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Keynote speech at 16th Annual Haitian Independence Day Gala in Massachusetts

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015—last revised January 10, 2015, thanks to helpful feedback
Finishing the un-finished:

1. Festering symptoms of an unfinished revolution:
   a) high rates of socio-economic inequality
   b) low access to quality education
   c) daily violations of Haitians’ human (linguistic) rights
   d) disdain of national culture and national language

2. Essential ingredients for one cure:
   Greater access to, and improved quality of, education through Kreyòl, digital technology and interactive learning ... as one path to:

   Finishing the Unfinished Revolution: Strengthening Democracy and Development in Haiti

By Ron Daniels

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
Nèg mawon: Senbòl endepandans Ayiti
L’union fait la force?

“Former Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis ... said the problem in Haiti and what worries her is the lack of transcendence, that people don’t think beyond their own self-interests.”

(PBS Interview with Hillary Rodham Clinton)
“L’union fait la force”?
Haitian Revolution, 1791–1803
Then 2 centuries of *un*-finished revolution
Symptom of unfinished revolution: “A schoolroom in Haiti”
* a poem by Kenneth Koch (1925-2002)

- Published in Koch’s final collection: *A Possible World* (Knopf, 2002)

- Written after a trip he took to Haiti in 1975, invited by the American ambassador to teach poetry in a Port-au-Prince lycée (Lycée Toussaint Louverture)
A Schoolroom in Haiti

In Haiti, Port-au-Prince, a man walked up and down the school hallways carrying a bull whip.

Oh, he never uses it, the school administrator said. Its purpose is only to instill good discipline in the students.

They were from fourteen to seventeen years old,
Boys in white shirts and white short pants. They stood up
And wouldn’t sit down till the Minister of Education Beckoned to them to do so.
They concentrated very hard on the ideas they were being given for writing poems.

After the officials left, they started writing their poems in Creole.
After four or five days they were asking to come forward and sing to the rest of the class these Creole poems. They did so.

This experiment was never repeated. The government became even more repressive.
One poem begins “B is for black, Bettina, a negress whom I dote on.”
The assignment was a poem about the colors of the vowels or the consonants in the manner of Rimbaud.
What has happened to those poems? What has become of those students?
I have the poems in New York. In Haiti I had asked to teach ten-year-olds but I had been told
They won’t be able to write well enough. The reason was they didn’t know French,
Not well enough to be able to write poetry. Their native language was Creole,
The language they spoke at home, but at the Lycée Toussaint L’Ouverture
And every other school, the instruction was in French.
They were stuck behind the French language. It loomed over them a wall
Blocking out everything:
Blocked mathematics, blocked science, blocked history, blocked literature
While Creole stayed back with them, cooking up poetry
But that was all. For the most part, except for a few rich boys
Who could afford to study French in the afternoons

They were left fatally behind

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
Unfinished revolution—“élites” vs. “moun an deyò”

Much rests on Haiti elite
Stung by losses, the wealthy consider fleeing or rebuilding

PETIONVILLE, Haiti - Days after the powerful earthquake, the wide-screen TVs still flashed inside the exclusive walled estates high on a verdant hill in this suburb. Servants poured espresso into fine china, delivered glasses of water on silver trays, and tapped cupboards filled with enough vegetables and pasta to last for weeks.

The question now is whether the wealthy elite that controls the bulk of the economy will help rebuild Haiti and create a thriving middle class. Eighty percent of Haitians live in poverty, while a handful of often light-skinned descendants of the French, who ruled the country’s coffee and sugar slave plantations until Haiti declared independence in 1804, and other groups control most of the wealth.
Unfinished revolution: “Intellectuals” vs. “vagabonds”

They’re shocked.
All they see is Martelly, Martelly, Martelly.

DIRECTED BY BEN PATTERSON  PRODUCED BY KARYN RACHTMAN & PRAS MICHEL
Why this centuries-old struggle about language and education in Haiti?
“Education for ALL...”

Haitian Creole ("Kreyòl") and the battles it has triggered throughout Haitian history:

1. Lessons about language and power....
   a) ... from *Haitian* history
   b) ... with consequences for *World* history

2. Education vs. *mis*-education in Haiti
   a) Education for “ALL”
   b) What does “all” really mean?

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
Power, knowledge and language

(1) “The progress of knowledge presupposes progress in our knowledge of the conditions of knowledge” (Pierre Bourdieu 1980)

(2) From the start, *language and education have been enlisted for exclusion and for the creation and transmission of inequities.* How so?

