

Arab American Experiences in Education

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A new wave of American immigration began in the 1960s. Due to political instability in North Africa and throughout the Mediterranean, Palestinians, Israelis, Lebanese, Moroccan, and Iraqi families moved to the United States in hopes of starting a better life. The influx of Middle Eastern immigration continues today due to ongoing turmoil in the region (Wingfield, 2011, p. 254). Contemporary Arab Americans face many of the similar challenges as their ancestors; Caucasian Americans express bigoted sentiments, the media criticizes their culture and religion, and the criminal justice system legalized the racial profiling of Arabs. Despite these challenges, Arab Americans continue to contribute to the American experience by participating in business, the arts, and the sciences. Arab Americans are a hidden minority. American schools have failed to properly address their educational, psychological, and cultural needs. Arab students need help to transition between the educational experiences of their homelands and the American education system. In order to assist students with this transition, educators must become aware of the similarities and differences between Middle Eastern systems of education and the American education. American schools must alter their instruction in order to present a more balanced view of Arabic history, culture and politics in order to avoid ostracizing Arab students. “The sizable portion of Arabic-speaking students in American educational institutions requires educators to learn more about this group” and to work towards providing an educational environment in which Arab students feel respected and proud of their heritage (Suleiman, 2000, p. 3). This paper will address the following questions: How are Middle Eastern and American educational institutions similar and how are they different, what challenges do Arab-American students face in American schools, and how can educators help Arab American students to succeed. Countries are only as strong as their citizens, and a citizenship is only as strong as its schools. Ignoring or

Arab Americans are a diverse ethnic group. “Some Arab Americans have assimilated the American way of life, others have tried to maintain a meaningful level of multiculturalism” (Suleiman, 2000, p. 6). Traditional Arabic families value education for its own sake and encourage their children to apply themselves in schools; this is one of the reasons that Arab American students demonstrate academic success despite the racism they encounter (Suleiman, 2000, p. 3). The Middle East and North African (MENA) have a rich history of formal education. Ancient Mesopotamia had formal classrooms. Ancient Egypt had scribe schools in order to teach literacy skills. Islam, which has a great influence in MENA countries, preaches the value of secular education as a means of ensuring spiritual strength and personal improvement. These cultural factors help to shape the Arab view that education is essential for a meaningful life and should be pursued for personal growth rather than utilitarian purposes (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 2). Families provide economic and emotional support for their children’s academic pursuits. Children do not take education for granted, and many Arab American families even chose to move to the United States because they sought rigorous educational opportunities for their children. Arab American students often blend in with Caucasian Americans because their physical traits are less distinguishable than Black or Asian Americans and because there is not an achievement gap between Arab Americans and White Americans (Suleiman, 2000, p.7). Despite their successes in school, Arab American children are not receiving a fair and appropriate education. They are marginalized by the curriculum and are hindered by the pedagogical format. Teachers must improve their understanding of the Arab American experience in order to better serve their students

In order to understand the challenges Arab Americans face in American schools educators must become familiar with the Middle Eastern educational practice. Despite

mainstream American thought, Middle Eastern education is most often publicly funded, co-educational, and secular in nature. Curriculum in Arab schools is similar to the curriculum in public schools in the United States. While some Middle Eastern nations continue to rely upon religious schools that are run by poorly trained teachers who work for extremist organizations, this is by far the exception rather than the rule. Unfortunately, popular books such as Greg Mortenson's *3 Cups of Tea* and *Stones to Schools* misrepresent Arab schooling by depicting a unique situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan as the normative experience for the entire region. For example, Mortenson states that his Central Asian Institute schools are different from extremist schools because they create a school family that is "willing to do anything, even die for" each other (Mortenson, 2009, p. 17) This dedication to one's school to the point of death sounds eerily similar to the pledges taken by students in Taliban training camps that he overtly opposes. Additionally, Mortenson describes the education of females as a rarity in the Arab world. He suggests that Afghan and Pakistani schools are all led by the Taliban, and he even chooses to write the Arabic word for schools, *madrassas*, instead of translating it into English (Mortenson, 2009, pp.251-254). He minimizes Egypt's and Libya's far-reaching initiatives to encourage girls to stay in school. Mortenson states that his initiative is unique in that it serves rural areas (Mortenson, 2009, p.17). In fact, the public initiatives in Egypt and Libya are primarily focused on the isolated rural areas where girls are most likely to drop out of school to help with the family farm or to get married (Ofori-Attah, 2008, pp.109-111). Girls not only attend schools in the Middle East, but they are also encouraged to participate in co-curricular clubs and sports. Many Arab girls are members of volleyball, soccer, track and field, and swim teams (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 114). At the university level, Arab women "outnumber and outperform men" (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 118). Women are welcome to enroll in any degree

