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MISCONDUCT IN EDUCATION

The definition of education corruption includes both its existence and the perception of its existence. According to Transparency International, for instance, Romania ranks 69 out of 91 countries in terms of corruption perception. Uzbekistan ranks 71 and the Russian Federation ranks 79. The definition of education corruption derives from the more general set of corruption issues. As in other areas, it includes the abuse of authority for material gain. But because education is an important public good, its professional standards include more than just material goods; hence the definition of education corruption includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain.

Why Is It Important for a Nation to Be Free of Education Corruption?

Since the time of Plato, it has generally been understood that a key ingredient in the making of a nation-state is how it chooses its technical, commercial, and political leaders. In general it is agreed that no modern nation can long survive if leaders are chosen on the basis of ascriptive characteristics, that is, the characteristics with which they are born: race, gender, social status. On the other hand it is common for families to try to protect and otherwise advantage their own children and relatives. All parents wish for the success of their own children; every group wishes to see the success of children from their particular group. This is normal.

Schooling provides the mechanism through which these opposing influences can be carefully managed. It is a common instrument employed by nations to "refresh" the sources of its leadership. Economists have tried to estimate the sacrifice in economic growth if there is a serious bias in the selection of leaders. It has been estimated that developing nations could improve their gross national product per capita by 5 percent if they were to base their leadership upon merit rather than on gender or social status. In fact by some estimates, the economic benefit to developing countries of choosing leaders on the basis of merit would be three times more than the benefit accruing from a reduction in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) trade restrictions on imports.

Success in one's schooling is one of the few background characteristics seen as necessary for modern leadership. Although it is possible for leaders to emerge through experience or just good fortune, getting ahead in schooling is seen as essential.

But what if schooling itself is not fair? What if the public comes to believe that the provision of schooling favors one social group? What if the public does not trust the teachers to judge student performance? What would happen if the process of schooling had been corrupted?

The fact is that in a democracy, the public takes a very active interest in the fairness of its education system. If the public does not trust the education system to be fair or effective, more may be sacrificed than economic growth. It might be said that current leaders, whether in commerce, science, or politics, had acquired their positions through privilege rather than achievement. If the school system cannot be trusted, it may detract from a nation's sense of social cohesion, the principal ingredient of all successful modern societies.

The Characteristics of an Education System Free of Corruption

A school system that is free of corruption is characterized by the following:

- Equality of access to educational opportunity
- Fairness in the distribution of educational curricula and materials
- Fairness and transparency in the criteria for selection to higher and more specialized training
- Fairness in accreditation in which all institutions are judged by professional standards equally applied and open to public scrutiny
- Fairness in the acquisition of educational goods and services
- Maintenance of professional standards of conduct by those who administer education institutions and who teach in them, whether public or private

Categories of Educational Corruption

Some refer to corruption as though it were a unitary concept or a problem with a single dimension. It is more complex than many realize. So frequent is corruption in education that it cannot be well understood without first differentiating one type from another.

Corruption in selection. There is no nation in which the proportion of the age cohort attending at the end of the system is as large as it is at the begin-

ning. Educational opportunity is shaped not like a rectangle, but like a pyramid. If one defines *elite* as meaning only those who are able to enter, then all nations have education systems that have elite characteristics. Therefore, the question is not whether a system selects a few to proceed, because all nations must select. Rather, the question is how that selection is made.

Educators sometimes argue that certain kinds of selection tests and techniques are "better" than others. For instance, some might argue that essay questions or oral examinations are better than multiple-choice questions. This kind of discussion, when divorced from context, is spurious.

Three principles help determine the choice of appropriate selection techniques: (1) available resources, (2) logistical challenges, and (3) the level of public accountability. Maintaining the same standard of reliability, cost differences in grading an essay versus a multiple-choice question can be as much as 10:1. Moreover, as test-taking populations expand, the differences in costs expand as well. The cost difference between grading an oral and a multiple-choice exam may be 10:1 if the number of test takers is 1,000. But if the number of test takers is 1 million, the cost difference may be 100:1.

