"The entire trip linked all of us directly to history."
Multiple Roles as a Teacher Traveler
by Terrina Wong

I believe that teachers travel in multiple roles: teachers as historians, teachers as cultural explorers, teachers as global thinkers, teachers as educators, and teachers as storytellers in pursuit of stories. Our trip to Turkey fulfilled all these roles.

As historians, the entire trip linked all of us directly to history. We became an “eyewitness” to the beginnings of human settlement and to the creation of the first Anatolian Empire by the Hittites. I was personally enthralled by Ankara’s Museum of Anatolian Civilizations and learned about the Hittite civilization that existed more than 3,000 years ago through their cultural objects and the descriptive narrative by Michael Fuller that helped us interpret and understand what we were viewing. We were able to connect history to curriculum as we enthusiastically ventured into ruins, mosques, palaces and museums that documented the Roman and Ottoman empires. I was able to get a “feel” for historical periods. For example, seeing and walking the physical layout of streets and thoroughfares, viewing the similarities and differences in the architecture and design of mosques (galleries, pillars, minarets, domes, windows, Islamic elements as the calligraphy, ablutions, carpets etc.), the cultural objects of the period, meanings behind the calligraphy or symbols, pieced historical pieces together and in context. Going to the monumental Atatürk Mausoleum framed my understanding of his significant contributions that define modern Turkey and why the Turks venerate him.

It was so fascinating to connect historical Turkey with present and future Turkey, the architecture of traditional versus more modern mosques, seemingly endless condominium development, new commercial buildings, and advanced technology (as explained at dinner by our host father who was an industrial engineer). The 500 year + old Grand Bazaar against Istanbul’s current shopping malls with its “Waikiki LC” retail outlets or trendy shops along Taksim! Personally experiencing Istanbul’s horrific traffic problems reminded me of how common big urban issues are globally.

As cultural explorers, this trip was equally rich with experiences. We learned about what makes things Turkish, more about Islam and the uniqueness of Islam in a secular society. Being able to talk to Turks (especially our evening with the Turkish family), I learned how deeply the Turks value their beloved country (the proud flags flying...
everywhere), their “father” Atatürk, family, hospitality, and traditions (especially respect for elders). The mix of cultural influences: Ottoman, Greek, European, Central Asian, Persian, and Islamic are apparent in the country’s architecture, literature, music, food and substantive elements of understanding cultural values.

As global thinkers, it was interesting to acquire bits of insight into how Turks are dealing with global issues, especially related to diversity: political, religious, social and economic diversity (haves v. have-nots), and the environment. We partially witnessed street protests in voicing support of the Kurds in Turkey, and commemorations of the Battle of Gallipoli (Çanakkale) in March 1915. We took photos of recycling bins on the streets of Istanbul, learned about the economy of Turkey and Turkey as an investment environment from representatives from the Turkey Prime Ministry (Investment Support and Promotion Agency). The image of countless minarets made it easier for us to imagine the 3,000 mosques in Istanbul alone, but we equally made note of the Catholic churches and Jewish synagogues. I appreciated our session with the Writers and Journalists Foundation and to learn more about the Gülen movement with a focus on interfaith dialogue. Women in Turkey, as evidenced, in part, by their healthy representation in the sciences at Yeditepe University, appear to have an opportunity towards equality and status. Yet, female teachers I talked to indicated women need to work to help contribute to their family, but, are still required to maintain all the responsibilities at home associated with motherhood and raising a family.

As an educator, visiting schools was very insightful and being able to talk directly to the students was an extraordinary opportunity. A quotation by Atatürk reflects the reverence for teachers in Turkey (transcribed from his Mausoleum in Ankara):

“Teachers are the one and only saviors of the nation.”
(October 14, 1925)

Visiting both public and private educational institutions provided a variety of settings for us to observe. I was equally impressed with all students, regardless of their economic status. The students seemed excited about their learning and eager to study hard to reach their aspirations to become economists, engineers, or lawyers. It was apparent Turkey is striving to produce a youth in skills that will help develop the nation; that is, students seemed rather unanimous in acquiring skills in engineering, economics and law and were earnest to share they wanted to
earn a comfortable living - in keeping with Atatürk’s belief that:

“Science and technology are the most reliable guides for everything in the world for civilization, for life, for success.”

(September 22, 1924)

As educators, Ken Winter’s article expressed our findings and experiences beautifully. I have gathered many emails of Turkish students eager to communicate with American students. I spoke with a very intelligent, eager student from Üsküdar American Academy, president of their Model U.N. Club, who is anxious to become a journalist. Her enthusiasm and confidence impressed me. I will link the Model UN club there with our school’s Student World Leaders Club.

The public school Duzce Fen Lisesi was equally interesting. Many students shared that it was the first time they met Americans and how excited they were to meet us. We really felt special.

As a storyteller in pursuit of stories, I will never forget the hospitality extended to us by our Turkish hosts, whether it was at an official meeting, in a carpet store, at a school or restaurant. The deeply embedded cultural value of making guests feel welcomed and important will never be forgotten. The individual calligraphy of our names by Mr. Ibrahim Anli is a gift I shall always treasure.

Other memorable stories related to our group of very unique individuals and the warm collegiality, trust, and friendships that were formed. Who can forget Scott in the Military Museum as one of the corp soldiers in the classroom? Greg’s quips in the back of the bus? Geoff’s playfulness with the Turkish students? And our infamous Mikey! I believe that professional networking and collegial bonds made during travel contribute to personal change.

May I extend my deepest appreciation to Alam and Melinda, Serkan, Barbara and Julie for a most extraordinary trip. If there was a way to render our trip into a visual gift, it would belong in the museum we went to that held all the precious gifts
to the Ottoman Empire! Thanks also to the Middle East Studies Center at OSU, and the Niagara Foundation. I hope our paths will cross again.

Winter, Kenneth. “North Central instructors travel to Turkey to study education system.” Petoskey News. 10:19 AM EDT, April 4, 2012. Ken was one of the participants on the trip. URL: http://www.petoskeynews.com/community/pnr-north-central-instructors-travel-to-turkey-to-study-education-system-20120404,0,22283,print.story

View of the Bosphorus from Topkapı Palace.

Shopping.

Fun in the relics of Iznik

Soldier at Atatürk’s mausoleum in Ankara.

Turkish textiles.

Hitite Lion
One of the beverages we enjoyed while we were in Turkey was Sahlep. This milk-based hot beverage is thickened with the root of the wild orchid, Orchis Maculata, or Orchis Militaris. It is supposed to have various curative properties which were valued by the Ottoman Sultan and the public at large. These are still valued and the drink is popular street fair during winter months. Unfortunately, there is a limit to this natural resource and some are concerned that the orchid population in Turkey is in danger of extinction due to this popularity.
**Articles:**

Blog entry on Sahlep in Istanbul:
http://intransit.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/01/30/sweet-winter-treat-sahlep/

The electronic version of “A Modern Herbal” by Maud Grieve, originally published in 1931, article on Orchids used for Sahlep:

Article on the orchids’ endangered status in Turkey:
Turkey Global Connections Study Tour 2012

March 15 - 25, 2012

Introduction

The Middle East Studies Center (MESC) of the Ohio State University (OSU) collaborated with Niagara Educational Services to bring 20 high school and community college teachers and scholars to Turkey March 15 – 25 2012 (see participant/organizer biographies in Appendix II, and daily activities in Appendix I). These educators teach at institutions across the U.S., from Hawai’I to New York City, and the state with the most representation was Michigan, with 4 participants teaching at institutions there. Including the 4 organizers (See Appendix III for biographies) there were 24 individuals. The Center also co-organized a trip with the Niagara Foundation in 2011 in which we took 14 educators (See details: http://mesc.osu.edu/Bulletin/AU11.pdf).

