The use of two didactic tools for dealing with conflicts in the Israeli society

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Literature review

Statement of the problem

- The Israeli society is known for its many conflicts.

- President Rivlin presented these conflicts in his "Tribes Address".

- The religious-secular conflict "is the deepest, widest and most central of the conflicts dividing the Jewish-Israeli people. It applies to individuals, families, communities and the entire country" (Peres & Ben-Raphael, 2006).

- Each group gathers around its political parties, symbols, area of residence and mostly, the education institutes dear to its heart. This is how structured conflict centers are created, feeding the struggle between the different religious categories. (…) The findings do not indicate hope for reconciliation, but for future deepening of the conflicts" (Peres & Ben Raphael, 2006, p.135).

The Educational Goal of the Models

- In an era of uncertainty regarding future careers, students should be taught how **to regulate their own learning**, to look for material, to evaluate it and **make decisions**.

- Many lecturers realize they should provide their students with lifelong learning skills, but still avoid because they feel **it's not part of their expertise** and because **they are afraid of conflicts** in the classroom (Reichman, 2018).

- The two models promote communication and discourse between people with different opinions and ways of life.

- These tools provide students with skills necessary in order to promote efficient discourse. They enhance **civic education** and **democracy** in educational settings.

- Both models allow students to **present their own narr**ative, while **respecting alternate ones.** The models use **moral dilemmas** and **provocative texts** in order to reveal different perceptions, and to find creative solutions for solving real life problems.

- The models use analysis of **conflicting values, dilemmas** and collaborative learning of **antagonistic tex**ts representing different perceptions.
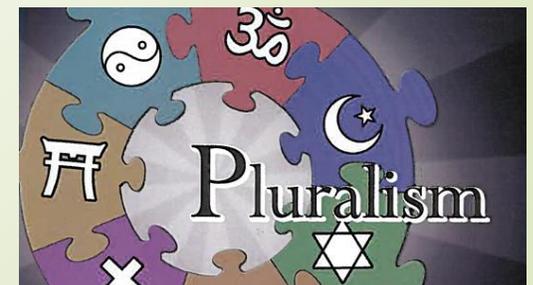
Dilemma Based Model (DBM)
Reichman (2018,2019)

DBM is a six steps model used for teaching conflicting values. It analyses moral dilemmas in a structured way, by using **multi-dimensional thinking**, **reflection** (at each step) and **alternative assessment** techniques (Reichman (2017, 2018).

- Step 1: The teacher reads a vignette that presents a moral dilemma and asks the students to suggest what should the protagonist do (without sharing this with the class).

- Step 2: The teacher divides the class into five groups (a variation on De Bono's Six thinking hats: facts (white hat), advantages (yellow), disadvantages (black), creative ideas (green) and feelings (red). The teacher is in charge of the meta cognition, observing both the content and the process (De Bono's blue hat)

- Step 3: The students look for information. The teacher can help, but they are in charge.

- Step 4: The students share the information with their group and they decide how to present it to the entire class.

- Step 5: Each group presents the other group their results and they discuss based on the new information that was added.

- Step 6: Three fold assessment: self evaluation, peer evaluation (each group evaluates the other groups) and top-down (the teacher's).
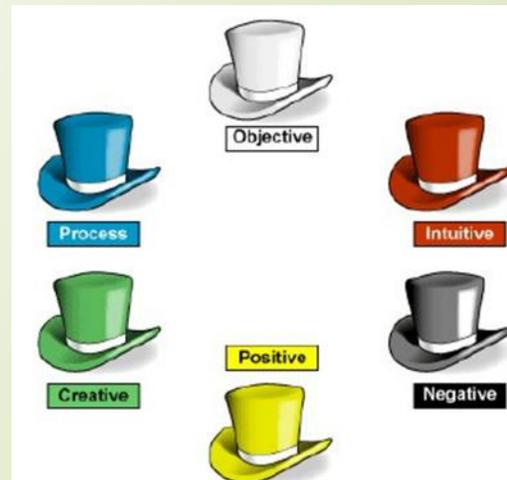
The Imago model
(Tzav Pius)

- Tzav pius focuses on the **Imago model.**

- A text is analyzed in four consecutive steps:
- **Reflection:** Finding the main sentences in the author's words.
- **Confirmation:** Explanation of these sentences in the reader's words.
- **Empathy:** Emotional or rational identification with (part of) the text.
- **Critical reaction:** Critical interpretation of the text.

- Postponing the last step **moderates the dialogue**, since it is supported by **rational arguments**.

- The aim is **to avoid aggressive and impulsive reactions** to disputable texts and **to develop tolerance**.

Research question

- **What are the students' attitudes regarding their experience with interdisciplinary learning using the two models?**

Mixed Methodology

- The students were given an anonymous **questionnaire** that contained **multiple choice questions.**

- The students had to answer **open ended questions** regarding **the course, the model** and **the lecturer.**

Methodology- cont.

The DBM model has been implemented at David Yellin College in the course: **Education towards Morals and Values**.

The lessons were on "**Conflicting Values and Rights in a democratic society**".