(3) Language is a tool for, or against, “élite closure.” Language is a “perfect instrument of empire.”
What is Francophonie?
Giscard d’Estaing’s answer
(French President, 1974–1982):

... language as “perfect instrument of empire”

“There is an interdependence between the economic power of a nation and the radiation of its culture. I mean, interdependence, advisedly.

This means not only that the material presence of a nation opens the way to its intellectual presence, but also that this, in turn, thanks especially to the vehicle of language, contributes to economic dynamism on world markets. This is why the radiation of French culture in the world must be ceaselessly reinforced and extended.

This is why this linguistic and intellectual community one calls Francophonie must be considered an essential element in our political policy.” (April 21, 1974, Le Monde, via David C. Gordon)
French President Hollande’s neo-colonial proposal to Haitian President Martelly on October 31, 2014

« Enfin, il y a la francophonie, c’est un lien majeur que la langue française nous permet d’avoir avec Haïti et nous faisons en sorte qu’il y ait dans les lycées qui sont construits aujourd’hui en Haïti le plus d’enseignement en Français, par des Français quand c’est possible ou par des francophones parce que nous ne voudrions pas que ce qui fait l’identité d’Haïti, la langue française, puisse se perdre. »

http://www.boursorama.com/actualites/france-haiti-martelly-evoque-un-partenariat-pour-l-education-ae69f38cb59bf8a08f286a1949fc4165

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
President Hollande and the Francophonie movement contradict Cartesian best practice in education:

Descartes in *Discourse on the Method* (1637): “... if I write in French, which is the language of my country, rather than Latin, which is that of my teachers, it is because I hope that those who use only their unalloyed natural reason will be better judges of my opinions than those who swear only by the books of the ancients. And as for those who combine good sense with application, whom alone I wish to have as my judges, I am sure they will not be so partial to Latin that they will refuse to grasp my arguments because I express them in the vernacular.”

Now, dear intellectuals, educators and policy makers: Please re-read Descartes’s plea (for teaching in the native language) while replacing “French” by “Kreyòl,” “my country” by “Haiti,” “Latin” by “French,” and “the ancients” by “the former colonial power.”
“Today [January 1st, 2015] marks the 211th anniversary of Haiti’s independence. In other words, 211 years since a bunch of slaves under Jean-Jacques Dessalines's leadership fiercely defeated the French army whose core mission was to keep the masses in slavery forever. In recent years the last three French presidents, Jacques Chirac, Nicolas Sarkozy, and the current president François Hollande have in one way or another shown amnesia or misunderstanding of the Haitian linguistic reality and of facts regarding the history between Haiti and France. ...”
**Nimewo 5**: Sèl lang ki simante tout Ayisyen ansanm, se lang kreyòl. Kreyòl ak franse, se lang ofisyèl Repiblik d Ayiti.

**Nimewo 32-1**: Bon fòmasyon pou tout sitwayen, sou kont Leta ak moun ki alatèt chak zòn peyi a. Se pou yo rive mete lekòl gratis pou tout moun. Se pou yo kontwole si moun k ap fè lekòl yo, alawotè, ni pou lekòl Leta, ni pou lekòl prive.

**Nimewo 32-2**: Premye travay Leta, ak moun ki alatèt chak zòn peyi a, se fè yon jan pou tout moun rive al lekòl. Se sèl jan yo va kapab mete peyi a sou wout pwogrè vre. Tout moun ki vle bay konkou nan travay sa a, fèt pou yo jwenn ankourajman ak avantaj nan men Leta.

**Nimewo 32-3**: Tout timoun dwe fè klas primè yo. Lalwa va di ki pinisyon yo prevwa lè sa pa fèt. Leta dwe bay élèv lekòl primè tout liv ak tou sa ki nesesè pou yo aprann, gratis.
1987 CONSTITUTION OF HAITI

ARTICLE 5:
All Haitians are united by a common language: Creole. Creole and French are the official languages of the Republic.

ARTICLE 32:
The State guarantees the right to education. It sees to the physical, intellectual, moral, professional, social and civic training of the population.

ARTICLE 32-1:
Education is the responsibility of the State and its territorial divisions. They must make schooling available to all, free of charge, and ensure that public and private sector teachers are properly trained.

ARTICLE 32-2:
The first responsibility of the State and its territorial divisions is education of the masses, which is the only way the country can be developed. The State shall encourage and facilitate private enterprise in this field.

ARTICLE 32-3:
Primary schooling is compulsory under penalties to be prescribed by law. Classroom facilities and teaching materials shall be provided by the State to elementary school students free of charge.