Mutual understanding, with a focus on education, was the theme of the trip. The itinerary included several school and university visits, sharing meals with Turkish families in their homes, participation in a sermon and prayer at a mosque, discussions with government officials, and a visit in one of the most advanced laboratories in the field of science.

By sharing our experience and knowledge, also share teaching resources for K-16 education and beyond, we intend to build a community of policy leaders and educators in both countries. The itinerary included the capital and a visit to the Turkish Ministry of Education to learn about the country’s centralized educational system. Very fortunately, we were able to meet with the Director of Foreign Relations, Dr. Ziya Yediyildiz. The participants also visited public and private universities and high schools. See Appendix I for the full itinerary.

This group was extraordinary and their level of engagement and willingness to share their experiences and reflections. Our guide to Istanbul’s history, Dr. Aykut AYIK, a faculty member at Istanbul University, was impressed, noting that this group asked many well-informed questions. A post-trip survey was sent out and 9 out of the 20 participants were also interviewed for their feedback after the trip. The data from those sources and many pre- and post-trip email exchanges were analyzed for the evaluation section below. There is enough data for quite a lengthy academic study. However, for the purpose of this brief report, only a selection of the most salient information relating to how the trip impacted its participants is included.

Purpose and Goals

The purpose of the trip is to create a community of educators in Turkey and the United States and to create Turkish-American intellectual exchange and resource sharing. The rationale is that, while global connections in the classroom by way of technology or through actual visits are becoming more widespread, they can be sporadic. In creating a transnational community, avenues may be opened up
which would allow continuity for these connections, and more opportunities to gain intercultural and political awareness of current and historical Turkish contexts before traveling. In addition, we exchanged knowledge about Turkey in the 21st century by “reply all” emails prior to the trip to begin developing content more inclusive of Turkish and global perspectives. The intended outcomes related to that purpose follow.

- Instructional Materials on Turkey, for K-16 and the community at large.
- Transnational partnerships between Turkish and American teachers and schools, inclusive of study tours, online communication, and collaboration on instructional materials.
- Online platforms and methods for communication focused on teaching and curriculum (and the challenges of implementing state curricula).

As a result of the trip, and of last year’s trip, we have begun holding conversations through video conference with colleagues all over the U.S. and Turkey to create Turkish-American intellectual exchange and resource sharing, “Turkish and U.S. Educators Talk”. We have created a beta web site for this purpose: https://sites.google.com/site/turkishanduseducatorstalk/

In our first conversation we discussed issues related to global education in both countries, and the specific phenomena we encounter as we teach for a global perspective. Participants included professors from Istanbul University, Anadolu University, and Old Dominion University who research and teach about global education and Turkey, in addition to outreach professionals from the Middle East Outreach Council. If you would be interested in joining these conversations, please get in contact with the Assistant Director of MESC, Melinda Mcclimans (mcclimans.2@osu.edu).

Recruitment and Application Process

In October we sent an announcement that we were accepting applications for the Turkey Study Tour. This was distributed by partners such as then MidWest institute for International Studies, the Middle East Outreach Council and on listserve World 727 run by Global Education Professor Merry Merryfield. Each of these sources cater to classroom teachers who have had training in global and area studies. We received 26 applications from which we selected 20 to participate in the program. We selected teachers who:

- have had extensive experience abroad, or domestic intercultural experience.
- are currently teaching about the world, distant local perspectives, and diverse perspectives in their local contexts.
- use technology to connect to classrooms around the world.
Pre-trip Preparation

The organizers sent a pre-trip orientation email and a survey on March 7th to gather health information, learn more about participant interests, about their individual orientations within a group dynamic, and any get general feedback regarding their concerns.

The pre-departure survey received some critique, but was received quite well overall. One participant found it patronizing, particularly the request to refrain from side conversations. Most participants, however, agreed with the idea of creating a positive group dynamic together. The survey appeared to be effective because it let the group know we expected this of them, and they followed through and went beyond expectations in regard to engagement and caring attitudes.

We also set expectations by holding pre-trip workshops, one online and one near the airport, in which we gave scholarly information but we also emphasized the values we thought would improve everyone’s experience on the trip. For example, we stated the importance of active listening, to each other and our hosts, while in Turkey. One of the participants pointed out that he felt that particular piece really set the tone and had a positive impact on his experience. As everyone, including each of the organizers, was a teacher, it was important to re-orient from being the speaker predominantly to being a good listener.

Economics was a major part of the webinar's content, and upon arrival in Istanbul members of the Turkish government’s investment promotion agency gave a presentation on the current state of the Turkish economy. This helped tie together subsequent information from schools, universities and government in regard to global competition, and the incredible growth Turkey's economy has seen over the past five years.

One of the pre-trip concerns that we weren’t expecting was in regard to internet access. Since many of them teach online classes they would be in need of communication with their classes. Fortunately, the hotels had internet access but it can be hard to predict how reliable such access can be. We may decide to use the same hotels again for this reason, but internet access will be a priority. We found that having teachers who teach online courses to be a big benefit in regard to creating online content post-trip, and being more apt to take part in online conversation.

Participants and the Group Experience

We traversed Istanbul and Ankara in a bus that became our home away from home. We witnessed or engaged with numerous communities and facets of society, whether part of the networks of our guide, the schools, neighborhoods, or broader communities such as the scientific community. Such spaces and connections, though not always visible, are tangible in people’s experience and are made real by a group with a cohesive mentality. Physical spaces can provide a contain and define a particular community, such as the space of a mosque or a school. The major example for our group was the bus, which become a metaphor for "us." We continued to refer to the bus as a metaphor, or aspects of experience on the bus in group email exchanges.
Another example of community-defining space from our trip was the Seih Eyüp mosque, where we experienced the Sunday morning prayer and sermon afterward. While we saw many mosques on the trip, and all are considered to be sacred spaces (even though many have officially been converted into 'museums'), this was the only one not expecting tourists. This particular activity from the trip was unique because it was not readied for outsiders, but was, as it is normally, targeted to locals and pilgrims. Most visitors are adherents to the religion and have knowledge of the history and the unique features of this particular mosque, while we learned through observation and peripheral participation.

The mosque is connected to the life of the prophet's companion, Ayub, and is believed that the natural spring which feeds the mosque contains water of the Zam Zam spring of Mekka. Many of the participants in the after prayer sermon cup their hands in supplication, or Du'a, asking for God's assistance on something. We women stood in the back, quietly observing while the women performed prayer and listened to the sermon, the men of our group were not visible to us once we separated into the gender-specific areas of the courtyard. Little did we know that two of our group (men) were participating in the prayer. Someone beckoned them to join, so they got into a prayer line.

It is difficult to choose only one more example as we visited a wide variety of public and private spaces, each with value and particular significance. These included Turkish homes where we had dinner, classrooms, cafeterias, playgrounds, university and pre-collegiate school campuses, school conference rooms, a laboratory, a journalism office, a government meeting rooms (Ministry of Education and Istanbul Governor), places of worship (some re-purposed as museums by the Turkish government), Ataturk’s mausoleum, museums, restaurants, markets, streets, gas stations, hotel lobbies and meeting rooms, ruins and ancient walls, an ancient castle, a boat, the plane over, and others.

