


OSU ILLiad TN: 1752603 



Request Date: 20200729

Borrower: IUL

Lender String:

*OSU,MNU,NUI,EEM,UPM,IPL,CGU,UIU,IND,IUP,
UMC,COO,DGW,TLS,VTU

Borrower's ILLiad TN: 2013245

ILL Number: 203780714

Call #: LC1091 .R45 2007

Location: Thompson Library Stacks
8th Floor

Journal Title: Reimagining civic education : how
diverse societies form democratic citizens /

Volume: Issue:

Month/Year: , 2007

Pages: 245-270

Article Author: Levinson, Bradley

Article Title: Forming and implementing a new
secondary civic education program in Mexico.

OCLC Number: 70673192

Notes:

Maxcost: 45.00IFM Exempt

ILLiad Odyssey : 129.79.11.15

Email: libils@indiana.edu

Library:

DDS, Wells Library, E-065
Indiana University Libraries
1320 E. 10th Street
Bloomington, Indiana 47405
United States

Please send resend requests to
liblend@osu.edu or call 614-292-6211.

Notice: This material may be protected by
Copyright Law (Title 17 U.S.C.).

10

Forming and Implementing a New Secondary Civic Education Program in Mexico: Toward a Democratic Citizen without Adjectives

Bradley A. U. Levinson

For at least two decades now, Mexico has been in the throes of a fitful transition from a long history of corrupt authoritarian rule to a more fully democratic regime. Yet changes in civil society have not always kept pace with changes in the formal political-electoral sphere. Like so many other countries currently experiencing democratic transition, Mexico has looked to its school system to undertake the daunting task of cultivating democratic attitudes and dispositions among the new generation. There is both great enthusiasm for this project, and great skepticism that schools can accomplish it.

Civic education in Mexico is back—sort of. After twenty-five years of nearly invisible incorporation into the cross-disciplinary subject of “social studies” in the national secondary school (*secundaria*), civic education in 1999 was reconceived as a separate course of study that might invigorate the entire secondary curriculum. Renamed “Civic and Ethical Formation” (*Formación Cívica y Ética*, or FCE), this new course had been implemented in virtually all secundarias by 2001. A great deal of hope had been invested in this new school subject, which encompassed everything from citizenship

and government studies to “values” and sex education. With its emphasis on student-centered pedagogy and critical thinking, FCE teachers were envisioned as the catalysts of a new educational culture in the schools. Students, meanwhile, had become the new democratic subjects of schooling.

While the reform of civic education began in the mid-1990s, what gave it renewed impetus, and special interest, was its convergence since 2000 with more robust democratic openings in the Mexican political and policy-making process. In that year, long-standing single-party rule effectively ended in Mexico with the election of the opposition candidate, Vicente Fox, and with the achievement of an opposition majority in the bicameral congress. Fox’s party, *Partido de Acción Nacional* (PAN), has made inroads into all major ministries, and he has made significant new appointments within the national education ministry, the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP). While most Mexicans hailed these new developments as important steps on the road to full democracy, many worried that the rightist PAN, historically allied with the Catholic Church, would use its power to erode the strong separation of church and state that had characterized public education since the Revolution ended, in 1921. Because it centrally addressed questions of ethics, morality, and citizenship, the FCE program was feared to be a beachhead from which the PAN might seek to introduce religion back into the schools. Yet most policymakers and curriculum experts in the education ministry remained nonpartisan and, like the vast majority of schoolteachers themselves, strongly upheld the principle of “*laicidad*” (secularism) in schools.

The new course for civic and ethical education in Mexican secondary schools is ambitious, complex, and compulsory. For roughly three hours a week, during all three years of *secundaria*, Mexican students examine a number of social and civic issues. The new program not only covers the traditional themes of civic education (constitution, structure of government, laws, electoral processes, etc.) but also entails a variety of “ethical” considerations, including prevention of drug addiction and gang membership, sex education, multicultural awareness and tolerance, gender relations, and environmental awareness.

During my initial research on the new Mexican program,¹ I spoke with a number of policymakers, scholars, administrators, and teachers. Many were understandably excited about the prospects for the FCE course. They thought it could serve as the axis of a new “democratic” culture in the schools, where teachers and school authorities would come to model a spirit of participation, dialogue, respect, and open inquiry; they hoped it would pave the way for a Mexican democracy “without adjectives.”² Yet many expressed skepticism about whether the reform could meaningfully take hold. Skepticism, as I will discuss further, seemed to turn around two areas of concern: (1) teacher subjectivities,³ teacher training, and teacher

hiring, all mired in older structures of tradition, convenience, economic opportunism, and even union favoritism and corruption, and (2) the cultural and political immaturity of the broader society to sustain whatever democratic habits and attitudes the school manages to develop in students.

In this chapter, I present the main goals and themes of the new Mexican program and highlight some of the challenges that national and local actors have identified for its implementation. I begin with a brief historical review of civic education in the modern Mexican *secundaria*, follow with an account of how the FCE was created, and then turn to a thematic analysis of the new published curriculum and study program. From there I consider what Mexicans themselves have told me about the program, summarizing the challenges that they articulate.

THE VICISSITUDES OF CIVIC AND ETHICAL EDUCATION IN THE MEXICAN SECUNDARIA

Though the public *secundaria* was officially created by law in 1915, it was not until 1923, shortly after the first federal rural primary schools (*primarias*) were brought into being, that the *secundaria* received serious attention. Until that time, Mexico had followed the classical European tradition of combining secondary education with college preparatory studies, thereby emphasizing specialization and encyclopedic knowledge. In 1923, Bernardo Gastéum, Subsecretary of Education, proposed a reorganization of college preparatory studies by clearly distinguishing a phase of secondary education as an extension of the primary school. In this manner, the *secundaria* would still retain some of the subject matter and specialization characteristic of preparatory studies, but it would now continue the "basic" cultural and ideological functions of the *primaria*. Following the liberal imperative to wrest power from the church and assign the task of moral socialization to the state, the *secundaria* would now focus on a formative *education* of the character rather than the instruction of specialized knowledge.⁴

It was not until 1928 and the creation of a separate Office of Secondary Education that the *secundaria* became more explicitly guided by methods and principles appropriate to the "adolescent" life stage (Meneses Morales 1986: 479, 603). Moisés Sáenz, considered by most the founder of the *secundaria*, had studied at Columbia University with John Dewey. Yet while the U.S. junior high school advocated by Dewey had been developed in part to foster individual identity formation and critical thinking, the Mexican *secundaria* emphasized the importance of curtailing selfish individualism and creating a sense of social solidarity. The goal of the *secundaria* was to balance the desire for a curriculum more specialized than the *prima-*

ria—a curriculum that would offer students the chance to explore their vocational options—with the themes of integration and national unity. The goal, in other words, was to accommodate the “individual differences” of the students while still subordinating individual interests to the imperatives of “solidarity,” “cooperation,” and so-called social values (Meneses Morales 1986: 486).

The presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934–1940), the great populist reformer, oversaw a significant growth in secondary enrollments. Now with an avowedly socialist educational program, children of workers were more strongly encouraged to continue their schooling as the *secundaria* turned more “technical,” and the curriculum included more hours devoted to practical, productive activities. It was at this time that “vocational counseling” (*orientación*) first appeared in the *secundaria*. Also at this time, the teaching of history and civics was given new emphasis. In 1932, the curriculum added a course in “civic culture” to the required courses of Spanish, foreign language, mathematics, science (biology, chemistry, and physics), geography, and history for each of the three years. This course added an important critical element to the curriculum, as it focused on political, economic, and legal “problems” in Mexico. By 1937, the course in civic culture had been changed to “socialist information and practice,” and students increasingly learned about class conflict and imperialism as a way of understanding Mexican history. They participated in student government and mutual aid societies to practice cooperative social work. Finally, students made frequent trips to shops and factories in order to gain a fuller appreciation of working-class life.

The short-lived socialist experiment ended abruptly in 1940, as the reins of presidential power swung over to the more conservative Avila Camacho. If the school under Cárdenas had given preference to workers and become the school of struggle, under Camacho’s first education secretary, Véjar Vázquez, it would become the “school of love,” and under his second secretary, Torres Bodet, the school of unity. Official educational discourse thus reinstated the signal importance of “national unity” and reconciliation above class struggle.

The *secundaria* expanded under Camacho at an even greater rate than under Cárdenas. Once again, the uniquely “adolescent” character of the institution was proclaimed, and reformers sought to protect the *secundaria* from the “threat of two contradictory invasions:” the *primaria* and higher education (Meneses Morales 1988: 283). The *secundaria* was to have its own personality, its own agenda. As the Mexican state entered into a period of more comfortable alliance with national and transnational capital, the official discourse of this period constructed the interests of the nation, of subordinated classes, and of capital as convergent; each could win in the

formula for national development, modernization, and the stabilization of a "revolutionary" regime. This formula then provided the basic continuity in policy and practice around the *secundaria* at least until 1974, perhaps even until 1992 (see the later discussion here). In the period from 1950 to 1970, there was a 1,000 percent increase in *secundaria* enrollments, mainly due to the growing participation of female students, who came to form half the student body in most *secundarias* by the late 1970s.

Before 1974, then, civic education had always been present in the *secundaria*, though it was oriented more toward unity and solidarity (of class, of nation) than to the construction of a democratic citizen. In 1974, after a major national reform law and a national conference held in Chetumal, Quintana Roo, there was another significant modification of the *secundaria* curriculum. Among other things, the so-called Chetumal Reforms brought together previously separate subjects (*asignaturas*) into multidisciplinary fields of inquiry, called *áreas*. Thus, for instance, biology, chemistry, and physics came together as "natural sciences," and were given a combined seven hours per week in the national curriculum. For our interests here, history, geography, and civics were combined into "social sciences" and also given seven hours of the weekly study program. Teachers who had previously been more strongly specialized in, and identified with, one of three subjects, now had to cover a broader field of social sciences. The teaching of civics was folded into the new social science curriculum, and not always in a wholly coherent fashion.⁵

From 1992 to 1993, a series of educational "modernization" measures included an important amendment to the constitutional article mandating public education and a new "general law" of education. The amendment now made *secundaria* attendance compulsory, thereby raising the stakes of civic education at that level; the new law stipulated values of critical reflection, democratic participation, and human rights. From 1993 to 1999, the older *asignaturas* returned to all *secundarias* in Mexico, with civics accorded just three hours during the first and second year. A brand new subject, Educational Orientation (*Orientación Educativa*), was added to the third year of studies, along with a three-hour elective course that the states and localities could determine according to their own needs and interests. It was during this time that many social workers, psychologists, and "vocational counselors" made their first regular appearance in classrooms. Previously, such school personnel had been limited to occasional classroom visits to conduct vocational aptitude tests or to lead discussions about sexual development. After 1993, however, many of these personnel became regular classroom instructors, charged with teaching a new subject that combined vocational orientation with elements of self-exploration, sex education, and drug and crime prevention.

●

INFLUENCES AND INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS IN THE CREATION OF THE FCE

The next serious reform of Mexican civic education, which most concerns us here, began in the mid-1990s. During the last PRI presidential administration (1994–2000), the Secretary of Education gave a team the charge to create what would eventually become the FCE. The policy process for the reform of civic education in Mexico received a strong impulse, according to many, from then-president Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000), who had actually served as Secretary of Education during the prior presidential administration, from 1988 to 1994. Zedillo had been the primary architect of the modernization reforms of 1992 and 1993, which among other things enshrined new language in the Federal Education Law that made participatory and “pertinent” education a cornerstone of national development. Such emphases were reiterated in the national Program for Educational Development 1995–2000 under Zedillo’s presidency, which highlighted the goals of achieving educational “equity, quality, and relevance” (*pertinencia*).

There is good evidence that Zedillo was reading and channeling a variety of social concerns that had been brewing for over a decade. Based on my previous fieldwork, my reading of popular and scholarly literatures, and my ongoing trips to Mexico, I have identified at least three powerful societal discourses that formed and expanded throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Each one of these discourses expressed certain understandings of democracy, and each one, I argue, would impact the eventual formation of this new program for citizenship education. Such discourses emerged out of rather different social sectors and movements, but each one articulated a set of existential concerns that cut across broad sectors of Mexican society. Each one also highlighted a different set of “values” that needed to be recovered or constructed.

Finally, if there is one theme that cuts across all the discourses it is the concern with human rights and the creation of a culture of “tolerance.” Fed up with political violence and economic misery, and disgusted by the impunity accorded to most perpetrators, many Mexicans by the 1990s had seized on human rights as a crucial value. The notion of human rights, in turn, was often vitally linked to the attainment of democracy. However, human rights could also become a kind of Rorschach of cultural projection: the place of human rights and the route to achieving a regime respectful of such rights, would vary by discourse and social sector.

One discourse, which I call “lost values” (*valores perdidos*), drew attention to the signs of what many observers call “social disintegration,” such as increased violence, corruption, divorce, and disregard for adult authority. The assumption made by this discourse was that traditional values of

respect, honesty, and obedience had once effectively ordered society, but had since fallen into disuse. There was a strong sense of proper social hierarchy having become challenged and turned upside-down. Most strongly articulated through conservative Catholic organizations such as the national "Parents' Union" (UNPF), the discourse on lost values nevertheless resonated with a much broader public. The often explicit solution proposed by the very same discourse was the recovery of values that had been "lost" in recent years—typically through religious education or other kinds of catechistic instruction, and the reassertion of paternal control.

Another discourse, which I call the active and "critical citizen" (*el ciudadano crítico*), highlighted the importance of creating deeper democratic habits and a political culture that would support a democratic transition over the longer term. Most strongly articulated by a generation of left-leaning Mexican intellectuals and leaders who'd come of age in the political opposition to the PRI-dominated state, the discourse of the "critical citizen" called for a new participatory sensibility among citizens, most of whom were seen as having grown complacent, fatalistic, or too accustomed to state largesse. This form of participation presupposed an ethos of respectful dialogue but also critical questioning, in which existing social hierarchies and received norms would be subject to constant critique. The new citizen would actively consider different social and political options through a critical discursive process, and arrive at independent stances. The discourse of the critical citizen implicitly valued equality over hierarchy—gender equity was often prominently touted as a goal. Although it originated in the more highly schooled sectors of society, this discourse, too, found resonance across broad sectors of society that had been irrevocably changed by experiences of immigration and/or consumption of cultural media such as television, movies, popular music, and the Internet.