The appropriate system in Sweden might be to have each teacher individually design and grade selection examinations. But with about 1 percent of Sweden's education resources, about 100 times the number of university applicants, and a extensive geographical challenge, the appropriate system in China must be more standardized and machine gradable.

A key difference among nations is not the kind of test used, but whether whatever technique is chosen can be corrupted. How selection is managed is deeply important for maintaining the equality of education opportunity. Since World War II the technology of administering examinations has changed radically in OECD countries, but in many parts of the former Soviet Union, and other parts of the world, the technologies have not kept pace. Often, each faculty within each higher education institution administers examinations independently. Many examinations are delivered orally. And many can be taken only at the university where they are designed. This system of selection is unfair, inefficient, and low quality. It is *unfair* because examinations have to be taken where they are designed, meaning that those who cannot easily travel have less opportunity. The effect of this is to limit access to higher education to students who can afford to travel. It is *inefficient* because students must take a new examination for each institution to which they apply, and given that they cannot do this at a single sitting, they must wait for a new test-taking occasion. This may delay their entry by a year or more. It is of *low quality* because questions are designed by faculty who are isolated from modern labor markets. They use skills that are out of date, and they design tests whose administration cannot be standardized. But the key issue is corruption.

Tests that are centrally scored can still be corrupted by leaks. In some parts of South Asia, questions are privately sold to high-paying candidates before the test is administered. Being more subjective and administered in private, oral examinations are even more open to corruption. As faculty salaries decline in value, and higher education institutions require alternative sources of income, bribery surrounding the admissions process can become a matter of routine. Candidates may even know how much a "pass" will cost and be expected to bring the cash ahead of time. This may be the case, for instance, in the Russian Federation.

Consequences of a corrupt selection system. The process of academic selection is the linchpin of any education system and of overall national cohesion. It represents the essence of the public good. If the system is corrupt or widely believed to be corrupt, little else in the education system can be successful. Inattention to corruption in selection places all other aspects of a nation's economic and social ambitions at risk.

How to avoid corruption in selection. Designing selection examinations is technically complex. It requires a high degree of professionalism, modern equipment, and staff with scarce technical skills who are able to garner high salaries in the private sector. Unless they are in very wealthy countries, few government ministries are able to perform selection functions well. The alternative is to create an autonomous agency, staffed with internationally recognized experts and guided by public education standards and policies, but financed by modest examination fees.

Corruption in accreditation. The way in which institutions of higher education are publicly "recognized" is through a system of accreditation. When

all institutions were state owned and administered, the system was managed within the central ministries. In the 1990s two things happened that corrupted many systems of accreditation. First, because of the openness to new economic systems and new labor markets, higher education institutions responded with the introduction of a number of new degree programs. All of them need to be recognized. Second, the number of private institutions blossomed, with many of these claiming to be as high in quality as the older, more established public institutions.

Both of these tendencies are positive and should be encouraged. The problem is not that there is private education. The problem is that the system of accreditation has not sufficiently changed in response to the new programs and institutions. In many instances accreditation committees remain in the hands of rectors of public institutions who may have an interest in preventing competition.

The higher education system of accreditation is often corrupt because the connection between higher education and the system of "licensing" or "certifying" professionals has not been reformed. (A license allows a person to practice a given profession, such as medicine; certification allows a person to practice a specific specialization, such as surgery.) Whenever higher education institutions are associated with licensure and/or certification, the stakes for accreditation are high. The price for accreditation on the corrupted market is therefore high as well.

Institutions that seek recognition of new programs, or private institutions that seek institutional recognition, often have to pay a bribe. This places the nation at risk because an institution of low quality may be licensing individuals who may not be of sufficient professional standard. There are many instances of corrupted accreditation leading to poor medical schools, law schools, and programs of business and accounting. On the other hand, the correct response should not be to confine a nation to only old programs and traditional institutions. All nations need innovation in higher education in response to social and labor market challenges.