Outcomes and Products

There were several tangible outcomes from the trip in addition to the less-quantifiable, but perhaps more important, sense of community that developed amongst the participants. The following products from the trip will be made available online through OSU’s Knowledge Bank (http://kb.osu.edu – go the The Middle East Studies Center Community). Please also see the Middle East Studies Bulletin from Spring of 2012 (http://mesc.osu.edu/Bulletin/Spi2.pdf) for an overview of the trip, and an article written by participant, Terrina Wong, Outreach Specialist at Punahao School, Hawai‘i.

Kenneth Winter, Adjunct Journalism and Political Science Professor at North Central Michigan College, wrote and published several news articles reporting on his experience and knowledge gained from the trip, as well as a full-length report on Fetullah Gulen (Appendix IV).

Kerri Finlayson, professor of anthropology and sociology at North Central Michigan College, is organizing a conference on Turkey at her college to address current issues and raise awareness among local classroom teachers at multiple levels. Kenneth Winter and several of the trip organizers will present.
Dara Weller, Director of Gifted and Talented at St. Stephens Indian School in St. Stephens, Wyoming, created a lesson plan on Islam and the Ottoman Empire, which will be featured in our Knowledge Bank (kb.osu.edu) collection.

Michael Fuller, Professor of Behavioral Sciences (specifically Anthropology) at St. Louis Community College – Meramec, created online Photographic Collections of Seljuk and other artifacts and archeological forms he observed on the trip. [http://users.stlcc.edu/mfuller/turkey2012.html](http://users.stlcc.edu/mfuller/turkey2012.html)

Organizer Middle East Outreach Council President, Barb Petzen, created photographic documentation of the trip. See her collection online: [http://www.flickr.com/photos/37358431@N05/collections/72157629244133988/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/37358431@N05/collections/72157629244133988/)

Berkeley Carroll School “is an elite private co-ed school for children in PreK and kindergarten through grade 12. Berkeley Carroll is one of the oldest college prep schools in Brooklyn and Manhattan” It was also well-represented on the trip, with three of its faculty members participating. When the trip was over, they created activities at their school about Turkey. Participant Kenneth Winter also joined them at the school to teach their students about journalism.

Lorne Swarthout, trip participant and history teacher at Berkeley Carroll, posted about it on the school’s blog, here: [http://worldaffairsbreakfastclub.blogspot.com/2012/05/turkey.html](http://worldaffairsbreakfastclub.blogspot.com/2012/05/turkey.html)

Julie Waage, who participated last year, and was a part of the leadership team this year, has implemented a great deal about Turkey into her classroom. She has had several speakers connect form Turkey to discuss issues in the region and historical topics. As she is currently she is teaching geography, the director gave a lecture to her students on people and places in Afghanistan through a video conference connection into her classroom, as well. Afghanistan is one of the many central Asian regions with populations speaking Turkic languages. Thus a diverse and authentic perspective on Turkey and Turkic peoples is included in her teaching, much of which is drawn from her experience in Turkey.

*Support and Funding*
MESC and Niagara co-organized the tour, with MESC taking the lead domestically, and Niagara taking the lead in Turkey. Participants paid $1200 each to register. Participants were also responsible for their trips to New York City. Niagara funded the airfare from New York City to Istanbul; local transport in Turkey, including to Ankara, Iznik, and the return to Istanbul; the lodging while in Turkey; the meals; entrance to museums and historic sites; and other miscellaneous costs which arose on the trip. We had many generous hosts in Turkey, some who welcomed us into their homes who we would like to thank here. We especially thank Mehmet Ilker Bey, President of Ilkerler Tarim, for hosting dinner in the Khedive’s Palace, for which we were honored.

MESC recruited teachers from P-12 schools and community colleges with the help of their partners in national outreach, The Middle East Outreach Council, the Midwest Institute for International Studies, and Professor Merry Merryfield. We take this opportunity to thank them for their support, which made the trip possible. MESC administered registration for the participants, pre-trip orientation, post-trip assessment and related instructional resources development. We also thank our Title VI grant office and the department of Education for their continued support through the years and for funding payments for instructional materials from both trips to Turkey. These will be available in the Middle East Studies Center’s community in the Knowledge Bank at OSU (kb.osu.edu).

Evaluation

We interviewed participants after the trip and have extensive email correspondence to draw from as we evaluate the trip. This process will inform our planning for next year’s trip, and we hope will deepen our understanding of the trip experience. Due to the large amount of data, a full analysis is not available here, but a brief summary of what we observe in the data.

The participants were particularly impressed with the labs at Yeditepe. Professor Şahin’s down-to-earth attitude about his work there, and his openness made it especially rewarding. His colleagues and the graduate students we meet were equally hospitable. They also appreciated the chance to interact with school communities and families, and to have the time to talk one-on-one with individuals in each place. There was an appreciation for the history and underlying values of Turkish culture, and an enthusiasm to share what was learned with colleagues back home. A remarkable part of the groups interaction were the continual group emails which were intellectually stimulating, humorous, and profoundly caring.

Conclusion

The trip has been very helpful in strengthening the Center’s networks in Turkey, in producing educators who are enthusiastic about teaching about Turkey and in creating opportunities to discuss the policy issues related to global education in both the United States and Turkey. Those are the non-tangibles, but they are perhaps the most powerful results. In regard to concrete products from the trip, articles, blogs, instructional materials and quite a volume of high-quality, educational photographs, and now several lesson plans made by this and last year’s participants constitute a formidable body of instructional support materials. These, and the participants of the Turkey trips themselves, will continue to engage with
scholars and educators through online forums and video discussions. We consider this number and quality of outcomes to have long-term impact locally, nationally and internationally.
Appendix I – Turkey Trip Itinerary

Itinerary

Thurs, Mar 15 New York
12:00 PM Pre-departure orientation at the Hilton, JFK
3:00 PM Meet at JFK to Check-in
5:45 PM Flight to Istanbul, Turkish Airlines

Fri, Mar 16 İSTANBUL
9:15AM Arrive in İstanbul Atatürk International Airport (IST)
Workshop on Turkey
Hotel Check In - İstanbul
Bosphorus Cruise
7:30 PM Dinner at Kubban Restaurant

OVERNIGHT IN İSTANBUL
Sat, Mar 17 İSTANBUL
8:00 AM Breakfast
9:00 AM Discuss Purpose of the Trip, Culture and Cultural Differences, Diverse classroom expectations
10:00 AM Galata tower
11:15 Jewish museum
12:30 PM Lunch, 2:00 Spice Bazaar
1:30PM military museum
4:00 miniatürk
7:30 PM Dinner with Turkish family

OVERNIGHT IN İSTANBUL
Appendix I – Turkey Trip Itinerary

Sun, Mar 18 ĖSTANBUL

6.00 AM Eyup Sultan Camii, observe morning prayer
7:30AM Breakfast
8:30 AM Talk about ideas for teaching about what was seen yesterday, group work to sketch role-playing activity
9:00 AM Presentation by Aykut AYİK, Professor, Istanbul University
9:30 AM Explore with Professor AYİK (focus is on history) TOPKAPI SARAYI (Topkapi Palace)
2:00 PM lunch
3:00 AYASOFYA MÜZESİ (Hagia Sophia Museum)
4:00 Sulaymaniyah Mosque
7:30 PM Dinner at Khedive's Palace

