



**THE CHALLENGES OF PARENTHOOD UNDER COVID-
19 PANDEMIC:
THE PROSPECT OF A NEW PARTNERSHIP IN
EDUCATION**

**Mahmoud
Mehrmoammadi**

THE PROBLEMATIC CONTEXT

A new vision of schooling or a new breed of education being developed, may be referred to as "**mixed**" or "**blended**" but with a different tone or meaning. That is, education is going to be defined more and less as a joint responsibility of the institution of school and the institution of home (**Home-Schooling**) where **both are expected to play an equally valid and significant role**. The institution of family will now count more heavily in performing the critical social mission of education.

THE PROBLEMATIC CONTEXT

The shift in the context happened so fast and so unexpectedly that left every parent in a state similar to a **cultural shock**. They were suddenly thrown into a field to perform a variety of tasks that were not prepared for. It posed a real challenge to the perception of parenthood and stretched parental responsibilities to new borders. It sometimes required an **adjustment in the life style** as well as **learning new skills** on the part of parents to handle the educational emergencies.

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

✓ May be the most troublesome and distressing aspect of it all was the **fundamental uncertainties surrounding the outcomes of the new "offsite" version of delivering educational services to students. OR "will it work?"**

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

The concern, on the other hand, truly yet implicitly echoed **the trust public assigned to the social institution named school**, to competently and professionally discharge educational responsibilities in a professional fashion.

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

They feared the **interruption of the role played by this time-honored institution** while the prospect of the alternative mode is utterly unclear. Will cognitive, social, spiritual, emotional and physical development as education's main missions be maintained and secured?

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

✓ To some, a version of **de-schooling** idea was suddenly becoming a reality which **rested on the advancement of digital communication technology** representing a totally problematic axiom.

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

Technology replacing or simulating real educational circumstances is and should indeed be acknowledged as a source of genuine concern. Since education is an intricate and critically sensitive enterprise that cannot be relegated to tools and apparatus no matter how sophisticated and smart they are.

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

I, therefore, share the deep concern and sympathize with parents who view and label the new situation as a first step towards de-schooling. It is a dim prospect.

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

✓ Another bewildering and annoying aspect, concerns about sending their children to school at a time of pandemic... **can this time-honored social institution rise to the occasion and live up to the expectations?**

SPECTRUM OF EXISTENTIAL CONCERNS

Is the learning infra-structures responsive and up to the task? Is my child's well-being and safety ensured in this high-risk situation? Are the staff ready? Are the necessary protection devices in place? Are the school's rules and regulations properly revised to account for new conditions?

THE SPECTRUM OF RESPONSIBILITIES OR INTERVENTIONS AT HOME

- What classification of responsibilities under the emergent mode of remote learning?*
- What are the new dimensions of parental care and sacrifice, which is mostly a product of the emerging conditions undermining conventional schooling?*

THE SPECTRUM OF RESPONSIBILITIES OR INTERVENTIONS AT HOME

A) Home Hidden Curriculum

- to strengthen family bonds
- to engage in dialogue to reach proper decisions collectively with respect to children's rights and responsibilities?
- to have greater impact with respect to religious beliefs and virtues through actions and deed?

THE SPECTRUM OF RESPONSIBILITIES OR INTERVENTIONS AT HOME

B) Moral and Educational

- monitoring student behavior in virtual learning settings such as taking tests and doing homework online while observing the school standards
- being fully present (physical and otherwise) in online classes

THE SPECTRUM OF RESPONSIBILITIES OR INTERVENTIONS AT HOME

B) Moral and Educational

- honoring the deadlines set for learning activities
- refraining from the temptation to act on behalf of the kid when it comes to signing up in class, doing homework, taking tests, etc.

THE SPECTRUM OF RESPONSIBILITIES OR INTERVENTIONS AT HOME

C) Emotional and Mental

- managing the potential dangers of stress, and depression
- managing isolation and to come up with solutions making up for the lost social interaction
- to watch for adding to the pressure by resorting to verbal abuse and physical punishment and, thus, exacerbating the situation

THE SPECTRUM OF RESPONSIBILITIES OR INTERVENTIONS AT HOME

D) Academic and technological

- learning the tricks of virtual learning(**E-learning literate**)
- becoming in effect a TA to fulfill the gaps in learning,

THE SPECTRUM OF RESPONSIBILITIES OR INTERVENTIONS AT HOME

*These may add up to a
sense of helplessness
with debilitating effects*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Undoubtedly **parents need to spend a lot more "time on task"**. Time on task, defined as “time focused on undertaking planned learning tasks”, is not viewed as a pertinent factor or variable with bearing on learning and achievement applicable to students only, as the research on learning suggests. It is also **applicable to parents within this new education scheme.**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is as if the new situation has given birth to a new variable or concept in education and educational research that could be referred to as **Parental Time on Task (PTT)**. The variable calls for more **quality time** spent directly or indirectly on widespread educational issues in concert with plans and activities of the school.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This is while parents as a group naturally exhibit different personalities, different dispositions towards education, different academic qualifications and experiences, different spending capabilities and, in general, **different affordances and possibilities to meet the requirements of parenting with respect to formal education.**

CONCLUDING REMARKS

But it is **utterly safe to assume** that they all want the best to happen for their kids. It is similarly safe to assume that most will invest the time and energy necessary to support the education of their loved ones

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The school is well advised to tap into these assumptions and do whatever is needed to make new scale of parent engagement a reality.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Online workshops where parents' experiences could be shared and also allocated teacher talk with every parent are among the actions recommended. Publishing attractive and informative flyers and brochures addressing problems and possible solutions is another worthwhile mechanism.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

School administrators, in other words, cannot stop at mere advising or preaching parents to exercise resilience in facing the challenges and responsibilities of the new order in education. Practical actions such as the one's mentioned are needed to make this dream come through.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Let's make hope and optimism the name of the game in the new era. The new era could prove to be advantageous to the pre COVID-19 situation if all the players of the game, of which parents are but one, consciously accept their share of obligations.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Their "deep connection" with education could indeed prove to be a blessing in disguise, signaling the ultimate redemption of the most challenging human enterprise called education.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

قال الله سبحانه و تعالى:

عسى ان تكرهوا شيئا و هو خير لكم



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***May peace and blessing of Allah be with those
who faithfully pursue the goal of excellence in
Islamic educational contexts***