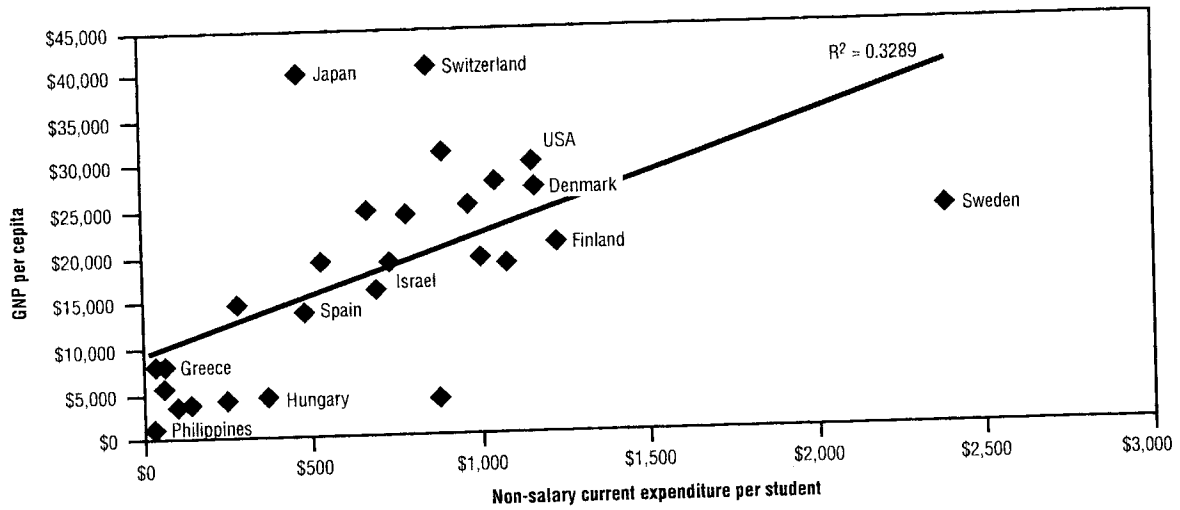
How to avoid corruption in accreditation. How can a nation encourage educational innovation and, at the same time, protect itself from poor quality higher education programs? The answer is twofold. First, the process of accreditation must be liberalized. It should be simple and inexpensive for a new program and for new institutions to operate. Control over quality should not be made at the stage of accreditation. In nations that have a wide variety among accredited institutions, the function of accrediting changes. Instead of creating institutions of identical quality, it creates institutions with identical transparency in public accounting of their purposes, staffing, and results. The public is then free to choose a wide range of educational quality at different prices.

Second, the process by which individuals leave higher education and apply to practice or be certified in their professions should be separated from the higher education institutions themselves. No matter how excellent, no university should provide a license to practice medicine. In many parts of the world, such as the United States, where significant portions of higher education is in private hands, the process of licensing and certification is separate from universities. A law degree from the University of Chicago or Yale will not permit someone to practice law. For that they, and all others, must sit for the external examination. It is the law examination that weeds out potentially low quality lawyers, not the law schools. This lowers the risk of bribery in the process of accreditation. The license to practice medicine should be governed by a board of medical examiners that manages a system of testing to which all medical applicants must pass. Similar systems must be established for law, accounting, and other fields. Key to this new system is to allow many new higher education institutions to compete with one another. This will allow both low- and high-quality institutions to operate freely and at different prices. Having a variety of quality allows some low-quality institutions to attract new students, to innovate, and to improve. Open competition may allow some institutions of high quality to slip in status and competitiveness. At the same time as this variation in quality occurs, the public is protected from malpractice by the rigor of the licensing and certification examinations. And because accreditation is no longer associated with a license to practice, the process of accreditation can be more liberal. Furthermore, having a more open system of accreditation takes the pressure off it. The effect of this will be to eliminate graft and corruption in the process of accreditation.

Corruption in supplies. It is rarely recognized that, in fact, education is a big "business." In North America, the education and training sector accounts for 10 percent of gross domestic product. Education

FIGURE 1

As economies grow, more is spent on goods and services per student



SOURCE: Courtesy of author.

and training is the economy's largest sector after health care, and the fastest in growth. In considering only compulsory education for a moment, expenditures can be divided first into capital and recurrent categories, then into salary and nonsalary categories. In terms of nonsalary expenditures there is wide variation from one country to another, with Sweden spending about U.S. $2,394 per pupil and India spending less than U.S. $1.00 per pupil. Nevertheless, as countries develop economically, more resources are allocated to support educational quality (see Figure 1).