OVERNIGHT IN ĖSTANBUL

Mon, Mar 19 ĖSTANBUL
9:00 AM Breakfast at the hotel
10:00 AM Karya Church/Mosque/Museum
11:30 AM Panorama museum, lunch at 1:00
2:00 PM Take public transit to KAPALI ÇARŞI (Grand Bazaar)
5:00 PM Spice Bazaar
7:00 PM Meet for dinner and to share experiences

OVERNIGHT IN ĖSTANBUL

Tues, Mar 20 ĖSTANBUL
8:00 Breakfast
Appendix I – Turkey Trip Itinerary

9:00am Lecture/discussion
10:00 am YEREBATAN SARNICI (Basilica Cistern)
11:00 SultanAhmet Camii (BlueMosque), hippodrome
1:00 lunch at school (melinda contacting school)

Dinner on your own

OVERNIGHT IN İSTANBUL

Wed, Mar 21
8:00 AM Breakfast at the Hotel
9:00 AM Board Bus to go to Ankara - lecture on bus
2:00 lunch
3:00 public school in Bolu

7:00 dinner
8:30 PM Hotel registration

OVERNIGHT IN ANKARA

Thurs, Mar 22 ANKARA
8:00 AM Breakfast and check out at the hotel
9:00 AM Lecture/discussion
10:00 Visit to Education Ministry of Turkey
11:30 school visit
1:00 lunch
Appendix I – Turkey Trip Itinerary

2:30 Ankara castle and archeological museum
4:30 haci bayram
5:30 return to hotel then free time

OVERNIGHT IN ANKARA
Fri, Mar 23
8:00 breakfast
9:00 lecture/discussion
10:00 writers and journalist foundation - explain about the fetullah Gulan movement
12:00 Observe Friday prayer
1:00 lunch at private school, followed by school
3:00 Bilkent
5:30 return to hotel, Professor Elvan Gunel, Anadolu University (oldest university in Turkey) to give presentation, 6:30 dinner, then to bar or nargila

OVERNIGHT IN ANKARA
Sat, Mar 24
7:00 AM depart, Breakfast on bus
9:00 AM Maybe anadolu
11:00 AM Lunch at Iznik
12:00:00 shopping
3:00 PM Bus to go to Istanbul
6:30 PM Dinner
8:00 PM check-in, hotel TBD
Appendix I – Turkey Trip Itinerary

OVERNIGHT IN ISTANBUL

Sun, Mar 25 Back to USA

7:30AM Breakfast at the hotel

8:00 AM Bus to go to Istanbul Airport

11:30 AM Flight to USA (New York JFK Airport) by Turkish Airlines

2:45 PM Arrive in New York
## Participant Information

Additional biographical information for each participant is located at [https://sites.google.com/site/turkeydeparture2012/home/bios](https://sites.google.com/site/turkeydeparture2012/home/bios)

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### Appendix II - Participants

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<td>Dara</td>
<td>Weller</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>St. Stephens Indian School Gifted and Talented Director</td>
<td>P-12</td>
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<td>Kenneth</td>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>North Central Michigan College Classroom Teacher</td>
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<td>Terrina</td>
<td>Wong</td>
<td>Hawai'i</td>
<td>Punahou School Outreach Director</td>
<td>P-12</td>
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</table>
Organizers of the Trip

Serkan Aykan

*Title/Affiliation:* Executive Director of Niagara Foundation Ohio Chapter

Mr. Aykan earned his bachelor’s degree in Science Education. After he graduated from university, he taught English as a second language and Science in private schools in Kazakhstan, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan. He also worked at Wisconsin Career Academy as a Science teacher and project coordinator. He was an assistant principal and science teacher at Science Academy of Chicago. After the completion of his duties at the Science Academy of Chicago, he started at the Niagara Educational Services as Educational Director and vice president of the Board. Then Mr. Aykan and the NES board founded Turkish American Society of Chicago under Niagara Educational Services. He was the founder CEO of Chicago Turkish American Chamber of Commerce. Before he came to Columbus, he was serving at Niagara Educational Services as Board President. He is with Niagara Foundation Ohio Chapter for one and half year. He is residence of Columbus with his wife Fatma and their children, Fehime and Orhan.

Alam Payind

*Title/Affiliation:* Director of the Middle East Studies Center (The Ohio State University)

Dr. Alam Payind has been the Director of the Middle East Studies Center (MESC) since 1986, a senior teaching member of the International Studies Program and the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures department, a liaison for the Office of International Students and Scholars, and a member of University's International Programs Task Force. Born and raised in Afghanistan, and previously a holder of government and academic positions in Kabul, he speaks Pashto, Dari and Urdu with native fluency. He continues to conduct field work, provide consultations on a regular basis in Afghanistan and has visited the country 8 times since September 11th, 2001. He travels extensively within the Afghan borders, and during one recent trip he was a witness to the Taliban's resurgence in Qandahar.

Besides being a professor at the Ohio State University, he is still part of the faculty at Kabul University in Afghanistan, and is a consultant to the new Afghan government in its educational reconstruction efforts. In late 2006, Dr. Payind was offered the position of Ambassador of the Afghanistan to the United Kingdom which he turned down for personal and professional reasons. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science and Higher Education, as well as an M.A. in Political Science in 1977 from Indiana University, his M.Sc. in Higher Education from Indiana University in 1972; and his BA in Political Science & Islamic Law from Kabul University in 1966.

Dr. Payind served in the Afghan government as the Director General of Cultural and Foreign Relations, and was a professor at Kabul University before the Soviet invasion in 1979 forced him
to seek refuge in the US. Dr. Payind has seen Afghanistan through many phases: under King Zahir Shah, President Dawud, the ten-year Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the Mujahiddin regime, followed by the Taliban regime, and the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, and subsequent Karzai government. He has been back to Afghanistan six times since the establishment of the Karzai government, and plans to go again in June. His combination of academic qualifications and life experience uniquely qualifies him to give the cultural, historical, and current social context for recent events.

Melinda McClimans

*Title/Affiliation:* Assistant Director of the Middle East Studies Center (The Ohio State University)

Melinda began studying Arabic at Worthington high school (Linworth Alternative Program) and, in 1993, she and her family moved to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where they lived for a year and a half. During that time-period she also studied Arabic in Cairo and Tunisia. In 1994 she enrolled in Franklin College in the Italian-speaking area of Switzerland and obtained her Bachelor's degree in 1997, worked as an intern at the United Nations in Bangkok after graduating, and obtained a Masters degree in Arabic at OSU in 2004. She speaks Italian, and has research capabilities in French and Arabic.

Her current position as Assistant Director of the Middle East Studies Center at the Ohio State University (OSU) entails program and budget management, grant proposal writing and reporting, training and staff development, educational material creation, and outreach to the P-12 community. Teacher training is a major priority of the Center, and has become important in her life as well; two years ago, she enrolled in OSU's PhD program in Social Studies and Global Education. Her focus is on adult education, particularly teacher training. She organizes day-long seminars for teachers and teaches the Center’s Summer Institute on Middle Eastern Cultures.