program they wish. While women are a minority in construction, engineering, and manufacturing programs, they are welcomed to the programs (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 116). Dina Bakhoum is one example of an Arab, Muslim woman who is a well-respected, world-renowned construction engineer and historical preservationist. Bakhoum serves as a director for Aga Khan Program in Cairo, Egypt. Under her leadership, Aga Khan , located and repaired the Medieval Wall of Cairo as well as many Mamluck mosques. Bakhoum explains that she is treated well in the field, “my coworkers, employees, and even government officials treat me with respect. They know that I am knowledgeable in the field and trust my expertise. I am not treated any differently due to my gender” (D.Bakhoum, personnel communication, April 15, 2011). Rist notes the effect of teacher expectations on student success. Teacher expectations directly correlate with the success of their students (Strouse, 2000, pp. 176-201). As long as teacher’s underestimate the academic background of their Arabic students, Middle Eastern children will continue to live down to their expectations.

Mortenson also notes that Middle Eastern schools are in need of Western economic support because Arab nations do not fund schools. In 2004, MENA countries spent approximately 5.3% of their gross domestic product on public schools. In the entire world, this is the highest percentage of gross domestic product that is dedicated to education (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 118). This anecdotal style of writing leads to a perception that all Arab schools are inadequate, that they serve as breeding grounds for terrorism, and that Middle Easterners are dependent upon foreign assistance in order to gain freedom from ignorance; this could not be farther from the truth. Interestingly, Mortenson is currently being sued for misrepresenting his experiences in Pakistan and Afghanistan and for misusing funds that were donated to his charity the Central Asia Institute. Mortenson admitted that only “most of the story is true” and that only

a small percentage of donations goes directly towards building schools in the Middle East. (CNN Wire Staff, 2011). Unfortunately, these confessions come years after the United States military made 3 Cups of Tea required reading and after the book topped the best sellers list. Mortenson's admission that he took artistic license and misused funding only came after the American public was exposed to the idea that the Middle East is an illiterate wasteland of ignorance and sexism.

In reality, Arab students generally experience high quality, secular, co-educational learning that prepares them for competitive colleges. In fact, Arab immigrants are "better educated and more wealthy than the average American" (Wingfield, 2011, p.254). MENA schools offer free elementary, preparatory (junior high), secondary, and tertiary schools for all children regardless of race, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, or national origin (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 25, 109-110). Families also have the option of sending students to semi-private schools that are government funded but managed by private organizations. Semi-private schools are similar to charter schools. Parents who are able to afford tuition are also able to choose to send students to private schools. The curriculum at private and semi-private schools is determined by the individual institution and provides alternative curricular choices. MENA countries offer a liberal arts education that dates back to the development of the seven liberal arts in Byzantine era schools (Ofori-Attah, 2008, pp.1-2). The core curriculum in MENA public schools consists of English language, English literature, Arabic language, social studies, science, and information technology. Additionally, most countries require a third language of study. Egypt, Israel, Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain offer optional religion classes in Christianity, Judaism and Islam (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 28). Students choose to study at schools where Arabic is the primary language of instruction or at schools where English is the primary language of instruction (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 27). In the United States, the language of

education is English. Arab immigrants are knowledgeable and often fluent in English. The familiarity with the English language helps Middle Easterners to be successful in American schools (Ofori-Attah, 2008, pp.27-28).