This process of development raises the size of the education markets around the world, particularly in countries with healthy rates of economic growth. Across the world, public education expenditures doubled between 1980 and 1994. In North America they grew by 103 percent; in Western Europe by 135 percent. But in East Asia and the Pacific, they grew by more than 200 percent during the same period (see Table 1).

First it might be noted that corruption in school supplies can be found in countries at all levels of economic development, from Kenya and Uganda to the United States and other more well-endowed nations. To understand the problem of corruption in educational supplies, one must divide the supply process into three distinct parts: (1) design (such as with pedagogical materials and textbooks), (2) manufacturing (printing), and (3) distribution. The source of problem may be different with each category.

The corruption of the design process usually occurs when a public agency, such as a ministry of education, contracts for designs (such as the writing of textbooks) among a short list of privileged authors or providers. Sometimes these authors or companies provide educational officials with a gift or bribe for the privilege of designing educational materials. If an author receives a proportion of the sales, the level of illegal earnings can be significant. In terms of book sales in North America, for instance, two-thirds of publishing profits come from educational publishing. Hence, the receipt of contracts for textbook design can bring an automatic benefit to the authors.

In the manufacturing process, the hazard of corruption is similar. Benefits will accrue to the firms that are given contracts for printing or making the materials, and because of the guaranteed nature of educational sales, the profits are often high.

Most corruption in school supplies stems from the use of "protection." Protection is a well-known notion in other fields, such as the manufacturing of automobiles, furniture, glass, and steel. If a country sets up trade barriers targeting imports, these barriers have an economic cost. Governments may be-

TABLE 1

Large growth of education expenditures per region

Continents, major areas, and groups of countries	Public expenditures on education per inhabitant (in dollars)				Percent change 1980–1994
	1980	1985	1990	1994	
World total	126	124	202	252	100
Africa (North and Sub-Saharan Africa)	48	40	41	41	-15
America	307	375	521	623	103
Asia	37	39	66	93	151
Europe	418	340	741	982	135
Oceania	467	439	715	878	88
Industrializing countries	31	28	40	48	55
Sub-Saharan Africa	41	26	29	32	-22
Arab States	109	122	110	110	1
Latin America and the Caribbean	93	70	102	153	65
East Asia and the Pacific	12	14	20	36	200
South Asia	13	14	30	14	1
Poorest countries	9	7	9	9	0
Industrialized countries	487	520	914	1,211	149

SOURCE: Based on data from *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook*, 1998.

lieve that the costs are worth it and that protection is justified on the basis of five common arguments:

- National interest, image, and pride. To appear strong, some believe it necessary to "protect oneself" from foreign products. This argument is very common in education. All nations believe they have the right to educate their citizens in the way they choose. What may not be well understood is that to do this well, curriculum, supplies, and materials need not be a public sector monopoly.
- Safeguard of local jobs. This is rarely made in education by comparison, say, to textiles, but it can be used when other arguments appear weak.
- Grace period for "infant industries." This refers to the argument that a new business is likely to be more vulnerable to competition than a more mature business. Sometimes those responsible for a new business may argue for tariff protection against foreign competition on grounds that they are inexperienced and that the protection is needed for a "short period of time," until they are more prepared for the competition. This interim period is known as the grace period and the new industry is referred to as an "infant industry." This is commonly heard with respect to local textbook publishers and providers of tests and standardized examinations.
- Saving foreign exchange. This is an argument typical of very low-income countries with artificial restrictions on foreign exchange. The problem with this argument is that the cost in local exchange may be considerably higher than an imported product.
- Unavailable supply from nongovernment sources. In education this is the most common argument heard, particularly with respect to textbooks. This argument is common in countries where the language of instruction is local. It is argued that because no local suppliers exist, the government must therefore manufacture the nation's textbooks. The argument rests on the assumption that the "supply response" would be near zero if open competitive bidding were allowed—that, in essence, there would be market failure. In many instances this assumption rests on the experience of there being no fair or open competition in the past. It also must be remembered that, given market principles, international suppliers—such as Oxford University Press, Microsoft, and World Book Encyclopedia—are usually quite happy to produce the products in whatever language is required and are also quite prepared to lease copyrighted materials to local publishers and manufacturers.