Julie Waage

*Title/Affiliation:* Classroom Teacher and Content Specialist (McLain High School, Jefferson County Public Schools, Colorado)

Julie grew up in Greeley, CO where her love for international experiences began with a series of summer trips to Mexico in order to help teach classes and construct schooling facilities at an orphanage. In school at the University of Wyoming, Julie spent two years studying political science and international relations where the thirst for knowledge about the world continued to grow. This area of study was shifted to a focus on teaching when she transferred her studies to the University of Northern Colorado for a B. A. in Social Sciences and Secondary Education.

Following her undergraduate studies, Julie began teaching while pursuing a Masters of Education in
Appendix III – Organizers of the Trip

Curriculum and Instruction at Grand Canyon University. During summer vacations and winter breaks, Julie and her husband, Karl, were able to spend some time traveling both domestically and abroad.

Last March, both Julie and Karl were able to join OSU and the Niagara Foundation on the first annual Turkey Tour. This experience has opened many other opportunities including writing curriculum and serving as a guest speaker to classes throughout her school district.

Julie is currently a high school social studies teacher and content specialist at an alternative high school for at-risk youth. She has worked on several committees to write World History and Government curriculum for grades 7-12 across the school district. She is presently working on her Educational Specialist degree and administrative licensure through the University of Colorado at Denver.
Turkey at a Crossroads–Fethullah Gülen

By Ken Winter
Adjunct Instructor
North Central Michigan College
Petoskey, Michigan

The Ohio State University
Middle East Studies Center

Central Michigan University
Department of Political Science
PSC 590 Independent Study
Dr. Orlando J. Pérez, Chair

August 10, 2012
Abstract: Turkey is at a crossroads. Turkey’s future as an evolving democracy remains unclear, but Fethullah Gülen, a moderate Islamic teacher now in his early 70s and living in the United States for health reasons, has become a significant force. His writings, preaching and the evolving Gülen Movement has captured support from a great number of people and are viewed by others as controversial by others. Because the movement has no organization or structure like traditional Turkish political parties or organizations, Gülen’s effort to expand civil liberties and strengthen democracy in Turkey has caused suspicion and ended up into a six-year trial unsuccessfully attempting to prosecute him for crimes against the state.

Turkish Provincial preacher, scholar, writer and poet Fethullah Gülen has inspired a worldwide network of Muslims, even in the United States where he now lives, that does not seek to subvert modern secular states although his movement has raised concern to the point he was once tried, unsuccessfully, for crimes against the state. The exact number of supporters of the Gülen movement is not known, as there is no membership system, but estimates vary from 1 million to 8 million. (White, 112). The movement consists primarily of students, teachers, businessmen, journalists and other educated professionals, arranged in a flexible organizational network. In-depth ethnographic evidence of the Gülen and his movement represents a new discussion by political scientists and sociologists of the politics between Islam and the civil society in secular states, especially when following micro-sites of interaction between the Gülen movement and state from Turkey to Kazakhstan. (Turam, 3)

Veteran CBS 60 Minutes correspondent, described him in a May 14, 2012 nationwide U.S. broadcast:
“He's the spiritual leader of a growing and increasingly influential force in the Muslim world -- known as "The Gülen Movement" -- with millions upon millions of disciples who compare him to Gandhi and Martin Luther King. Gülen promotes tolerance, interfaith dialog, and above all: he promotes education. And yet he's a mystery man -- he's never seen or heard in public -- and the more power he gains, the more questions are raised about his motives and the schools.” (Stahl)

This author first became acquainted with Fethullah Gülen and the Gülen movement after selected by the Ohio State University’s Middle East Study Center with financial and logistical support from the Niagara Foundation to travel 10 days, March 15 to 25, 2012, to Turkey with a group of 24 professors, classroom teachers (K-16), to visit schools, learn about Turkish culture from university professors, and meet with their counterparts and other officials in Turkish government. Each participant paid $1,200; the sponsors largely subsidized other expenses. In-country costs such as lodging, food, transport, and much of the international travel was covered, except to getting to the New York JFK International Airport group departure point. The Itinerary included visiting schools, universities, academic engagements, and audiences with local and central government officials, dinners with local scholars and business leaders, and historic sites in both İstanbul and Ankara.

Dr. Alam Payind, Director, and Melinda McClimans Assistant Director, of The Ohio State Middle East Studies Center, identified the goals and outcomes of its Turkey Global Connections Trip for Educators and Policy Makers when reporting on the first 2011 trip in the department bulletin and 2012 trip application:

**Project Goals:**

- To build a community of policy leaders and educators in Turkey and the United
States, and by sharing our experience and knowledge, create teaching resources for K-16 education and beyond.

- To identify a set of shared academic and social goals within the realm of global education.

**Desired outcomes:**

- Instructional Materials on Turkey, for K-16 and the community at large.
- Transnational partnerships between Turkish and American teachers and schools, inclusive of study tours, online communication, and collaboration on instructional materials.
- Online platform for communication focused on teaching and curriculum (and the challenges of implementing state curricula).

This paper discusses Fethullah Gülen, his life, writings and preaching and his Movement; Gülen, the Movement and Turkish Politics; Turkey’s History, Culture, Religion & Politics; and Turkey’s Press, Media and Defamation Laws. The paper specifically deals with questions from these five areas:

1. Who is Fethullah Gülen?
2. What are the Gülen Movement and its impact on education, political and social development?
3. What are the motives behind the Gülen Movement?
4. Is there transparency in Gülen movement or is it as clandestine as some purport?
5. What has been the Gülen Movement’s recent impact on secular government, particularly in Turkey?

In 1995, Fethullah Gülen became known beyond among a small circle of religious people in Turkey, as he also became a focus of public attention and interest and even a national event within a short period of time. Leading journalists interviewed him and reported on his ideas on current issues and his private life.

“These interviews have presented a moderate figure, who respects his ‘nation’ and ‘state’, admires Picasso’s work, as well as the poems of the socialist Turkish poet, Nazim Kikemet. As a result, secularists who disapproved of the rise of the Islamic political party, Refah Partist, appreciate Fethullah Gülen. The see in his personality a moderate person, far removed from the radical concerts of political Islam. In fact, he became popular among liberals concerned with finding an
example of ‘broad-minded’ and ‘modern’ leader among Islamist leaders.” (Baskan, 850)

To better understand Gülen ‘s impact in his home country, it is important to understand the politics of engagement between Islam and the secular state. Dr. Berna Turam, associate professor of sociology and Middle East studies at Northeastern University, writes that key to understanding the relationship between Islam and civil society is the state. She said neither religious diversity in the public sphere nor the opposition by Islamic forces is a sufficient condition for civil society and democratization in the Muslim context.