The greatest cognitive challenge that Arab students face is transitioning from MENA schools is the method of instruction. The Global Corporation Council, which includes the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Bahrain, articulated the goal of changing education from a memorization based system to a more student centered process. Memorization has only recently been replaced by student-centered instruction and the transition is a gradual process (Zehr, 2008, pp.3-4). In order to increase critical thinking and analysis skills, the Global Corporation Council is undertaking an initiative to improve the physical structure of schools, to increase educational accountability through rigorous high stakes testing, and to integrate technology in classrooms (Zehr, 2008, p. 3). The Global Corporation Council's educational goals are very similar to the goals of the United States' No Child Left Behind policy. However, the extent of rote memorization in education is far greater in the Arab world than in the United States (Zehr, 2008, pp. 3-4). Arab Americans are not yet accustomed to group work, laboratory sciences at the preparatory level, or experiential learning. This lack of familiarity with freedom of thought is overwhelming to many Arab students who are accustomed to memorizing the ideas of authority figures instead of creating their own understanding of the world.

Arab American students perceive their native born American counterparts as "undisciplined" (Zehr, 2008, p. 5). American students regularly display disrespect towards teachers and speak out of turn during class. Arab schools require more adherences to strict behavioral guidelines. The cultural reverence for education prevents students from disrespecting teachers or disrupting class (Zehr, 2008, p. 5). Class sizes in MENA countries vary. However,

the vast majority of Middle Eastern nations have a larger average class size than American schools. The average class size in Egypt is 40 students, in Libya is 30 students, and in Jordan, Israel and Tunisia the average class is 28 students (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p. 45). In urban environments some schools have two different school shifts. Having two different shifts allows the faculty and administration to serve growing populations despite small building sizes (Ofori-Attah, 2008, p.45). This technique is currently used in some West Coast American schools but is uncommon in the United States. The distracting, noisy, fast-paced and intimate setting of an American school can be unsettling for students who are accustomed to crowded yet quite classroom environments where knowledge is transmitted through lecture, and classes are scheduled throughout the day. The brain of an Arab American student has not been forced to learn to filter background noise and practice selective attention; these skills are essential for success in American schools (Zehr, 2008, pp. 3-6). Educators should help Arab American students to adjust to a new learning environment and a new means of instruction.

Emotional challenges for Arab American students are numerous and penetrate all levels of the educational system. Overt and covert curriculum represents Arabs in a negative light. Current national curriculum does not adequately address the positive contributions of the Arab world or of Arab Americans. Instead, the Middle East is portrayed as a timeless civilization that is trapped in the past. Arab people, particularly Muslim Arabs, are most often portrayed as dangerous, sexist ideologues that are threats to American society. While there are dangerous Arabs, they are the exception rather than the rule. "Arabs are America's scapegoats and anti-Arab hysteria has been building in this country (the United States) for years" (Suleiman, 2000, p.9). American politicians, academics and media blame Middle Easterners for security concerns, economic troubles, and increasing crime rates. Arabs are the official excuse for government

invasion of personal privacy under the Patriot Act and in the airports, for oil prices skyrocketing, and for the failures of our national security system from defending Americans at home and abroad (Suleiman, 2000, p.9). Arab American parents “complain that teachers badmouth Arabs and blame political violence in the Middle East on Islam” (Wingfield, 2011, p.257). Teachers are therefore denying the complex realities of life in the Middle East, are ignoring the ill-effects of colonialism and western meddling in the region. They are invalidating the world’s second largest religion. This is by no means appropriate in a school system that preaches separation of church and state in a country that prides itself on religious toleration.

Presenting an unbalanced view of the morality of Arabic peoples feeds bigotry and leads Arab students with an identity crisis (Suleiman, 2000, p. 8). Middle Eastern students are forced to choose to associate themselves with Arab culture and thus be judged as un-American, or to associate with American culture and be forced to abandon their culture. Regardless of the choices Arab Americans make, they quickly find that they do not fully fit either persona (Suleiman, 2000, p.9). Regardless of how well Arab immigrants “assimilate to the American way of life,” they are harassed in school and in their communities (Suleiman, 2000, p. 6). Harassment reached a peak in the days following the events of September 11,2001. The media showed nonstop footage of “menacing, violent (Arab) figures” for the first week after the attacks. One example of such harassment is that a schoolgirl in Florida faced consistent harassment by classmates. The harassment culminated when a boy tore the scarf from her head and then struck her on the face with his belt (Wingfield, 2011, p. 257). The cause of such horrific behavior is complex. However, one component of the violation of Arab civil rights is the demonization of Arabs, specifically Muslim Arabs, in American media. Immediately following the events of September 11, 2001, Americans were deprived of any audio-visual stimulation that was not