The third discourse, which I call "accountability" (*rendición de cuentas*), virtually created a new phrase in Mexican Spanish overnight, since there had been no adequate predecessor to this cultural import. Even more clearly influenced from abroad than the others, the discourse on accountability called for greater transparency in public management and more valid and neutral forms of evaluation in assessing educational "quality." One of the important assumptions of this discourse was that the goals of transparency and quality called for both institutional and personal transformations. On the one hand, new kinds of institutional arrangements, such as the creation of a quasi-independent National Institute for Educational Evaluation, or the implementation of a merit-based assessment of teacher performance, would leverage higher quality and greater public accountability. On the other hand, the discourse called for the cultivation of a new subjectivity which placed responsibility for public outcomes—such as students' learning—on individuals as well as institutions. In this

sense, the new democratic citizen had to learn to become more responsible—that is, accountable—for his or her actions.

The growth of these societal discourses clearly put the need for some kind of citizenship education on the national agenda. Time and time again, people who were involved in some way with the creation of the FCE program alluded to aspects of these societal discourses and the social pressures that accompanied them. Usually the pressures were characterized in rather general terms, with reference to “values,” above all (Latapí 2003). As the main author of the FCE program put it in an interview, for instance, “There was an urgent social demand, expressed in many different venues, that values be taught, that there was a lack of values [in the current generation].” Such social pressures, of course, would have to be channeled and mediated in specific ways through the bureaucracy of the education ministry (SEP), which is relatively impervious to the demands of particular social movements. Indeed, as I highlight here, the final impetus for development of a program like FCE would come from the personal initiative of key actors—the president, the secretary of education, and, perhaps most decisively, the secretary’s wife.

The secretary of education who took over shortly after the beginning of the Zedillo administration, Miguel Limón, is a professor of constitutional law with a long trajectory of civil service. After having served as dean of social sciences at the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City and academic secretary at the National Pedagogical University, Limón went on to serve for a number of years as director of the National Institute for Indigenous Affairs (INI), as subsecretary of the interior (*Gobernación*) for issues of corruption and extortion, and finally as attorney general for environmental protection. This list of positions covers a remarkable range of issues and concerns that were eventually encompassed by the FCE program; indeed, the former secretary himself pointed out that each of these former positions had a strong “ethical” dimension (*contenido ético*), and that he saw his appointment as secretary a grand opportunity to bring this ethical dimension to public education. Yet why did Limón give the development of citizenship education such a high priority among the many pressing educational problems confronting him at the outset of his administration?

On this point, the former secretary revealed the influence of his wife. When I asked him to reflect on how his biography influenced his interest in the FCE program, he started in with a chuckle:

Look, in the first place let me tell you something: I’m married to a teacher, an educator, and she has had a lot of influence on my education as an adult. . . . She has been very important in all of this, she really insisted and persevered with me so I wouldn’t lose sight [of civic and ethical education] beyond all the fog that is created as part of bureaucratic routine. Her insistence was in that sense very, very important.

The Secretary then went on to describe how his wife eventually formed the crucial authorship team for FCE. She became a member of the team and an active contributor to the development of the program.

For her part, the Secretary's wife, Maestra Campillo, placed the highest emphasis on the multiplicity of perspectives and materials that shaped the program. As she traveled with her husband to numerous international meetings during the early part of his tenure, she took advantage of each site to gather materials on civic education. Among the sites she mentioned most prominently were Switzerland (for UNESCO), France (where her husband had studied many years before), Spain, England, the United States, various countries of South America, and, perhaps most intriguingly, Japan. As she put it in response to my question about whether foreign influences had shaped FCE:

I had the advantage that my husband was speaking regularly with the ministers, the policymakers, so the obligatory question on my part was always, "Please, ask them what they're doing in this area [of civic education]." . . . There's no influence from a single place but we are certainly, and necessarily, influenced by the materials that we have read.

Societal discourses, as I have discussed then, created impetus and formed an important backdrop for the work of the FCE team. They provided a critical "problem diagnosis" for policy reform (Sutton and Levinson 2001). Public concerns about values were often expressed through the media or directly to the President's office, and then channeled to Limón. Such discourses also established a set of implicit parameters within which the FCE team would have to conduct its work.

Legitimated by public discourse, supported by the President, and bolstered by the general goals of the Plan for Educational Development 1995–2000, by 1995 Limón felt a clear mandate to begin the reform of civic education to include a stronger component of "values formation" as well as participatory pedagogy. Ordinarily, proposals for curricular reform within the SEP would have been routed through the appropriate content "team" in the General Directorate of Educational Methods and Materials, under the Subsecretary of Basic Education. The Secretary, in consultation with the President, would provide a policy mandate to reform curriculum, and would instruct the Subsecretary to put the reform into motion through the appropriate content team. However, Limón proceeded differently. First, he convened a prominent group of educational researchers to produce a white paper on the topic of citizenship and values education. This group was coordinated by one of the foremost education scholars in modern Mexican history, a man whose principled and pointed criticism had often caused problems for previous PRI administrations. When the white paper

was delivered, the discussion about how to create a program in civic education was really just beginning. The subsecretary for basic education took a less active role in these discussions. In his mind, there were more pressing matters requiring resources and attention, and he also worried about giving teachers too much latitude to teach civic “values.” This is apparently why Limón took the unprecedented step of convening a separate team of advisers to draft the new program in civic education. The team was literally housed in Limón’s private offices and figuratively taken under his wing. His wife would come to form the symbolic heart of the team, and a Harvard-trained educational philosopher was selected to head it up. Then two more members were added—one a classical musician and music professor of broad reputation, another a writer of fiction and social commentary.

This team took the draft white paper produced by the specially convened research team and went about seeking additional input from a variety of organizations and government agencies that had rarely been consulted in the past. Clearly, this was going to be a new, more collaborative process for curriculum and program design. Technical curriculum teams from all the states of the Mexican republic were invited to participate in early discussions, comment on drafts, and propose their own ideas. Then, among the organizations external to the SEP that were invited to submit proposals for content, and to vet the early drafts of the program, were the Catholic Church, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, the National Pedagogical University, the National Youth Institute, the Human Rights Commission of the Federal District, the Ministry of Health, and the Council on Addictions. Particularly important was a burgeoning collaboration with the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE), which had its own parallel program in citizenship education for a democratic political culture.⁶ For nearly two years, there were numerous discussions and numerous drafts of the curriculum. All those involved characterized this time as one of intensive study and intensive discussion.