“Civil society stands for the quality of the broader social world, not a particular realm of social life, as it connects both private and public spheres to the state. Since democracies have the potential to become sporadically uncivil and intolerant, the proliferation of civil society depends largely on the state-Islam interaction from state repression to the negotiation and co-operation in secular republics.” (Turam, 22)

She writes that although religion and nationalism are not inherent propellants of civil society, we are currently witnessing that Islamic nationalists have come to play pivotal roles in current transitions in the Muslim world, which has taken place in Turkey and Gülen . She opines that the long-term implications of the Gülen ‘s movement’s planned projects to revitalize faith are “overshadowed by the movement’s unintentional capacity to create alternative pathways of engagement”. (Turnam, 23)

The history of the Turks goes back as early 11th Century AD with the migration of the Oghuz into the Anatolia as part of larger expansion forming the Seljuk Empire and overtaking the Byzantine Empire in 1701. Europe eventually referred to the area as “Turchia” and it was eventually invaded and fell under Mongol rule when some Turkish states were formed with one of these states developing into the Ottoman Empire and
eventually conquering Istanbul, being identified by the Europeans as they became a large empire, called the Turkish Empire in Europe. Next, the Empire expanded to Eastern Anatolia, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Europe and North Africa. Although the Ottoman Empire's power and prestige peaked in the 16th century; it did not fully reach the technological advance in military capabilities of the Western powers in the 19th century. Nevertheless, Turkey managed to maintain independence though some of its territories were ceded to its neighbors and some small countries gained independence from it. Turkey was defeated in World War I with most of Anatolia and Eastern Europe, including Istanbul. A group of young military officers formed a government in Ankara, elected Mustafa Kemal as its leader and won a successful battle against the Allied Forces to establish the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and proclaimed Ankara its new capital on October 29, 1923. On November 1, they formed a new parliament formally abolishing Sultanate and ending 623 years of Ottoman rule. As Turkey’s first president, he introduced many social reforms including creation of a secular government. The Turkish parliament presented Mustafa Kemal with the honorific surname "Atatürk" (Father of the Turks) in 1934. Turkey remained neutral most of World War II and eventually in February, 1945, and became a charter member of United Nations and joined NATO in 1952, helping to stop communist expansion in the Mediterranean. Originally a single party country, Turkey became a multi-party democracy after 1945 interrupted by a series of four brief military coups d'états in 1960, 1971, 1997 and 1980 that have kept the secular government in check from Islamic control. Since 1984, the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) has tried to overthrow the Turkish government without success, but have claimed 40,000 lives. (Kinross, 16-18),
Gülen was born in 1938 in a village near Erzürüm in eastern Turkey. His father was an imam (an Islamic leadership position, often the worship leader of a mosque and the Muslim community). He learned from his father, the elements of Islam as well as some Persian and Arabic. Gülen was first appointed in 1957 to a mosque in Edrine and about the same time was introduced to the teaching of Said-I Nursi (1876-1960), a politically active Kurdish preacher. Nursi became the founder of the Nurcu (Followers of Light movement). His message was that Muslims should not reject modernity, but find inspiration in the sacred texts to engage it. Gülen put Nursi’s ideas into practice when he was transferred to a mosque in Izmir in 1966, where political Islam never took root. He organized summer camps, taught the tenets of Islam and established a network of student boarding schools known as “lighthouses”. They sought to transfer the loyalty of Muslims from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish secular government. (Gülen)

“Official toleration allowed Gülen to concentrate on what became his life-work—the recreation of a network, first of private schools and residences, then of universities, media outlets and civil society groups as centers of excellence promoting a modern, Islam-based ethical framework. Starting with wealthy businessman of Izmir, Gülen mobilized resources allowing him to control one of Turkey’s leading newspapers, Zaman, a television station and a radio station, as well as a university with campuses in in Istanbul and Ankara. Like his schools, Gülen’s other activities try to be self-financing, competing on quality.”

Over the years, the Gülen movement has extended his reach from Turkic to the republics of the former Soviet Union and then to the successor states of the Soviet Union, the Balkans and finally the west, becoming more pronounced in the United States in 1997. The Gülen Movement is considered a strong example of moderate
Islam in the contemporary world. For example, on the day after 9/11 attacks, Gülen ran a full-page ad in the *New York Times* condemning the attacks and said the perpetrators were not representative of Islam. His writings support his moderate views as they promote love and tolerance through inter-cultural dialogue echoed at conferences and symposiums. Rice University in Houston, TX, hosted a first-time conference, Nov. 12-13, 2005, “Islam in Contemporary Turkey: the Contributions of Fethullah Gülen Movement in Thought and Practice.” He has also met with many world religious leaders including Pope John Paul II at the Vatican in February, 1998. (Oxford) (Ebaugh, 2) (Gülen)

“His message is one of tolerance, respect, interfaith dialog and centers on the need to create respect, interfaith dialog and centers on the need to create bridges between scientific and technological advances in the Muslim world achieved by means of education. As Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi describes Gülen, ‘Gülen defends a ‘progressive notion of Islam in which Muslims are able to totally engage the world without any fear or prejudice’.” (Ebaugh, 2)

Gülen’s moderate role in Turkish politics has not been without controversy and criticism. Young Muslims who argued that he should not have humiliated himself by going to the Vatican criticized his 1998 dialogue with Pope Paul II. (Ebaugh, 38) While the movement is thriving both in Turkey and worldwide, some are vehemently opposed to him and his movement, fearing that he is attempting a political takeover of Turkey, like that orchestrated by the Ayatollah Khomeni in the 1970s in Iran. Khomeini replaced the modernization efforts of the Shah backed by the U.S. and in place, a very conservative, Islamist government. Beginning in 1999, Gülen was put on trial for attempting to overthrow the government. He has since lived in exile in the United States. He was
acquitted of the charges in 2008. He has been seen as supportive of Turkey’s current Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, but news emerged in May 2012 of a possible germinal conflict between the two. Gülen has not gone without harassment from different quarters, which have feared his movement and message as an attempt to overthrow the civil society, especially governments. Gülen started being prosecuted in an Ankara State Security Court (DGM) after they first appeared in 1961 after the 1960 coup d’état. They were abolished in 1973, but returned under the 1982-military drafted Constitution to try “offenses against the indivisible national or territorial integrity of State, against the free democratic order, or against the Republic.” DMGs had broad rather expansive distinction, which made them a forum for political prosecution, like those against Gülen. Turkey abolished the courts in June, 2004, through a constitutional amendment to comply with a European accession agreement and transferred Anti-Terror prosecutions to regional High Criminal Courts. (Harrington, 65-66)

Berna Turam writes, “Following the fall of the Soviet Union, Islam has come to be singled out in the west at the major threat not only to Western democracies and also to individual liberties in the Muslim context,” She also points out there is no consensus on the basics as to whether contemporary Islamic movements undermine and threaten civil society or contribute. Gülen has had to endure political criminal prosecutions twice after a coup d’etat. He had been “tried” apparently for a being a religious leader interfering with a secularist regime. He was first prosecuted in May 1971, under a broad and vague charge of “carrying out propaganda” to undermine the Turkish State and replace it with a religious state. He was found guilty in the Izmir Martial Law Court, without a
lawyer representing him, and sentenced him to three years of “heavy” imprisonment and banned from civil service, which prevented him from being an imam since it is a civil service position. An appeals court agreed with the guilty conviction, but set aside his punishment as it thought it was too excessive. The same prosecutor filed a 2000 indictment of attempting to take over the state for religious purposes with a final decision delayed for five years and assigned to a High Criminal Court in Ankara (June, 2004) after the DGMs were abolished. The case was eventually voluntarily dismissed after the prosecutor appeals criminal court acquittal and Supreme Court of Appeals upholds earlier appellate panel decision by 17-6 vote (June 24, 2008) In the meantime, Gülen had applied and through some legal wrangling was granted permanent resident status on October 10, 2008 by the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services after first coming to the U.S. for medical treatment under a B-2 Visa on March 21, 1999 and later changed to I-129 (religious worker) through June 19, 2003 and later several other immigration statuses. (Harrington, 147-154; Turam)