linked to the tragedy. The news was flooded by images of pain and suffering at the hands of Arabs, of Arabs celebrating American deaths, and of extremist training camps that chanted anti-American slogans. The sensorimotor stimulation of a specific archetype, in this case of a violent Arab, is akin to the first step of brainwashing. In order to brainwash an individual is victim to excessively controlled sensory input thus preventing the brain from entertaining contradictory information or constructing opposing beliefs (Suleiman, 2011, p. 55). Within three days of the attacks there were literally hundreds of reported hate crimes against Arab Americans. While the numbers of hate crimes decreased slightly since 2001, as an ethnic group, Arab Americans continue to be the most likely to be harassed (Suleiman, 2011, p.255). This harassment increases anxiety levels. Anxiety activates the amygdala and the insula which communicate stress to the adrenal gland in order to initiate the so-called fight or flight response. While there are positive effects of long term stress such as increased metabolism, increased awareness, and a shutdown of non-essential physiological tasks, there are also significant negative side effects of prolonged stress. Hyper-activation of the amygdala, chronic increased density of the amygdala, the deactivation of executive functions, atrophy of the hippocampus, and emotional deregulation plague overanxious brains (Fenske, 2011). The amygdala's changes in function and structure suggest an unusual return to primitive emotional responses and increased aggression. The deactivation of executive functions in the parietal lobe prevents the individual from planning and strategizing well. The atrophy of the hippocampus impairs memory and attention. The emotional deregulation most commonly faced in chronically stressed individuals is based upon the brain's focus on negative experiences for a longer duration and in a more meaningful way than positive experiences. This is a significant factor in mood disorders such as phobia, major depression, and panic disorders (Fenske, 2011). Related to these biological changes related to fight or flight,

there are also academic performance problems. Students who are the most talented in school utilize executive functions in order to complete complex assignments. During times of anxiety, the brain is no longer able to execute executive functions because the blood and nutrients that are sent to the brain are rerouted to the survival centers. Intellectually strong students are therefore unable to demonstrate their skills in stressful situations. Students who have a lower IQ do not depend on executive functions as much as strong students; instead, they make educated guesses. Since average and below average students do not rely on executive functions to demonstrate their skills their performance does not deviate. By creating and preserving a society in which Arab students are chronically stressed about racism, America is ensuring that the most intellectually gifted Arab Americans are unable to perform to their true potential. Racism is literally depriving Arabs of future success. Arab students are regularly afraid for their emotional and physical safety in American schools and communities. They are suffering negative health and academic performance effects from racial stereotyping and discrimination.

Arab speaking students are also cognitively affected by “the fallacious assumptions caused by cultural conditioning” (Suleiman, 2000, p. 4). Inaccurate and negative beliefs about Arabs impede student learning by decreasing their sense of self-worth and increasing anxiety (Suleiman, 2000, p. 4). More often than with Black or Asian racism, racial slurs about Arabs often go unchecked by teachers, parents, or political officials in the United States (Suleiman, 2000, p. 8). Not only do racial slurs against Middle Easterners go unpunished and without notice but they are perpetuated by mainstream culture. “The media have done their part to encourage Arab-bashing” (Suleimanm 2000, p. 8). For example, the Disney Corporation had two versions of the *Aladdin* theme song and elected to use the version that alluded to the Middle East as a land “where they cut off your ear if they don’t like your face, it’s barbaric, but hey it’s home” (New