In the end, the four-member FCE team delivered a comprehensive three-year program for the consideration of the civic education team in the General Directorate of Educational Methods and Materials—the team that would have ordinarily been charged to produce the program itself. It had been made clear to this team, with all due discretion, that their expert input would be valued, but that all final decisions belonged to the FCE authoring team and Limón, for whom that team directly worked. The civic education team was in accord with the basic orientation of the program and its pedagogical focus. Their greatest concern was with the overabundance and sequencing of themes; they made some observations that were heeded, and others that weren’t. In any case, the final product was judged sufficiently cogent and viable for the subsecretary of basic education, Olac Fuentes, to give it his full support. Despite his earlier reservations, Fuentes provided

the full support of his office to launch the new program, and he even proved an articulate defender of its core principles.

Thus, combining civics, ethics, and orientation into one subject, *Formación Cívica y Ética* went into partial effect in 1999, with three hours a week in the first year. By 2001, it was operating in virtually every *secundaria* in the country, public and private alike, for all three grades.

MAJOR ORGANIZING THEMES AND PRINCIPLES OF THE NEW FCE

When I first heard of the FCE, in 1998, I would not have predicted its progressive orientation. After all, since the early 1980s a succession of neoliberal political regimes had shrunk the populist welfare state constructed throughout the 1970s and emphasized the benefits of technical and vocational education. The right was becoming more politically cohesive and making inroads into social policy, while the left, despite some significant electoral gains, was in disarray. Thus, I expected that any new program in civic or ethical education would largely avoid critical thinking and instead emphasize the reinforcement of conservative moral truths along with a spirit of social adjustment. What I learned surprised me.

An analysis of two key documents—the *Annotated Program of Studies* (SEP 2000) and the *Teachers' Guide* (SEP, 2001)—provides us with the major organizing themes and principles of the new course in civic and ethical education. After affirming the special importance of citizenship education (*formación ciudadana*), the opening pages of the *Program of Studies* (2000: 12–13) go on to emphasize that the new subject adopts a focus that is “formative, secular, democratizing, nationalist, universalist, preventive, and communicative.” Each of these terms, of course, encompasses a broad domain of meanings, yet they can be fairly glossed as follows.

The first term, *formativo*, points to the widest educative intent of Mexican schooling: to mold the habits, values, and attitudes of future citizens. In the Mexican lexicon, *educación* has always had a broader meaning than mere *instrucción*, and *formación* indicates a fuller approach than *educación*. While instruction, and even education, can refer to the transmission and acquisition of facts and knowledge through mental processes, formation points to habit and affect, with the intention of shaping forms of perception and conduct in everyday life. The Mexican *secundaria* has always presumed to be *formativo* and *integral* (holistic), thus the new FCE program does not so much propose a new focus as recover and reinforce one of the *secundaria*'s perennial goals.

The next four terms point to foundational concepts of the Mexican constitution. Rooted in the Liberal constitution of 1857 but reformulated dur-

ing the Revolution (1917), the current Mexican constitution gives the federal state a broad tutelary role through public education. Because of the historical struggle against the power of the Catholic Church, the constitution stipulates that public education will be secular (*laica*) and shall not be used to propagate the beliefs of specific religions. It also provides the foundation for a democratic form of governance, so civic education should contribute to the formation of democratic habits. Although the democratic promises of its constitution were rarely fulfilled in the past century, the rise in recent years of a more truly pluralistic political system, and the growth of a more vibrant civil society, have given renewed meaning to a democratic education.⁷ Perhaps for the first time ever, Mexicans can now debate and vote in ways that may really make a difference.

An emphasis on both nationalism and universalism might seem a naked contradiction to some, but throughout its modern history Mexico has tried to couple a strong sense of national identity with gestures of international solidarity for peace and justice. Because of its troubled history with the great U.S. colossus to the north, and because of its own regional, class, and ethnic diversity, Mexican basic education has always attempted to form strong allegiance to the nation. Civic ceremonies and the celebration of national holidays and heroes figure prominently in the lives of all Mexican schoolchildren. Yet for all this nationalist pride, Mexican schools have also tried to inculcate in their children an appreciation for world history and the contributions of different national cultures.

The new FCE subject establishes a “preventive” focus in relation to certain growing problems in Mexican society, such as drug addiction, early, unwed pregnancy, and organized crime. Students learn about the causes and consequences of such activities in order to “prevent” their own participation in them. Finally, and very importantly, FCE highlights a “communicative” rationale. Instead of merely digesting received opinion and fact, students in FCE are to learn to dialogue and question received wisdom, expressing their doubts and opinions openly. In this way, knowledge and value can be constructed through communication, not imposition.

This latter point seems especially important when one glances over the remainder of the *Program of Studies and Teachers' Guide*. Throughout the text, the authors of these documents place emphasis on a communicative pedagogical stance, and a new role for the teacher as facilitator rather than provider of information. As in the educational philosophy of John Dewey, such communication is intimately linked to the urgent need for students to take control of their learning and to begin practicing democratic virtues:

[The program] seeks to strengthen the student's capacity for critical analysis, for group work and participation in both individual and collective decision-making processes based on the values of a democratic life. . . . It's important

that students understand the vital importance of this subject and that they come to recognize themselves as the center of the curriculum. (SEP 2000: 14, 20)

The documents go on to criticize the heavy emphasis on information in the previous curriculum, saying, for instance, that

in [the old civics] the contents were dominated by detailed description of our public institutions and the recital of human rights, to the detriment of a more systematic development of abilities and attitudes that might lead to greater citizenship participation. In the new subject (FCE), we seek to make the connections between civics and students' lives more apparent. (SEP 2001: 3)

Correspondingly, the new plan establishes a number of "pedagogical and didactic guidelines" for teachers. Such guidelines include, among other things, clear directions to

- relate themes to students' lives.
- deepen themes through inquiry activities.
- foment . . . attitudes of respect and acceptance that encourage freedom of expression for all, taking special care to promote gender equity.
- encourage the practice of values, attitudes, and habits related to democratic life, to group work and collective organization.

Clearly, these new guidelines create a significant break with the older, teacher-centered approach to civics instruction.

While civics has a long and illustrious history in Mexican schools, the term *ethical* in a school context is less familiar to the current generation of Mexicans. It also raises more eyebrows. This is because of its possible connection to specific moral values derived from Catholicism. Steeped in the tradition of "lay" education, schoolteachers are especially vigilant about the introduction of religion to the public classroom. However, a close analysis of the new FCE program reveals strict adherence to a secular conception of ethical values, one that allows, but does not promote, the adoption of specific moralities (see Latapí 2003 for a critique). Still, what exactly is the difference between "civic" and "ethical" education, and how do they mesh? The *Teachers' Guide* explains it this way:

Formación cívica can be defined as a process of personal development through which individuals articulate values and form conceptions . . . that lead them to conceive of themselves as members of a political and social community, and to thereby exercise . . . the qualities of citizenship that the Constitution grants them. . . .

Formación ética can be defined as a process of human development in which

the individual acquires and forms a set of abilities, attitudes, values, and knowledge that enables her to know herself and to recognize others as equal in dignity and rights. (SEP 2001: 9; my translation provides the female pronoun)

Each of these formative goals, in turn, is linked to the overarching concept and goal of democracy. Civic education can make students aware of their rights and responsibilities as democratic citizens, the guide suggests, but only ethical education can deepen the attitudes that make respectful participation possible.

