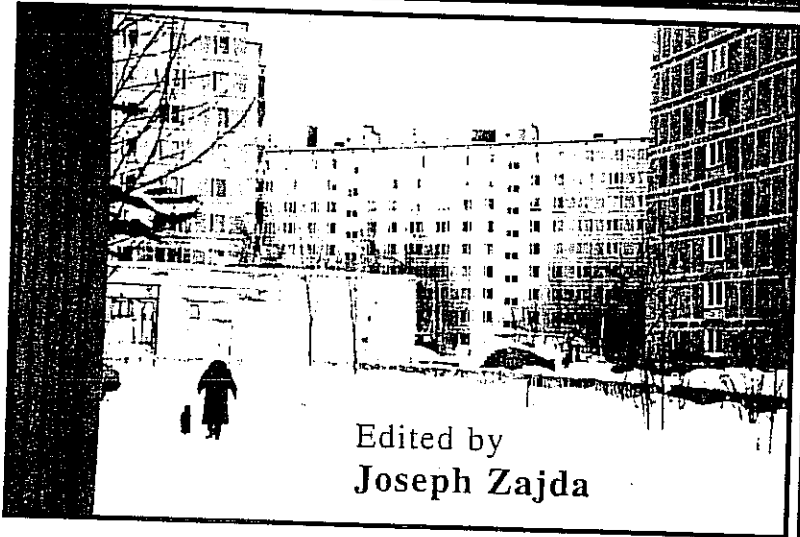


# Education and Society



Edited by  
Joseph Zajda

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## Students' Real and Ideal Characteristics as Perceived by Teachers

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### Background

Israel is an immigrant country. Immigration and its integration played an important role in shaping its ethnic composition, as also its socio-economic structure and cultural characteristics from the turn of the 20th century until today. Indeed as of the late 1980s and into the present, Israel continues to be preoccupied by a constant influx of a proportionally large contingent of immigrants.

The changing nature of immigration to Israel since 1948, forced Israeli society and its social institutions, including its schools, to change cultural conceptions and strategies of immigrant absorption and also to introduce modifications in its educational provisions. Equality of opportunity for all and especially for under privileged groups of immigrant children have been a major concern to politicians, social scientists and educationalists. The continuous influx of students of extremely diverse backgrounds—ethnic and socio-economic—posed a challenge to the integrity of the educational system. The system responded by ideological, conceptual, administrative, pedagogical and curricular changes as also by structural reforms (Adler, 1989; Iram, 1987; Smilansky, 1973).

In wake of massive intervention programs in the elementary school, there was observed an increase in academic achievement. Indeed an international study (Thorndike, 1973), which found differences in reading comprehension between developed and underdeveloped countries, found that in Israel where half of the population immigrated from underdeveloped countries, the mean achievement scores were similar to those of developed countries.