York Times, 1993). Additionally the children's film represents Arabs as vigilantes who cut off the hands of people who steal food for the hungry; in fact, only in Saudi Arabia, when a felon is tried and convicted three times for a felony is such a punishment permitted. Despite the fact that the vast majority of the Middle East does not permit this punishment, that in Saudi Arabia street merchants do not enforce the law, and that Arab Muslims are required by the Quran to freely give food to those in need, Disney elected to use this episode in its children's film. From an early age, children are indoctrinated to view Arabs as violent, oppressive, and barbaric people who are to be feared (Feng, 2001). While these images are damaging to non-Arab children in that they contribute to the development of bigotry, they are more harmful to Arab children. In order to become masters of any trade, individuals need to see examples of successful people with whom they share common ethnic traits, location of origin, and culture (Coyle, 2011 pp.397-399). The academic achievement gap between white students and students of color is attributed to the "student's perceptions of the opportunities in the wider society, educational opportunities available in the educational system, and the cumulative psychic and emotional effects of living in a social world saturated with racist ideology" (Shapiro & Purpel, 2005, p.231). Connecting with an individual who is gifted in a field allows the brain to entertain the idea that greatness is attainable. This personal connection with highly talented men and women is one of the reasons for hotbeds of talent. For example, the Dominican Republic provides Major League Baseball with numerous players, Brazil regularly leads the world in professional soccer, and many great dancers come from Russia. Arab American students are only exposed to Arabs who are terrorists. They are denied access to the many successful Arab athletes, business executives, artists, and humanitarians. Arab students are therefore unable to seriously consider the possibility to succeeding in a career. Without hope for success the brain does not meet its full potential (Coyle,

2007, pp.397-399). Neuroscientist Sian Beilock found that increased anxiety levels decrease performance in highly skilled individuals. One cause of anxiety is stereotype. When a learner is aware, unconsciously or consciously, of stereotypes that suggest they will do poorly on a certain assessments or in a certain field, they are less likely to succeed than if that stereotype is dispelled. Something as simple as asking students to identify their race or gender before taking an SAT decreases scores significantly. These types of demographic questions serve as subtle reminders that there are performance expectations based on these differences. Students live down to, or up to the stereotypes they have acquired in society. When people see examples that disprove stereotypes, they are able to free themselves from the stereotypical persona and perform at a higher level. Beilock conducted a study wherein approximately 500 undergraduate students took a GRE. The students were 50% Black and 50% White. The subjects were matched for IQ and for academic achievement as well as gender, economic class, and age. When the GRE was given before Barack Obama accepted the nomination for President, there was a significant achievement gap between Black students and White students. Two subsequent GREs were given to the same subjects; the first was immediately following Obama's acceptance of the nomination and the second was immediately following his inauguration. In both of these tests the racial achievement gap was erased. The only difference between the first test and the subsequent tests was that Black students had a role model. President Obama served as evidence that the stereotype of Blacks as unintelligent was untrue. The President's obvious intellect and personal and professional success was enough to convince the unconscious minds of Black students that they too could achieve their academic goals. The ability to immunize individuals against harmful stereotypes is called the Obama Effect (Beilock, 2011, pp.168-170). Arab students need role models that disprove the stereotype that they are barbaric, violent, and uneducated. Without

disproving this stereotype through concrete, famous examples, students will never live up to their potential.

It is overwhelmingly clear that American schools are failing to meet the needs and defend the civil rights of Arab school children. This leaves educators wondering, what can be done to improve the educational experiences of Arab American students. While cultural change is a slow process, it is the responsibility of teachers and administrators to work to ensure that all children have a safe and conducive learning environment. There are four steps educators can take to combat Anti-American sentiment and curriculum. First, since first generation Arab American students are often accustomed to direct, teacher-centered learning it would be helpful for teachers to slowly expose these students to more critical and student-centered activities. Including both teacher-centered and student-centered instruction creates an environment where Arab learners can gradually adjust to the new method of instruction. Changes in behavior and learning require time. In order to change the brain's response to stimuli, in this case classroom interaction, the myelin around the axons of the neurons in the parietal and frontal lobes must thicken. Myelin thickens with each attempt at a behavior. Every time a student attempts to learn through constructivist techniques he improves. However, if a teacher simply expects an Arab student to adjust to student-centered learning immediately the student will be over-stimulated and will fail to learn at all (Ansari, 2011 pp. 355-370).

The second way that educators can help Arab Americans in their classroom is to update curriculum. Purpel and Shapiro discuss consumerism and corporate culture. Educational materials are representative of white American male experiences. While many publishers have marginally incorporated diverse ethnic groups and women in their curriculum, these peoples continue to be included anecdotally rather than as a major component of the American

experience. Additionally, while teachers lecture they rarely refer “to women or people of color” (Shapiro & Purpel,2005, p.94). Classroom lectures and materials continue to minimize contributions of minority groups leading students of color to feel as though they have little to offer to their communities and therefore have limited career opportunities (Shapiro & Purpel,2005, pp.90-104). Including Arab and Arab-American literature, ancient and contemporary history, culture, and current events in classroom discussion provides Arab students with a balanced view of the achievements and shortcomings of their peoples. Curriculum has worked to integrate Black, Hispanic, and Asian American stories into the curriculum; it is time we do the same for Arab Americans.