The three years of *secundaria* study have been organized around three main themes that run throughout the FCE program. Such themes are interspersed through a variety of curriculum units. The first theme, focused on ethics, consists of "reflection about human nature and human values." The second theme, unusually reflexive with regard to their life stage, considers both "problems and possibilities for adolescents and youth." The third and final theme centers on traditional civics concepts: "social organization, democracy, citizenship participation, and forms of government in Mexico."

The first year course of study opens with a broad exploration of human nature and values. Students consider the evolution of culture and the characteristics of *Homo sapiens* as a species. Before long, the course centers on the perennial issue of gender relations, and invites students to discuss what it means to "be a woman and be a man." This is just one of many points where gender becomes salient. Even here, at this early stage in the program, students are encouraged to explicitly reflect on the goals of equity, the economic and educational disadvantages women typically face, and so on (SEP 2000: 39).

A major section of the first year, called "youth and goals," opens an explicit reflection about the promises of adolescence. Students are encouraged to project their aspirations into the future, to imagine their possibilities. There is a good deal of language here seemingly borrowed from humanistic psychology: "personal realization," "life cycle and life goals," and "human potential." There is also the first opening toward vocational orientation, as students are encouraged to "identify tastes, aspirations, and goals during the stage of adolescence" (SEP 2000: 46ff.). Finally, the first year ends with forty hours of instructional time spent exploring how to "live in society." Concepts include interdependence, communication, emotional connection (*afectividad*), enjoyment, solidarity, and reciprocity, as well as the "spirit of service, creativity, and work." Activities direct students to pose examples of such concepts in everyday life (SEP 2000: 50ff.).

The second year of the program picks up at the same point but gives a different twist to "living in society." Under the rubric of democracy now, students learn about the "values of living together" (*valores de la convivencia*), as well as the more specific "civic values and citizenship formation."

What are considered the key values of democracy are imparted to students: liberty, equality, equity, justice, respect, tolerance, solidarity, and responsibility (SEP 2000: 55ff.).

As if to give concrete and immediate meaning to these values, the second year moves on to consider students' relation to the *secundaria* itself. In an interesting example of institutional self-reflection, students are encouraged to explore their "reasons for attending the *secundaria*," and to ask themselves, "How do I take advantage of what the *secundaria* has to offer?" The goal here is to urge students to "acquire the elements for actively participating in society," by taking the *secundaria* as a microcosm of the broader society (SEP 2000: 79ff.). From the *secundaria*, teachers and students make the leap to the nation, exploring concepts such as "nationalism, love of country, and national pride," as well as "unity and cultural pluralism." Students are even asked to examine the "possibility of participating in, and influencing, matters of national interest" (SEP 2000: 85ff.). Finally, the second year ends with a further opening out to the study of "humanity." It is here, for the first (and perhaps only) time, that students explicitly consider their relationship to the environment (SEP 2000: 89ff.). This relationship is framed not only by a national interest, but with reference to worldwide environmental issues and problems. Here is one of the few moments where the curriculum opens explicitly to consider a global perspective.

The third year of the FCE course turns to focus a good deal on the traditional subject matter of civics: study of the constitution, the political structure (elections, parties, etc.), the governance structure (federal, state, and municipal agencies), and the separation of powers (executive, legislative, and judicial). Yet toward the middle of the year, the program of study returns to refocus some themes that have already been introduced in previous years. These themes are considered now under the rubric of "responsibility and individual decision-making." References to gender inequality pepper the consideration of sexuality, addiction prevention, and "study, work, and personal realization" (SEP 2000: 97ff.).

The FCE program includes an ambitious final project meant to foster "responsibility, collective decision-making, and participation." Either in small groups, or as a whole class, students must "demonstrate that they are capable of making change in some aspect of their school or immediate environment. For this the youth must identify an improvable aspect of one of the broad fields that they've studied throughout the course: education, work, health, environment, and free time." Through this project, students should learn how to arrive at decisions through consensus, how to conduct an empirical investigation and divide the work fairly among themselves, and how to present the results of an investigation to authorities and peers in order to effect positive change. The program description ends with a final observation of the anticipated "formative" benefits of this group project, in

which “the students will discover that they’re capable of cooperating, joining a team, finding a problem and proposing viable solutions, coming to an agreement, respecting one another, and researching” (SEP 2000: 103–4).

This brief analytic summary of the FCE program’s major themes and activities should make one thing apparent: the program is ambitious, comprehensive, and, in relation to previous Mexican civic education, even revolutionary. Yet the success of any program lies in the conditions that make implementation possible and effective pedagogy enduring. I turn to these conditions in the final three sections.

**“YA PASÓ EL TIEMPO DE LOS DICTADORES”:
THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGING
INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND
TEACHER PRACTICES**

One fall afternoon in 2002, I was chatting with a regional pedagogical adviser (*jefe de enseñanza*) in the Mexican state of Morelos. *Jefes de enseñanza* typically work for the state education ministries; they are assigned a subject and a region, and they have primary responsibility for supervising the teaching of that subject in the region and for providing materials and in-service training opportunities. On this occasion, I was asking the *jefa de enseñanza*, a sixty-something former history teacher who was now in charge of disseminating the program in FCE, what she thought of the way the new subject was being taught in schools. She expressed some exasperation and said that many teachers were simply not grasping the new pedagogical focus of the program. She described how some teachers were still relying too heavily on the textbook and dictating passages for their students to copy. In an irritated tone, she finished her lament: “*Ya pasó el tiempo de los dictadores, pues*” (The reign of the dictators is over, come on!).

I am not sure whether the adviser deliberately intended the double meaning of this phrase, but I have taken it as a telling epigram for the challenges of creating a new democratic citizen in Mexico. The word *dictator* in this phrase can refer either to a tyrannical political leader or to the type of teacher who dictates notes and generally leads an authoritarian classroom, where only one correct response is possible. Her phrase suggests that in order to rid themselves of dictators at the political level,⁸ Mexicans would also have to eventually rid themselves of classroom dictators. In other words, the way to create a more active, participatory Mexican citizen who would no longer accept undemocratic regimes was through a more active, participatory pedagogy. Only teachers who could develop such a pedagogical style would be appropriate for modeling and thereby encouraging democratic conduct.

It was no coincidence, then, that when I posed the question "What is the greatest challenge to the successful implementation of the new FCE program?" the almost unanimous response of policymakers, administrators, and teachers alike was some version of "teacher training." Teachers themselves, when discussing their experiences with FCE, often called for more training and more in-service "courses." With few exceptions, they recognized that their own training did not adequately prepare them to teach the subject. They even noted that the new programs explicitly called for teachers to "change," to adopt a new "stance" in relation to their students, but that the guidance and resources needed to effect such a change were rarely forthcoming. Few incentives existed to encourage reticent teachers to examine and change their old teaching habits.