Gülen, a single man, retired from formal preaching duties in 1981. From 1988 to 1991 he gave a series of sermons in popular mosques of major cities. In 1994, he participated in the founding of "Journalists and Writers Foundation" and was given the title "Honorary President" by the foundation. Inspired by Gülen, who served as in his honorary position for the first ten years, the foundation was initiated by a group that organized a headquarters in Istanbul. The core of the group are the Abant Platform Meetings, “a venue for debate that highlights different perspectives on the solutions to common challenges and also the human values that participants share.” They attempt to organize Turks of diverse backgrounds, Muslims, secularists, modernists, atheists
and Christians to discuss common positions on key contemporary issues. Major funding comes from their publishing unit with sells books that cater primarily to intellectuals. Gülen-written books have sold over 50,000 copies, and CDS netting between $300,000 to $500,000 a year. (Ebaugh, 89) (Turkey)

In 1999, Gülen emigrated to the U.S. for medical treatment as a diabetic with serious heart and kidney problems, though arguably it was in anticipation of being tried over remarks (aired after his emigration to US), which seemed to favor an Islamic state. When this video surfaced in which he seems to order his flock to surreptitiously take over key government positions in Turkey in stealth Islamic coup. After Gülen was accused of treason by the government at the time, he decided to stay in the Poconos -- even after he was cleared in 2008 in abstentia. He is lives in a private room and comes only into a prayer outside the door although for the last year has not accepted visitors. (Turkey) (Stahl).

In her 60 Minutes Interview, Stahl claims The CIA and US government are supporting a Turkish Islamic cult Imam Gülen while he sets up hundreds of charter schools in the US to push his sect's ideology. The Gülen Movement supports the privatization of education in Turkey, the jailing of journalists who expose their connections with the police and are used as US CIA operatives throughout Central Asia and the world. They also receive $150 million in public funds in the US for their charter schools while public schools are being closed. (Stahl)

Stahl reports there are a total of about 130 charter schools in 26 states. Together they form the largest collection of charter schools in the country. They’re founded and run by
immigrant businessmen and academics from Turkey.

Why are they building public schools in Texas and the United States?, asks Stahl in her 60 Minutes television segment.

“The answer seems to lie with this mystery man: the Turkish imam Fethullah Gülen who tells his followers that to be devout Muslims they shouldn't build mosques - they should build schools; and not to teach religion, but science. In sermons on the web, he actually says: "Studying physics, mathematics, and chemistry is worshiping God." So Gülen's followers have gone out and built over 1,000 schools around the globe - from Turkey to Togo; from Taiwan to Texas.” (Stahl)

The schools appear not only well financed, but selective and disciplined as this author observed in Turkey, with Gülen schools accepting only the highest national achievement scoring students and receiving top academic honors. The schools offer high standards of scientific education and a competitive technology and secular curriculum, which are taught in English. The teachers pay visits to students’ homes and are directly asked to support the ‘educational ‘ principles, which “aim to reconcile scientific competitiveness, faith-based disciplines and loyal nationalism.” Very little social sciences, humanities or fine arts are offered, but athletics (basketball and soccer) and other after school club participation, such as Model United Nations, are required. (Turkey) (Turam)

In addition to his worldwide network of schools, Gülen has developed mass media holdings including Turkish-language TV, an English-language TV station in the United States, a Turkish-language newspaper, (Zaman), an English-language newspaper (Today's Zaman, magazines and journals in Turkish, the English The Fountain
Magazine and Arabic Hira, an international media group and a radio station. The movement also has Gülen-inspired Turkish banks and hospitals. (Ebaugh, 84, 92-94)

Currently, the Gülen movement is the largest and internationally most recognized Islamic movement in Turkey and rejects any potential form of radical Islam. They refused to vote or support the Islamic parties, Welfare and Virtue, which had radical factions. Both parties were eventually banned by 2001. He did not make any comment regarding the closures of the Welfare Party in 1998 or the Virtue Party in 2001. He has met some Turkish politicians, but he avoids meeting with the leaders of Islamic political parties.

The new pro-Islamic party, Justice and Development (JD), came into power in 2002, and displays similar attributes shared by Gülen. They not only want to maintain a secular government, but also want to maintain dialogue with the United States and European Union, with application to join now pending. The movement also sees Asia as fertile for growth and expansion. (Turam)

From a political science standpoint, the movement is difficult to measure as it has no central organization, membership or structure, relying on its growth from the bottom up and support coming from those that want to make individual contributions in a community to support a school, hospital or even a special event to promote Gülen. Ankara Middle East Technical University professor Elisabeth Ozdalga, in her published journal article, “Redeemer or Outsider? The Gülen Community in the Civilizing Process”, uses late German sociologist Norbert Elias to explain the unorthodoxy
involved with examining this movement using a traditional political science lenses looking at established political movements and structures because the Gülen movement appears so elusive and hard to identify like most power structures. She writes about Elias’s theory of European civilization relating to the monopolization of political power to create sovereign states, which was one of the key fundamental aspects of the development of modern European civilization. “His main thesis is that as the legitimate use of the means of violence is monopolized by the state, the ground is laid for more peaceful social relationships with the borders of each sovereign political unit,” Ozadalga writes. She points out where Turkey is a country in which traditional structures of political authority based on local and tribal communities are breaking up with the development of new networks (i.e. Gülen Movement) marked by a low level of social integration at the national level. She said the Gülen community is a social network that is different from traditional groups, such as the tarikats (Sufi Lodges). The Gülen movement is a conglomerate of networks around four main clusters of activities: economic enterprise; educational institutions; publications and broadcasting and religious gatherings or conversation meetings. (Ozdalga).

This elusive or shapeless movement causes both acceptability and apprehension, especially after 9-11, observes Turkish researcher Emad Y Kaddorah. Gülen accepts the secular system in Turkey, seeing compatibility focusing on tolerance and dialogue. While he has denied political ambitions, many claim Gülen helps set the political agenda in Turkey through his followers involved in the ruling AKP party, as well as his vast media empire, financial institutions and banks, thousands of schools, universities,
students’ residents, associations and foundations. (Kaddorah)

“Some believe that the model Turkey represents merely serves the United States and Israel’s interests and both of them have actively encouraging it to adopt the role. In the troubled Middle East, no Western power has the same freedom to maneuver as Turkey. The West, especially the United States, encourage Turkey’s soft influence in stabilizing the Middle East.” (Kaddorah)

Turkey’s application to join the European Union (EU) was made in April, 1987. It has been an associate member of the (EU) and its predecessors since 1963. After the ten founding members, Turkey was one of the first countries to become a member of the Council of Europe in 1949, as well as a member of NATO in 1952. It was officially recognized as a candidate for full membership to the European Union on December, 1999. Turkey’s accession talks have since been stalled by a number of domestic and external problems. Both Austria and France have said they would hold a referendum on Turkey’s accession. Cyprus has also been opposed to the move because of the 1974 Turkish invasion and ongoing conflict including being the only country that recognizes the 1983 independence of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Due to these setbacks, negotiations again came to a halt in December 2006, with the EU freezing talks in 8 of the 35 key areas under negotiation. The key areas range from free movement of goods, industrial and free enterprise to justice, freedom & security. (Turkey)

In its overview for 2011, Freedom House, an independent non-profit watchdog organization that monitors freedom, scores Turkey as “partially free” rating “freedom”, “civil liberties” and “political rights” as 3, as well as rating the Press and Internet as partially free. In its overview, it writes:
“Turkish referendum voters approved constitutional changes that included a restructuring of the civilian judiciary and limitations on the jurisdiction of military courts. The package also allowed for the prosecution of the leaders of the 1980 military coup…. The amended constitution grants women full equality before the law. The World Economic Forum ranked Turkey 126 out of 134 countries surveyed in its 2010 Global Gender Gap Index. Women hold just 50 seats in the 550-seat parliament, though that is nearly double the figure before the 2007 elections. Domestic abuse is reportedly common, and so-called honor crimes continue to occur”. (Freedom House)