The third step teachers can take to assist their students is to provide clear and immediate consequences for anti-Arab comments that are made in the classroom. Schools must protect the rights of all ethnic groups. It is important the faculty and students alike be held accountable to this law. Too often, Arab students are victims of racial slurs that are ignored or even perpetuated by their teachers and administrators. Faculty must identify their own stereotypical beliefs and consciously act to remediate them. One tool that may be of assistance in assessing unconscious biases is the Harvard Implicit Bias Test which is available online free of charge. Biased educators will implicitly treat Arab students differently than non-Arab students. Without actively working to remediate this problem and consciously choosing to address every incident of bigotry with severe and swift punishment, the next generation will perpetuate the racism of their parents’ generation and Arab students will never find respite from the horrors of bigotry.

The final step that must be taken to ensure a positive learning environment is the inclusion of successful Arabs and Arab Americans in media and social discourse. It is essential that all Americans, though particularly Arab students, see the possibility of greatness. The Arab

American community is waiting to experience the “Obama Effect” (Beilock, 2010, pp.168-172). If the only powerful Arabs with whom our students are familiar, are terrorists than they will see themselves as terrorists. If we provide meaningful examples of intelligent, peaceful, and positive Arabs in our world view than Arab American will have a much stronger potential of experiencing success.

In conclusion, this paper sought to describe the educational experiences that are common in the Middle East and North Africa. The paper explained the curriculum and pedagogy that are most commonly found in Arab schools. Despite a history of liberal arts education in the Middle East and the economic dedication of their homelands to free public education, American schools continue to perceive new immigrants as behind in their studies. Arab-American students face the inaccurate stereotype that they are ill-prepared for the American educational environment. This misunderstanding prevents the children from accessing challenging classes. Middle Eastern schools are perceived by Americans as overtly religious, poorly funded, and technologically poor single-sex institutions. In reality, Arab nations provide economic support for free, public education from pre-primary classes through the university level. Middle Eastern families have choices regarding public, semi-private, and private schools. Most schools are co-educational in the MENA nations. Most schools offer numerous language courses literature in the local language and in English, computer classes, social sciences, and physical science courses. The misperceptions of Arab education disservice Arab American students who seek to have access to challenging coursework. Additionally, it leaves non-Arab learners with misconceptions about the global community. Our future leaders need factual information about their international neighbors in order to effectively lead America in the global age.

Next, the paper sought to identify the challenges faced by Arab American students. Middle Eastern students face the challenge of adjusting to a more student-centered curriculum than is found in their homelands. This adjustment requires gradual changes in the learning process. Another challenge faced by Arab Americans is racism. Hate crimes against Arab Americans are at extremely high levels. Public criticism of Middle Eastern culture is publicly tolerated. Regular racism leaves students in a state of anxiety. For high functioning students, this increased anxiety reduces their cognitive functions thus preventing them from displaying the full potential of their academic, athletic, and social skills. The final struggle for Arab American children is the lack of publicity of successful, heroic, and inspirational role models who share their ethnic identity. Without the example of success, students feel as though they have nothing in common with the economic, political, and business leaders of the country. The subconsciously conform to a powerless and unintelligent persona. The simple inclusion of Arab role models in American pop-culture would increase the likelihood of Arab Americans experiencing a successful and positive future.

The final section of this paper identified steps that educators can take to help to improve the Arab American experience in schools. In order to help Arab American children to fully benefit from our educational system, educators must design pedagogical practices in a way that allows for a smooth transition from transmission models of education to active models of learning. Educators must update their curriculum to provide Arab literature, culture, and current events. Schools must actively assess, identify, and combat racist comments and behaviors as soon as they occur. Finally, American educators can team with media sources, the sports and music industries, and the government to draw attention to the Arab Americans who are ideal citizens. While Arab students are successful in school and in business, it is evident that their

success is limited by the realities of the American experience. The civil right to an appropriate public education is one that is worthy of protection. As a profession, it is essential that teachers fight for the rights of Arab Americans.

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