Those teachers who'd conscientiously adopted the new program's progressive pedagogy and sought to improve themselves further in this regard, were often dismayed by some of their colleagues' techniques. In my talk with an FCE teacher in the capital city of Morelos, she related how she had come to learn about one of her colleague's methods. Apparently a clerk at one of the local stationery stores, with whom she maintained a friendship, had asked her whether she was the civics teacher requiring her students to buy a values chart (*lámina*). The clerk could not provide the chart the students requested, because, in effect, it didn't exist. This teacher told her no, of course she hadn't made that request, but then she asked around the school to find out who in fact it was. The culprit—a former history and geography teacher—had fallen back on one of the time-honored methods used by the "dictators": have children go and purchase a chart, as if it were a worksheet, and then copy it into their notebooks. My interviewee, noting the irony of a new "dialogical" subject being taught in this way, finished with an exasperated chuckle, "What's up with that—buying a 'values chart'?" (*¿Cómo es eso de comprar una "lámina de valores"?*).

Finally, some teachers, and even some of the administrators and policymakers at higher levels, called attention to the political and structural challenges contained in the FCE. The new program espoused a more democratic approach to instruction and a more collegial dialogue about how to teach values and democratize instruction across the curriculum. Yet this program, more than one actor noted, had still been foisted upon the states by a "higher decision," and it appeared that little popular consultation had gone into it. Moreover, as one regional jefe de enseñanza put it, the notion of "democratic education" involves a different, more collegial role for school administration, yet current administrators are resistant:

The principals in general have been reinforcing their defenses because their position, their role as principal is the equivalent of the function of a governor, of a president, and that's what we're generally questioning in Mexico right

now. . . . So the principals see their position as being very threatened, in fact they've said as much, they say, "The respect for our office has been lost" (*Se ha perdido el respeto a nuestra investidura*). . . . Go ask any principal and he will tell you, "Well yes, of course, respect and democracy . . ."; they know the rhetoric well, the problem is in their attitude.

Yet others drew attention to the structural problem of school organization. Mexican scholars like Rafael Quiroz have been analyzing this problem for years (Quiroz 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996). The secundaria curriculum is highly fragmented, with students taking up to eleven different subjects at a time—ranging from one to five hours per week. They may have as many different teachers as subjects, and class periods typically last less than an hour. To paste together sufficient hours for a full-time position, teachers must often teach a number of disparate classes throughout the day, even at different schools within the same city or region. It is not uncommon for secundaria teachers of FCE to give ten hours of the class to five different groups in the morning shift, ten hours to five other groups in the afternoon, and yet another ten to twenty hours in a different school altogether. And those are the full-time teachers, often trained in normal schools. Perhaps more often than not, FCE teachers were first trained as "professionals" (lawyers, psychologists, etc.) and then acquired some teaching hours in the secundaria. They typically pursue a parallel career outside the school. The effect of all of this is for FCE teachers to have little chance to get to know their students in any real depth. The trust and familiarity that the new FCE program postulates for its success are structurally obviated by secundaria curriculum and hiring practices.

One last aspect of school organization and governance involves the bureaucratic infrastructure created to monitor student attendance and report their grades. As several supervisors and policymakers pointed out, this infrastructure had developed a sort of life of its own, often divorced from the practical exigencies of school life—and certainly counterproductive to good pedagogy. Teachers and support personnel had to spend an inordinate amount of time on paperwork, and this took away from time they might spend on more productive or engaging activities with the students. The "logic of evaluation," as Rafael Quiroz calls it, often led teachers to objectify knowledge and seek shortcuts for assessing learning. In sum, as another jefe de enseñanza put it, "We experience a daily conflict between administrative needs and pedagogical needs, and it's almost always the pedagogical needs that come out losing."

"UNA MERA SIMULACIÓN": STAFFING, RESOURCES, AND TEACHER SKEPTICISM

As already intimated, among the institutional challenges to effective implementation of FCE have been the policies and practices around school

staffing and teacher hiring. The FCE course was launched in 1999, and it was only that same year that normal schools in the country began offering the subject for credential specialization. Thus, schools had to assign existing teachers—of civics and of educational orientation, but also of geography and history—to the teaching of FCE. Moreover, even as new FCE-trained graduates become available to teach in the future, rules of seniority as well as teachers' union politics will assure that existing teachers retain their positions for many years still. In most cases, once teachers have acquired a certain number of "hours" at a school, or a full-time position (*plaza*), they are entitled to maintain the same level of work. Since schools must honor the hours of existing teachers, they have tended to transfer previous civics and history teachers into the first and second year of FCE, and the *orientadores* into the third year of FCE. These teachers can be encouraged, but generally not required, to take FCE training courses or pursue a specialized teaching degree in FCE.

Administrators commented to me that the old civics and social studies teachers—many of them originally lawyers by training—seemed to do well enough with the civics elements of the new FCE course, but they had a hard time with the "ethical" dimensions of the curriculum. Accustomed to teaching in rote fashion about the Constitution and government structures, they tended to have a poor grasp of dialogical, student-centered pedagogy. Conversely, the old *orientadores*—mostly psychologists and social workers by training—seemed to do well enough with the ethical part of FCE. After all, the old stand-alone course in "educational orientation" had become popular with students because it spoke directly to their concerns and interests and allowed for a degree of "free expression" lacking in most other classes. Yet the *orientadores* now struggled with the civic and legal elements of the FCE program.

Thus, most policymakers were realistic in preaching patience for the successful implementation of FCE. It would take many years for older teachers to retire or retrain themselves, and for schools to begin hiring the new FCE teachers. To make matters worse, there is some evidence that normal schools may be having a hard time attracting students to the new subject. It seems that few students want to take a risk on it. The new director of normal schools for the Mexico City district reported to me that many students who'd initially signed up to major in FCE in 1999 were now switching to other specializations because of doubt about the subject's future. Knowing Mexico's history of volatile change, these students were hedging their bets—better to study a long-standing subject, like history or Spanish, which stood little chance of being crushed by the next wave of educational reform.

Another problem that the teachers and administrators in the states emphasized was the uneven provision of training and resources. Some

schools have ready access to computers and Internet connections, through which they can research topics related to civics. Some schools and regions also have ready access to supplementary curriculum materials, teaching guides, videos, and the like. Yet other schools are far removed from such resources. One poor rural secundaria I visited in the state of Michoacán had, by early October, only recently received a shipment of textbooks for the FCE subject. Even more disconcerting, neither of the two FCE teachers at this school had ever seen nor been issued the official *Teachers' Guide* for the subject; they had planned their classes and curriculum according to the themes that were laid out in the textbook sent to the school.

Policymakers and functionaries involved with the FCE program also made it clear that the quality of teacher training and FCE implementation in the states depends a good deal on the energy and focus accorded the program by state "technical teams" and, perhaps most importantly, by regional *jefes de enseñanza*. Some states had clearly decided to devote more resources to augment the sparse training modules offered by the national directorate of teacher training. Many states also took full advantage of an array of "complementary" programs developed by nongovernmental organizations to bolster the official FCE curriculum (e.g., *Movimiento por la Democracia* and *Amnistía Internacional* [MCD/AI] 2001). Technical teams in such states could thus feel empowered to pursue a more aggressive program of teacher training and supervision. Even in the absence of strong support at the state level, though, some *jefes de enseñanza* clearly threw themselves into their work and felt passionately about the new subject. They made the FCE program into a kind of personal crusade, often attempting to leverage resources in the face of official indifference.

