledge of the outside world? How do you understand the outside world? Related to this, how do you develop an integrative study both of yourself (how do you initialize an integrative study of the Bahá'í Faith itself) and of the outside world? What are the integrative mechanisms that allow for "the articulation of a systematic relationship between the teachings of the Bahá'i Faith and a multidisciplinary core of knowledge and practice in philosophical and scientific domains"? (p.111) This is called the external dimension of the integrative process. Here, the focus is on the emergence of a new paradigm of knowledge that embraces both the spiritual and scientific traditions of humanity. **Are we able to discern ways to recognize the crystallizing features of such a paradigm, and to anticipate and work towards its emergence?** Here, again Sabet proposes a number of themes I also cannot discuss here.

Of course, Sabet also states that there should be consistency between the internal and external dimension of this integrative process; they should be interrelated and interchangeable.

3. Third, Sabet advances this discussion by proposing specific subject areas for an integrative curriculum that correlate the teachings of the Bahá'i Faith with the scientific and philosophical traditions of our times. This constitutes a sort of initial syllabus for integrative studies (very interesting!), but again there is no time to share this here.

4. Fourth, Sabet brings all these ideas to fruition by proposing an adaptive integrative curriculum that could explore the emergence of "a new paradigm of knowledge" based on the union of "the spiritual and scientific traditions of humanity". This model of a curriculum "is an attempt to develop an integrative approach to the organization of knowledge in which discoveries in the physical and biological sciences are incorporated with spiritual and ethical considerations in a developmental pattern that culminates in an ever-advancing social system." p.159

This curriculum has been briefly described in the Routledge Education chapter. I remind you here of the diagram.

Sabet's model (2002: 158) introduced four sequential clusters of knowledge. The first was concerned with the refinement of values, the second with generating facts. Together, they constituted the theoretical foundations from which first technological and then practical societal applications could emerge in the last two clusters.

An integrative domain of knowledge that incorporates the other three domains with the dynamics and parameters of the emerging world order in the areas of political economy, policy, law, organization, and governance of the world system. (4)

Philosophy Theology, and Ethics (1)

Social Sciences

Technology and Applied Sciences (3)

Biological and Physical Sciences (2)

Evolutionary methodology that integrates past and future, biological evolution and social history, whole and parts.

Based on this structure, a liberal arts integrative curriculum was created between 1997 and 2003 at Landegg International University that allowed undergraduates to study most of the main academic disciplines in the first two years before choosing their specialization. (There was also a Master of Arts programme but I do not have time to describe it here)

The first two years were a combination between general studies (general education) and a few courses in the traditional core areas such as "The Theory of Knowledge", "The Fundamentals of Ethics" or "The Philosophy of History". In these first two years, the average UG student would have studied subjects as diverse as: Physics, Mathematics, Philosophy, Biology, Psychology, Politics, Sociology, Economics, Public Health, the UN system, Law, Religion, Ethics, Public Health, Film Studies etc.

In the last two years the UG students would then specialize in one of the following four areas:

Bachelor of Arts (BA) programs:
- Economics and International Development
- Political Sciences and International Relations
- Psychology, Education, and Human Development
- Integrative Study of Religion

Throughout their period of study, the students would also attend an Integrative Seminar dedicated to the topic of interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, and explorations in the direction of developing an integrative paradigm. This module was run according to a sequence of 3 weeks of study followed by one week of seminar (for free discussion).

This curriculum was especially designed to alleviate the effect that the fragmentary curriculum at high–school level tended to have on students in terms of making them believe they could only be good at one or several subjects (and that they were miserable at the others). It also tried to create a more unified identity, by bringing knowledge from different domains into a more coherent view on reality.

BIHE Core Curriculum

Starting in 2006, Sabet redeveloped and incorporated the same model into the integrative Core Curriculum program currently in use at the Bahá'í Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) in Iran. Here, an attempt was made to integrate the Bahá'í worldview with the study of arts and sciences. The two were brought together into one institution seeking to contextualize and apply the Bahá'í teachings in the general curriculum of scientific disciplines. This change was achieved through the design of a core curriculum comprised of

a) general courses (English, Persian Language, Basic Math, Basic Science) and
b) interdisciplinary core courses in the liberal-arts tradition inspired by Bahá'í ideas (The History and Philosophy of Science, the History of Ethics, the Appreciation of Arts and Beauty, General Course in Epistemology, General Course in World History, and a Great Books course drawing on critical texts from the domains of literature, history, religion, and civilization).

Since its inception, the Core Curriculum program has undergone several changes and the title and content of the courses have been revised. The Core Curriculum filled the void in specialized courses (engineering, chemistry, math, biology, business, pharmacy, law, architecture, sociology, psychology, and the like) with meanings and values.

It was considered as a preliminary and transitional step and an experiment for the gradual development of a Bahá'í-based curriculum for higher education. It was assumed that the Core Curriculum program was the safest and the most organically oriented stepping stone toward the creation of a general curriculum based on the harmony of science and religion. This way, it was thought, the scientific boundaries of disciplines would be preserved, and the domain of values and meanings would not be superimposed as an ideology on the curriculum. (from "Education in Pedagogy and Practice" Ch. Routledge)

Few Theoretical Sources for the the Integrative Approach
of Dr. Behrooz Sabet

1. Whitehead, Alfred N. - *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* 1929
   - *Modes of Thought 1938; Adventure of Ideas 1933*
   - *The Aims of Education: And Other Essays.* 1929.(and others)
2. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin - The Phenomenon on Man 1959; The Future of Man 1964
3. Pitrim Sorokin – Social and Cultural Dynamics 1963; The Reconstruction of Humanity 1948; The Crisis of our Age 1945; Values in Human History 1972; Society, Culture and Personality: Their Structure and Dynamics 1962
4. Arnold Toynbee – A Study of History (1934-1961):
   Vol I: Introduction; The Geneses of Civilizations
   Vol II: The Geneses of Civilizations
   Vol III: The Growths of Civilizations
   Vol IV: The Breakdowns of Civilizations
   Vol V: The Disintegrations of Civilizations
   Vol VI: The Disintegrations of Civilizations
   Vol VII: Universal States; Universal Churches
   Vol VIII: Heroic Ages; Contacts between Civilizations in Space
   Vol IX: Contacts between Civilizations in Time; Law and Freedom in History; The Prospects of the Western Civilization
   Vol X: The Inspirations of Historians; A Note on Chronology
   Vol XII: Reconsiderations
            - An Historian's Approach to Religion (1956)
5. Ian Barbour – When science meets religion (2000); Religion and science: historical and contemporary issues. (1997)
6. Daniel Tanner and Laurel Tanner – Curriculum: Theory Into Practice (many editions) – "a complete discussion of needs and problems of developing a conceptual framework for education can be found in this book" (p. 202);
7. James B. Macdonald (his articles on curriculum); 8. Oliver & Gershman. 1989. *Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning: Toward a Process Theory of Teaching and Learning (on cosmologies)*

Thank you!