In early August, the Turkish military retired all 40 generals and admirals currently on trial on the charges of plotting to overthrow the Muslim-lead government. The arrested generals had been awaiting promotions, but instead, the Military Council appointed a new commander of the Second Army and leadership, who are responsible for defending Turkey against possible military attack by Syria, Iraq or Iran. (Bilefsky)

For Europe, Turkey also represents concerns because of its Muslim character and large population that could continue to flood Europe with even more migrant workers, causing even more economic and political unrest. It is also nervous about its borders with unstable neighbors such as Iran, Iraq and its neighbors in Caucasus, which is why some in the EU have expressed misgivings on how compatible Turkey’s membership is with Europe. They also see Turkey acting increasingly as a European country in the Middle East, rather than a Middle Eastern country in Europe. The earliest date that Turkey could enter the EU is 2013, the date when the next financial perspectives (the EU’s six year budgetary perspectives) will come into force. Ankara is currently aiming to comply with EU law by this date. (Kaddorah) (Turkey)

As one scholar observes:

“It is not yet clear whether the Gülen movement, like Opus Die, will outlive its
founder. In any event, it is a unique and highly successful manifestation of flexible, modern Islam in a globalized setting, and it is likely to have a lasting impact on the modernization of Islam and its opening with Western Ideas.” (Oxford)
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**Books**


Ken Winter, an instructor at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey, was one of four educators from Michigan selected to join 24 other high school and college instructors across the United States to study Turkey's education, culture and political systems, March 15-25, through The Ohio State University Middle East Studies Center and the Niagara Foundation. Others included Kerri Finlayson of North Central Michigan College in Petoskey, Colleen Pilgrim of Schoolcraft.

Ken Winter  Special to the News-Review

It's a high stakes game when it comes to education in Turkey.

College admission is based on only one criteria, one test score, no more. Entrance exams have to be taken in the 12th grade to continue and there's only one chance to take the exam.

The test determines everything -- whether or not one goes to college, and then which college. Some 1,500,000 students compete for the 10,000 available college slots. Outside Turkey, top choices for American universities are Harvard, Yale and Princeton, with others like the Big 10 now attracting interest.
In Turkey, the college choice determines career choice. Top picks: Law, engineering, medicine and economics, because that's Turkey's economic ladder for success. It doesn't even matter what one has done outside the test, like extracurricular activities, community service or other criteria used in American college entrance decisions. Turkish high school counselor Benju Shepard says the college entrance exam is a two-step process that starts with talking about college in about ninth grade.

"Students must decide whether they want to attend a Turkish or foreign university or look at both," she says. "The selection process begins as early as eighth grade for those wanting to get into a good school when 1 million high school-bound students take a standard exam."

Private schools are the best pathway for college success. Private schools, which mostly teach lessons in English, take only the top 1 percent, adds private school headmaster Eric Trujillo of Istanbul's Ueskuedar American Academy, that was started in 1873 by Congregational missionaries.

The former Fort Collins, Colo., educator, who took over as headmaster last year, says private high schools, like public schools, now must follow strict curriculum guidelines established by the Turkish Ministry of Education in 1986, and have moved away from an American-centric system brought by missionaries. Turkey established its own national system with Turkish books, and required emphasizing science, economics and math. Language skills are high, as well as required physical education ranging from basketball to volleyball.

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Although its school calendar resembles those in the U.S., Turkish demands on high school students appear greater with eight classes a day ranging from 45 minutes to two hours each, with a 40-minute lunch and two 20-minute free periods. For example, at American Academy, students are also required to be involved in at least one of the 70 school activities or clubs; most participate in two or three. Most popular are the student-run Model United Nations, German and French clubs. Boys and girls sports include volleyball, soccer, flag football and swimming.

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Even with its recent push to revolutionize its education system, Turkey ranks only around the global average in terms of access to education. It ranks only 76th out of the 110 countries in the Lagatum Prosperity Index's education section that annually assesses the economic growth, personal well-being and quality of life in 100 countries.

There is an under-representation of girls in primary and secondary education. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Turkey ranks 32nd among 34, and 40 percent of the Turkish 15-year-old students cannot reach basic competence level in mathematics. Turkey ranks a dismal 43rd out of 44 countries in the English Proficiency Index. Others criticize Turkey educators for not giving students enough time to develop themselves freely focusing more on standardized test results.

Even with the daunting picture of Turkey's education system and early mixed results so far from its FATIH Project, European strategist and Turkish scholar Arda Bilgen says there are many who feel the revolutionary effort will help the "new Turkey" join the ranks of other global actors, "after all investing in the human is required and critical to Turkey's political stability, economic growth, scientific and technological progress, and socioeconomic and humanitarian advancement."
Education in Turkey: An investment in the ‘human’

Ken Winter was one of four from Michigan selected to join 24 other high school and college educators from across the United States to study Turkey’s education, culture and political systems, March 15-25, through The Ohio State University Middle East Studies Center and the Niagara Foundation. Others included Kerri Finlayson of North Central Michigan College (Petoskey), Colleen Pilgrim of Schoolcraft Community College and Youmin Lee of Oakland Community College.

By KEN WINTER
It’s a high stakes game when it comes to education in Turkey. College admission is based on only one criteria—test score—no more. Entrance exams have to be taken in the 12th grade to continue and there’s only one chance to take the exam.

The test determines everything—whether or not one goes to college and then which college. Some 1,500,000 students compete for the 10,000 available college slots. Outside Turkey, only the top 1 percent, adds private school headmaster Eric Trjillo of Istanbul’s Uskudar American Academy that started in 1873 by Congregational missionaries.

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For example at American Academy, students are also required to be involved at least one of the 70-school activity or clubs most participate in two or three. Most popular are the student run Model United Nations (MUN) German and French Clubs. Boys and girls sports include volleyball, soccer, flag football and swimming.

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Even with the daunting picture of Turkey’s education system and early mixed results so far from its FATIH Project, European strategist and Turkish scholar Arda Bilgen says there are many that feel the revolutionary effort will help the “new Turkey” join the ranks of other global actors, “after all investing in the human is required and critical to Turkey’s political stability, economic growth, scientific and technological progress, and socio-economic and humanitarian advancement”.

In Turkey, the college choice determines career choice. Top picks- Law, engineering, medicine and economics because that’s Turkey’s economic ladder for success. It doesn’t even matter what one’s done outside the test-like extracurricular activities, community service or other criteria used in American college entrance decisions. Turkish high school counselor Benju Shepard says the college entrance exam is a two-step process that starts with talking about college in about 9th grade.

“Students must decide whether they want to attend a Turkish or foreign university or look at both,” she says. “The selection process begins as early 8th grade for those wanting to get into a good school when 1 million high school bound students take a standard exam.”

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A Turkish Revolution in Education

April 5, 2012

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Turkey at a Crossroads

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The test determines everything – whether or not one goes to college and then which college. Some 1,500,000 students compete for the 10,000 available domestic college slots. Outside Turkey, top choices for American universities are Harvard, Yale and Princeton with others like the Big 10 now attracting interest.

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