Lying behind all of these more concrete challenges of staffing, training, and resource provision is a deeper problem of skepticism, even cynicism that informs many teachers' understanding of the new program. Because educational policymaking has always been subject to the vicissitudes of the six-year presidential administrations known as *sexenios*, continuity has often been difficult to achieve. Teachers that have been in schools for a number of years will note the grand rhetoric that accompanies the inauguration of a new *sexenio*; they observe the arrival and departure of educational reforms, and they see that very little changes in the end. Mixed with this sense of inertia is often a more active critique of the duplicity of the state. Many teachers have developed a profound suspicion of educational authorities, seeing them as willfully complicit with an agenda of obfuscation, projecting polished surfaces that have little substance behind them. As one teacher at a rural secundaria put it:

What's always existed in Mexico has been a mere simulation (*una mera simulación*), and I think that today it's even more urgent that we see critically what's

happening with our schools. . . . Where's the seriousness, the coherence between what's said and what's done? There's a lot of interest [among teachers] in self-improvement, in updating knowledge, in taking challenging courses, but unfortunately the courses they offer us, the meetings are just two or three people, or all the teachers from the FCE area, getting together, and they tell us, "How's it been going in your classes? Tell us about your experiences?" And supposedly those are the courses [said in a tone of disgust].

The implication here is that the provision of teacher-training courses is not taken seriously enough, that it is only half-hearted, a "mere simulation" to show institutional compliance. Many teachers see the federal government as responsible for this situation.

**"COMO ECHAR UNA SEMILLA AL PURO
DESIERTO": THE SCHOOL'S DIFFICULT
ATTEMPT TO CREATE LASTING CHANGES
IN STUDENTS**

The female principal of a *secundaria* in the state of Morelos had been praising the qualities of the new FCE course, but then she began to acknowledge its limitations. She focused on the challenges of creating a new student sensibility when the broader society would not nurture it. She even said that family and community life, not to mention the media, often directly contradicted the positive messages of the program. "What are we supposed to do when we teach about the peaceful resolution of conflicts, or about respectful dialogue, and [the students] go home to watch so much violence on television, or they see their fathers bossing everyone around? It's like tossing a seed into the middle of the desert" (*Es como echar una semilla al puro desierto*).

In my discussions with teachers and administrators, optimism about the program's possible success was especially guarded. Optimism was generated by a common feeling that many of the current problems in student attitude and conduct—increased selfishness, violence, use of obscenity, apathy, and so on—could be traced to the dissolution of civic education in 1974. More than one teacher identified the early 1970s—when civics was folded into the new "area" of social sciences—as the origin of contemporary "social disorganization." Students were now generally thought to lack the "values" that previous generations had demonstrated. The remarks of this FCE teacher from Morelos, a male about sixty years old, were fairly typical:

The kids who were prepared according to these new "areas" [e.g., social sciences] no longer practiced the values that had been practiced for many years

before 1972 [*sic*], at which time there was, in the first place, the important fact that the father, from within the heart of the family, saw to it that from the time they were born to the time they arrived at school . . . the child already *had* values. And not just in the head, but in conduct (*demonstrables*). So all this gets cut off, and these kids from 1972 [*sic*] onward, until 1999, are the product of this societal disorganization. But, who provoked it? The educational policy of the state, you see?

This teacher begins by attributing current problems to the abolition of the self-contained civics course in the early 1970s, but he then quickly points to the role of the family, especially the father, in forming solid values before school attendance. After a few sentences, though, he returns to blaming the curriculum change in the 1970s, and the state that promoted this change, for today's "disorganization." After further prompting, the teacher tried to clarify the link: "[The creation of so-called areas like social sciences] created a movement contrary to what had been in place before, which was exactly about nurturing that value of responsibility, of honesty, of tolerance, of solidarity, that was in the family. . . . These were also the values in civics." Aside from the gender prejudice of his comments, what strikes me is the attempt to link school-based curriculum with social changes beyond the school. In his mind, the lack of a civics course after 1974 created a deficit of values formation in the school. The school no longer reinforced positive values taught previously (by the father!) in the family. In effect, this teacher, like many others, felt that as long as school curriculum provided a space for the reinforcement and extension of "values," teachers could sustain a guarded optimism about the new program.

As the principal quoted at the start of this section suggests, teachers have to contend daily with the apathy, even the opposition, of many parents regarding school-based values formation. In the state of Michoacán, nearly every teacher I interviewed mentioned this challenge. Parental opposition, though, did not always fall along ideological lines. Many parents appeared to resent the school's incursion into their lives, signified by the teachers' often paternalistic assumption of a tutelary role. One teacher cited a disgruntled parent who, in response to a suggestion that his child was learning inappropriate language in the home, retorted, "If I tell my kids vulgarities or curses it's OK with me. That's got nothing to do with them here in school; for me it's something normal." And even if parents did not explicitly oppose themselves to the school's angle on values, teachers still lamented the discrepancy between what students might learn in school and what they learned, by example, in the home. As one teacher lamented, "We [teachers] give one meaning or understanding of a value, and the students are living a different kind of value in their homes, right? So there's probably confusion. There's confusion in our students because we speak of values

and their meanings, and sometimes they don't put it into practice because they're not living it."

CONCLUSION

Exciting changes have been occurring in Mexican secondary education, and the new program for civic and ethical education lies at the heart of many of these changes.⁹ A progressive curriculum and pedagogy may indeed point the way to a flowering of civic awareness and participation amongst youth, and a corresponding diminution of social problems. Mexicans are looking to the school to help create a new democratic sensibility amongst youth, to form a new democratic citizen "without adjectives." Hope is running high in many quarters, and some teachers and administrators point to the program as the main contributor to positive changes they have already seen in their students.

Yet the challenges that remain are great. The new program must contend with an aging and ill-prepared teaching corps, undemocratic school governance, a prevailing emphasis on specialization and testing, and an entrenched bureaucratic structure that provides few incentives for teachers to change or improve. The new program must also overcome a pervasive society-wide cynicism about reforms initiated by the federal government, as well as disillusionment about resource inequities. It is indeed unfortunate that the central ministry takes a too-passive stance in compensating for geographic and economic conditions that translate into unequal quality of materials and instruction. And even as the state might begin to address imbalances in resource provision and challenge the union's dominance over hiring, it will have a much longer term problem to address: the creation of confidence through transparent and consistent actions. It is no coincidence that "accountability" (*rendición de cuentas*) recently has become a watchword in many quarters of the Mexican education system or that a National Institute for Educational Evaluation was recently established in Mexico to monitor its educational progress.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the new civics education cannot contribute to lasting change if it is not complemented by similar efforts in other spheres of contemporary society. The school, of course, is only one socializing institution among many, and the *secundaria* is only one transitory stage in Mexican youth's development. Only if like-minded reforms are made in family socialization, in community and municipal life, in religious education, in the media, and perhaps most importantly, in the provision of meaningful economic opportunities for young adults, can the new civics education come to fruition.