In addition, both models were presented in two **workshops for in-service teachers of Civic Education.**

The dilemmas used were related to:

➡ Demonstrations held in front of the house of the Legal Advisor to the Government .

➡ Blocking of Bar-Ilan Street during weekends and holidays.

The DBM model has been implemented at Gordon Academic College in undergraduate and graduate courses (MEd and MTeach) dealing with multiculturalism, immigration and decision making.

Findings regarding DBM

Quantitative findings: Strenghts

- 92%-94% agreed with statements regarding the connection between the course and the **development of civic responsibility**, the **interest in the subject**, the **clarity of the objectives**, the **structure** and **organization**.

- 67% ranked the course as "very good" or "excellent".

- 100% asserted they would recommend this course to other students.

Quantitative findings: Weaknesses

- Only 60% agreed with the statement that **the course was innovative**.

- Only 43.7% agreed that the **course was challenging.**

- 52.9% ranked the course **as fitting intermediate level.**

- 41.2% ranked the course **as easy**.

Qualitative findings regarding DBM

Strenghts: Very positive feedback to the model as well as to its impact in promoting dialogic discourse

- **"It exposes different viewpoints, encourages critical and creative discourse".**
- **"The model allows a view of every alternative's pros and cons".**
- **"I learned to analyze a dilemma using new tools".**
- **"It promotes out-of-the-box thinking and mutual listening".**
- **"It allows an objective examination of dilemmas from multiple viewpoints."**
- **"It provides tools to teach controversial topics".**
- **"All the students actively participate in class".**
- **"The examination of an issue from different angles allows keeping an open mind".**

Weaknesses: Some participants claimed the lessons were very easy and focused only on dilemmas regarding secular-religious relations

- **"The lessons were not challenging enough".**
- **"Dilemmas that are even more complex such as the Jewish-Arab relations should be discussed".**

Findings regarding
The Imago Model

A qualitative and quantitative analysis of the participants' attitudes regarding the **Imago model** was carried out in the "Education towards Morals and Values" course.
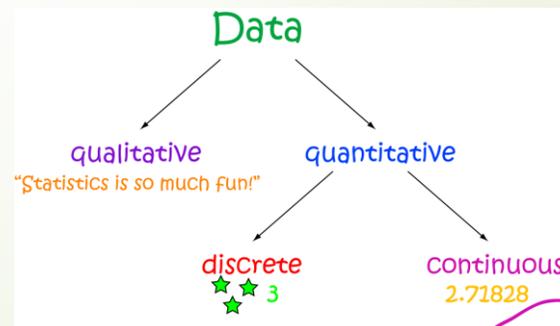
The Imago Model

▶ In all the assertions, excluding those of learning innovative and challenging material, agreement ("Agree" or "Strongly agree") was 90%. "**The course as innovative and challenging**"

▶ Less than two thirds of the respondents agreed with the first one and only 55.6% agreed to the second statement.

Findings regarding the Imago model

Quantitative findings: Strenghts

- 16 of the 18 respondents gave the course a high rank ("very good" or "excellent) . No one ranked it as "bad".

- 66% ranked the course as intermediate. 16.3% ranked it easy

  16.3% ranked it as hard.

- 17 out of the 18 respondents stated that they would recommend it to others.

- 100% of the respondents stressed the **interesting topics** and the **lecturer promoting** active participation.

Quantitative findings: Weaknesses

- Only 55.6% agreed that the course was **challenging**.

- Only 43.7% agreed that the course was innovative.

Qualitative findings regarding the Imago Model

Strengths regarding the model

> "It encourages participation and is interesting"

"The discourse is inclusive and stirs up thinking"

> "The students tend to cooperate"

> "It is relevant"

> "It teaches how to deal with the different

other"

> "The student learns to listen to the other and

to count to ten before addressing dilemmas"

Strengths regarding the ability to change opinions

> "I I listened to my classmates' opinions"

> "I tried to stand in their shoes"

> "I accepted multiple opinions of others"

> "I tried to see things even if I disagree"

> "The course promoted critical thinking"

> "I was happy to hear the opinions of people I am not familiar with".

Discussion and recommendations

- The findings indicate a **very positive reaction to both models**, as well as their **impact** promoting dialogic discourse.

- However, some participants claimed that learning by using these methods **is not challenging enough.**

- These claims can be interpreted in two ways:

- They can be understood **as praise**: the lessons did not seem challenging enough because **the models are easy for comprehension** and application and were explained well. This interpretation is supported by the very positive answers to all the quantitative and qualitative questions.

- An alternative explanation is that **active, collaborative and experiential learning is still perceived as less serious and challenging than the traditional academic tea**ching of a "know all" lecturing professor. This explanation was given also by Reichman (2018), who claimed that change in higher education is difficult, because the traditional students and faculty members have symbiotic expectations: the professors are motivated by their will to share their knowledge and expertise by lecturing, and the students are used to being "fed" by the professors who will give them the "right and accurate" information.

- This traditional approach **should not dissuade professors from attempting to implement change in order to promote the transformation of higher education students**.

Thank you for your attention !

➢ **Questions????**

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