How to avoid corruption in supplies. Corruption risk can be minimized by following three distinct steps. First is to treat the educational procurement process in the same way as the procurement of all other goods and services. Educational supplies should not be singled out as distinct in any way. This first step will bring the procurement

process in education in line with the procurement process in other areas, such as pharmaceuticals for the health care system, office supplies, and vehicles. Second is to establish bidding procedures in which there are no hidden "wires." Specifications should not be written that would in any way benefit a single group of manufacturers. Third is to open up the bidding process in parallel with the new guidelines on education services circulated by the World Trade Organization.

Strong resistance to open and competitive bidding often emerges from the education community. It might be noted that protection in educational manufacturing—whether software or computer hardware, furniture, textbooks, or even testing items—has the same cost as protection of any industrial product. It raises the real price, it constrains the quality, and it lowers the effectiveness. Most industrialized nations have come to realize that the natural public responsibility for education is to establish the curriculum principles and objectives of education. It is then a public responsibility to establish professional specification for the delivery of products and services to meet important national goals. The rest should be in the hands of private entities, competing against one another. The more limited the role of the government in the manufacturing process, the lower the chance for corruption in the process of educational supply.

Professional misconduct. Because education is a public good, education corruption must include an element broader than illicit material gain for personal use; it must include an element of professional misconduct. Misconduct can be found in other professions—the law, architecture, accounting, engineering, and so on. But when misconduct affects children and youth—citizens who are not adults or who are young adults—the implications are more serious and the safeguards must be more stringent.

Elements of professional misconduct in education include:

- Accepting material gifts or rewards in exchange for positive grades or assessments or for selection to specialized programs
- Assigning grades or assessments that are biased by a student's race, culture, social class, ethnicity, or other ascriptive attributes
- Insisting on a student's adoption of the instructor's personal values and philosophy
- Disclosing confidential information regarding a student
- Exploiting, harassing, or discriminating against particular students
- Adopting an inadequate textbook or inferior educational materials because of a manufacturer's gifts or incentives
- Forcing students to purchase materials that are copyrighted by the instructor
- Ignoring the inadequate teaching of colleagues, the unequal treatment of students, or the misconduct of fellow professionals
- Using school property for private commercial purposes

Definitions of faculty misconduct may differ from one country to another. For example, if a faculty member were to assign reading only from his own book, this would be interpreted as misconduct in higher education institutions in the United States but not in all parts of the world. Nevertheless, no nation can long ignore the existence of significant misconduct. In some countries it is common for teachers to accept payment for allowing students to proceed to the next grade. In some countries it is common for teachers to offer after-school tutoring for a price and to suggest that students might fail if they do not pay for after-school tutoring. In some countries, faculty may operate a "private" school in the after-school hours, hence using public property for private gain. In other instances, a school administrator or university rector may rent school property or use it for manufacturing or agricultural commerce and not report the income.

In some instances, the misconduct constitutes a criminal offense. Theft or misuse of public property for personal gain is a crime. With the installation of new tuition and fees, it is common for them to be used for private profit rather than for the benefit of the school or university. In these instances, misconduct needs to be judged by the criminal court system. In other instances, such as a teacher's bias against a certain category of student, the misconduct may be limited to professional ethics. In these cases, strong professional boards with the authority to fine and dismiss should be encouraged. The public needs to feel protected from faculty misconduct, and the effectiveness of the professional review boards may be an essential ingredient in their protection.