NOTES

Much of this chapter first appeared in the *International Journal of Educational Development* 24 (2003): 269–82. Reprinted with permission of Elsevier Scientific. Some sections first appeared in “Programs for Democratic Citizenship in Mexico’s Ministry of Education: Local Appropriations of Global Cultural Flows,” *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 12, no. 1 (2005): 251–84. Reprinted with permission of Indiana University Press.

1. This chapter is based on approximately five weeks of fieldwork in Mexico, followed by several long-distance telephone interviews. Fieldwork conducted in December 2001 and September–October 2002 consisted of interviewing national-level researchers, policymakers, and education ministry workers, as well as state- and local-level administrators and teachers; collecting documents (textbooks, official study plans, teacher training materials, newspaper articles, etc.); and observing classrooms in seven different secondary schools in two different Mexican states.

2. The reference is to a well-known argument by Enrique Krauze (1988) against all “qualified” forms of democracy (e.g., “presidential” democracy; “populist” democracy) that had been said to exist in Mexico. He argues for a “democracy without adjectives” or, as we might say, “democracy, period.”

3. The term *subjectivity* is used here to encompass the whole assemblage of attitudes, perceptions, and forms of self-awareness teachers may manifest in their behavior. I define *subjectivity* as “those forms of awareness, mostly but not exclusively embodied and sensual, that are given by personal and social history yet transmutable by context and contingency.” See Levinson (2001: 343–44) for a fuller discussion of this term’s meanings and usage in contemporary scholarship.

4. The debate over “education” versus “instruction” apparently dates from the late nineteenth century (Hale 1989: 162). In Spanish, *educación* implies a broad formation of character, manners, and morals, while *instrucción* implies the transmission of specialized knowledge. The Catholic Church, along with the family, had traditionally held a monopoly over the “education” of children. Liberals at the end of the century argued amongst themselves over whether the displacement of church power should include the state’s assumption of an educative role. Many argued that education should remain a family affair, with instruction the domain of the state. But by 1890, the Mexican state had begun to provide primary schooling with important educational functions. After the Revolution, the state expanded this formative quality of public education, and, modeling the German system, extended it to the *secundaria*. See also Zúñiga (1981: 223).

5. Although the Chetumal Reforms were adopted widely throughout the country, they were not legally required of all schools. Therefore, throughout the remainder of the 1970s and 1980s a number of localities, most notoriously Mexico City, continued to operate according to the older *asignaturas*. This created in effect a dual national system of *secundaria* curriculum.

6. The IFE is a government-funded yet independent agency created in the late 1980s mainly to administer fair and clean elections. However, a significant part of its work also includes fomenting civic education and the creation of a new democratic political culture. Through its Department of Electoral Certification, Civic Edu-

cation, and Citizenship Participation, the IFE has run several educational programs that complement the school-based FCE curriculum: these include the Jornadas Cívicas Infantiles y Juveniles, day-long programs of activity that range from mock elections to drawing and role-playing; "Project-Citizen," a program adapted from the U.S.-based Center for Civic Education that fosters community involvement and problem solving among adolescents; and the elementary program "Rights and Values for Mexican Children." See Salazar Ugarte (2001).

7. Although the Mexican Constitution provides for multiple parties, a bicameral Congress, and a system of checks and balances similar to the U.S. system, the reality until 2000 was distinct. After the rise to power of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), which since 1929, in one guise or another, had maintained the presidency until 2000, electoral and civic participation was manipulated through corporatist networks. The presidency assumed preponderant weight, and Congress, controlled by the PRI as well, served as a rubber stamp for presidential initiatives. Citizens were encouraged to look to the paternalist state for solutions and largesse. This scenario only began to change in the 1980s when opposition parties scored important victories in governors' and mayors' races and began to redress the imbalance in the federal Congress. By 2000, when the opposition candidate Vicente Fox finally won the presidency, the PRI only controlled a slim majority of governors' seats and senator positions. They maintained only a plurality of seats in the "House" (Cámara de Diputados). See Levy and Bruhn (2001) for a fine overview of recent Mexican politics.

8. The Mexican political regime, characterized by many political scientists as authoritarian and, until 2000, ruled by a single party for some seventy years, was once called "the perfect dictatorship" by the Peruvian author Mario Vargas Llosa.

9. Since the original drafting of this chapter, the Mexican Ministry of Education has undertaken a major reform of secondary education. The FCE program has remained intact, though its contents have been reordered and the number of student-teacher contact hours diminished. The new version of FCE was implemented with the 2006 school year.

REFERENCES

- Hale, C. 1989. *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Krauze, E. 1988. *Por una democracia sin adjetivos*. Mexico City: Cal y Arena.
- Latapí, P. 2003. *El debate sobre los valores en la escuela mexicana*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Levinson, B. A. U. 2001. *We Are All Equal: Student Culture and Identity at a Mexican Secondary School, 1988–1998*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Levy, D., and K. Bruhn. 2001. *Mexico: The Struggle for Democratic Development*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Meneses Morales, E. 1986. *Tendencias educativas oficiales en México, 1911–1934*. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Educativos.
- . 1988. *Tendencias educativas oficiales en México, 1934–1964*. Mexico City: Centro de Estudios Educativos.

- Movimiento for la Democracia and Amnistía Internacional. 2001. *Formación cívica y ética ciudadana: Manual de actualización docente*. Mexico City: Author.
- Quiroz, R. 1991. "Obstáculos para la apropiación de los contenidos académicos en la escuela secundaria." *Infancia y Aprendizaje* 55: 45-58.
- . 1992. "El tiempo cotidiano en la escuela secundaria." *Nueva Antropología* 12, no. 42: 89-100.
- . 1993. "La reforma curricular de la escuela secundaria en México." In *Educación, ciencia y tecnología: Los nuevos desafíos para América Latina*, ed. J. Labastida Martín, G. Valenti, and L. Villa. Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.
- . 1996. Del plan de estudios a los aulas. In *La educación secundaria: cambios y perspectivas*, ed. Estatal de Educación Pública de Oaxaca. Oaxaca: Author, 89-109.
- Salazar Ugarte, S. 2001. "El IFE ante la educación cívica." *Educación 2001* 1, no. 7 (July).
- Secretaría de Educación Pública. 2000. *Formación Cívica y Ética, Educación Secundaria: Programas de estudio comentados*. Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública.
- . 2001. *Formación Cívica y Ética, Educación Secundaria: Libro para el maestro*. Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública
- Sutton, M., and B. A. U. Levinson, eds. 2001. *Policy as Practice: Toward a Comparative Sociocultural Analysis of Education Policy*. Westport, Conn.: Ablex.
- Zuñiga, R. M. 1981. "La escuela que surge de la revolución." In *Historia de la educación pública en México*, ed. F. Solana, R. Cardiel, and R. Bolaños. Mexico City: Secretaría de Educación Pública.