Corruption in educational property and taxes. Educational facilities often occupy prime locations in urban areas. These can be rented or leased for both educational and other purposes. Almost all higher

education institutions, and also many institutions in compulsory education, must supplement public with other resources. But how should educational property be considered: as a private or public income? And how should alternative sources of income be taxed, or should they be taxed at all? And if there is reason not to tax educational institutions, or to tax them at a different rate than commercial businesses, should one treat all educational institutions the same? Should income to public education institutions from nontraditional sources be taxed the same as nontraditional income in private educational institutions? Should equity-owned private educational institutions (which share profits among the owners) be treated the same as a nonprofit institution, which reinvests all profits back into the institution?

One reason why corruption is so common in education is because the answers to these questions have never been adequately sorted out. From the time that government ministries "owned" all property in the Soviet Union to the present, it has never been quite clear which portion of government had ownership of educational property. Take the illustration of a local vocational school: Would it be owned by the enterprise on whose land it might sit? By the local municipality? By the region? By the national sector ministry? Take a technical university, previously under the ministry of industry: Does the land still belong to that ministry? Does land at all higher education institutions now belong to the ministry of education? Does it belong to the local municipality? Does it belong to the rectors council? Or would different authorities "own" different elements? Would the state-owned enterprise own the equipment, the ministry of education own the building, and the local municipality own the land?

How to avoid corruption in property and taxes. In the area of educational property and taxes, the single most important factor in reducing the risk of corruption is to clarify the situation of the land and the tax obligations. Recommendations include the following:

- Higher education land should belong to the board of trust of the higher education institutions themselves. This board of trust may be government appointed and would guide the long-term institutional interests.
- Profit-making educational institutions that are equity-owned should pay the same taxes as all commercial businesses.
- As long as they are not commercial (i.e., equity owned), neither public nor private educational institutions should pay tax on income.
- Information about gifts from individuals and from corporations should be made public, and such tax should be tax deductible.

What Can Be Done about Educational Corruption?

In some respect, solving the problem of educational corruption is not significantly different from solving the problem of corruption in other sectors. Such behaviors as misappropriation of public property or bribery in conjunction with public procurement—whether in education, housing, or some other area—are governed by similar rules and regulations. If the rules and regulations fail to deter the corruption in these other sectors, they will be similarly ineffective in education.

On the other hand, there are certain preventive measures specific to education corruption. These fall into four categories: (1) structural reforms necessary to reduce the opportunity for corruption, (2) improvements in adjudication and management to help anticipate questions of definition and interpretation, (3) measures necessary to actually prevent corruption practice, and (4) sanctions required to demote or punish when infractions do occur (see Table 2).

Summary

It has not been common to focus attention on corruption in education. There were many other pressing problems in business, banking, the judicial and legal system, manufacturing, and agriculture. In the early twenty-first century, however, such a focus may be necessary. Collapsing public expenditures have driven all institutions to generate their own resources, for which there is no precedent, and no regulatory structure is in place to give them guidance. One thing is abundantly clear: Whenever rules and regulations are confusing, one must expect a high level of corruption.

The burgeoning profit-making and not-for-profit enterprises within private education, and the entrance of public institutions into private education, have blurred the lines between what is public and what is private. Few within the public may understand what is in the private interest and should be taxed, or what is in the public interest and should

TABLE 2

Deterring education corruption

Structure Reform	Adjudication and Management	Prevention	Sanction
Autonomous examination agency	Professional boards	Blue-ribbon committee evaluations	Clear penalties for economic and professional corruption
Autonomous accreditation agency	Boards of trustees for each higher education institution	Annual reports on educational corruption	
Licensing and certification process separated from higher education	School boards		
Land ownership by educational institution			
Tax differentiation between profit-making and noncommercial education institutions			
Income generated by nonprofit educational institutions not subject to taxation			

SOURCE: Courtesy of author.

not be taxed. Confusion reigns over issues of educational property. Who actually owns these institutions? And without clear ownership of its land, no higher education institution can successfully approach the private capital markets for a development loan. In essence, no higher education institution can invest in its future until the principles of land ownership are sorted out.

Because of the lack of modern methods and technologies, the systems for selecting entrants into higher education are riddled with bribery. Because the structures are outdated, corruption is common in the accreditation process, the licensing process, and the certification process. Textbooks and supplies often remain under monopolies of the state; foreign suppliers are often prohibited from participating in the bidding process; and designers are chosen on the basis of unprofessional specification and through personal connections. Because of these corruptions and distortions, the education received by young people suffers in quality and in efficiency.

Lastly, because of the inadequate instruments of management and sanctions, professional misconduct is common. It is common for teachers to misuse their professional positions, to accept favors for normal services, and to accept bribes for looking with favor on certain students. And it is common for tuition and fees to be used for private profit.

These practices would be serious no matter what sector they occurred in. But the fact that they occur with frequency in education poses a particular problem. This is because education is the linchpin of a nation's social cohesion, and once the public comes to believe that the education system is corrupt, they will also believe that the future of their nation has been unfairly determined against them and their interests. If this occurs, a nation will not be able to establish a partnership with other democracies.

See also: ETHICS; HIGHER EDUCATION, INTERNATIONAL ISSUES; INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION; INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN EDUCATION PROGRAMS, GOODS, AND SERVICES.

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MISSISSIPPI FREEDOM SCHOOLS

The Mississippi freedom schools were an important project of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) designed to promote freedom, self-determination, and participatory activism aimed at African-American youth in the improvement of local communities and state organizations.

Project Planning

In November 1963 the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) and the SNCC conceived a major civil rights incursion into Mississippi during the summer of 1964. This incursion, spearheaded largely by SNCC and officially known as the Mississippi Summer Project, would promote African-American equality and basic democratic rights through a number of social action projects. One of those projects was the creation of a summer school program aimed at high school–age African-American students, providing them with a richer school experience than they were able to have in their own schools and, it was hoped, committing these students to become a force for social change in Mississippi. This educational endeavor became known as the Mississippi freedom schools.

Charles Cobb, field secretary for SNCC, proposed the idea of freedom schools as a war against academic poverty. He claimed the Mississippi school system and the African-American schools were meant to "squash intellectual curiosity." Cobb wanted young African-American students to have an education related directly to the everyday experiences and problems of these students. Freedom schools would "offer young black Mississippians an education that public schools would not supply, one that both provided intellectual stimulation and linked learning to participation in the movement to transform the South's segregated society" (Chilcoat and Ligon 1994, p. 132).

Implementation

To effect the idea of freedom schools, a curriculum conference was held in New York in March 1964. Approximately fifty people with varied backgrounds in education and civil rights work attended the conference. The major focus of the conference and the core of the freedom school curriculum was the formulating of a civic curriculum. The civic curriculum was to be composed of: (1) fourteen problem-solving case studies dealing with the political, economic, and social forces relating to the direct experiences of the students; (2) a *Citizenship Curriculum* facilitating student discussion as a means of achieving a new society; (3) a *Guide to Negro History* providing a comprehensive survey of African-American history; and (4) an emphasis on teachers extrapolating directly from students those personal experiences in which they lived each day in a hostile, repressive, dominantly white society. Also because of the lack of other academic opportunities offered to African-American students in their public schools, the conference included in the freedom schools a reading and writing remediation curriculum, a humanities curriculum emphasizing English, foreign languages, art, and creative writing, and a general science and mathematics curriculum. Coupled with the curriculum, the conference recommended a variety of progressive democratic teaching techniques emphasizing self-discovery and self-expression that were to stimulate the act of questioning.

In June 1964 two one-week orientation meetings were held on the campus of Western College for Women at Oxford, Ohio, for most of the freedom school summer volunteers. The second-week orientation involved the freedom school teachers. The orientation workshops were training courses in pedagogical techniques and in the use of the core civic curriculum developed at the curriculum conference. Upon completing the orientation, the volunteers traveled to their freedom school locations in Mississippi to begin their six-week stay. The original expectation was the creation of twenty schools with a desired student population of 1,000. However, freedom schools became a far greater success than the project had planned, with forty-one schools in twenty communities and 2,165 students.

As the Summer Project ended, it was hoped that freedom schools would continue. Although some of the schools did continue to operate, few could sustain either learning or activism. The schools were never projected as permanent institutions but rather, according to most of the original planners, as a tactic for immediate change. However, for many students and teachers, the freedom schools in the