ARTICLE 32-4:
Agricultural, vocational, cooperative and technical training is a fundamental responsibility of the State and its communes.

ARTICLE 32-5:
Preschool and maternal training, as well as nonformal education are encouraged.

ARTICLE 32-6:
Higher education shall be open to all, on an equal bases, according to merit only.

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
(1) *French is spoken fluently by some 5-10% of the population while all Haitians speak Kreyòl—thus, the vast majority speak Kreyòl only.*

(2) One widespread practice in Haitian schools is to “teach” and test students in French—“teaching” (to the test) traditionally amounts to rote memorization of French texts.

(3) The **1979 Réforme Bernard** had the following goals: (a) **promote Kreyòl** as a *transitional* language of instruction in the first three years of elementary school; (b) then **transition into French** in subsequent years; (c) with the ultimate goal of producing a **nation of Kreyòl-French bilingual speakers**.

(4) The **Réforme Bernard** was never fully implemented and, by all accounts, ended in massive failure. “[S]upported by cooperation institutions and international donors, this reform was not desired by the State or the government which, to the contrary and in various ways, would spend their time from 1979 to 1986 simply *sabotaging it in a more or less open or more or less insidious way*” (Guy Alexandre 1999, emphases mine)

To date, “education for ALL” has never existed in Haiti

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
“Education” in French

Third-grade teacher’s multiple choice question: “Trees are:
A: living beings  B: non-living being  C: beings that possesses [sic] feet”

Student’s version with answer “B” and a new “C”: “Trees are:
A: living beings  B: non-living being  C: beings that possesses [sic]”
Among nations independent for more than 100 years, Haiti is the only country with one truly national language but where the school system uses a language that is neither understood nor spoken by the majority of its population (Yves Dejean, Lekòl tèt anba ... )

The use of French in Haitian schools (un-sheltered im-perfect French immersion”)! is one major factor that causes the academic failure of the majority of Haitian children.

In effect French is a tool for “élite closure”—for the creation and transmission of power for a small group, especially via the education system).

Countries that do not use their native languages for formal instruction have the worst records of academic achievement and national development (Walter 2008; Hebblethwaite 2012).

How to improve education and social justice in Haiti?
(1) Basic principle for education for all: “Education is best carried on through the mother tongue of the pupil” (UNESCO 1953 on Fundamental Education; as in Descartes 1637!)

(2) The use of Kreyòl as the pupils’ native language taps into Haitian children’s innate creativity and puts the children at ease in the classroom.

(3) Kreyòl-based education protects and promotes Haitian children’s basic human rights along with Haitian culture’s long neglected potential for child-centered education based on guided discovery and experiential/constructivist learning (“learning by doing”).

(4) This is a welcome improvement on the rote-memorization “teaching to the test” style that is so heavily entrenched in the tradition of French-based “education” (mis-education?) in Haiti.
What’s next?
What can Haitian(-American)s do?

Si ou gen zòrèy tande, si ou gen bouch pale
Si ye pa sa peyi nou an li pwal koule
Tankou yon bato ki plen refije
Ayisyen chache Bondye ankò
Ki lè sa pral chanje?
Èske n ap kite bato a koule?

http://nyti.ms/1ohO6dj

A Creole Solution for Haiti’s Woes

By MICHEL DeGRAFF and MOLLY RUGGLES

AUG. 1, 2014
Bato a pa fouti koule.

Ayiti ap libere

Investiture des membres de l'Académie du Créole haïtien

La Présidence de la République, l'Université d'État d'Haïti et le Comité d'initiative pour l'établissement de l'Académie du Créole Haïtien annoncent qu'aura lieu jeudi 4 décembre, à l'Hôtel Kinam II de Pétion ville, à compter de 9h15 a.m., la cérémonie d'investiture des 33 premiers Académiciens et académiciennes du Créole Haïtien.

Éducation : Le travail colossal de la Commission nationale de la réforme curriculaire démarre

Samedi, 20 Décembre 2014 18:22   AL/HPN   Societe & Culture - Societe

Deux semaines après son installation, la Commission nationale de la réforme curriculaire (CNRC), se met au travail. Un atelier de deux jours a été lancé, ce samedi 20 décembre, à l'hôtel Ritz Kinam II (Pétion-Ville) par le ministre Nesmy Manigat, dans le but de développer une lecture commune du mandat et des livrables pour une nouvelle école haïtienne, a constaté Haiti Press Network.
Examples of international collaboration with Haitian schools

(1) What can we learn from the mouths of kids? **Examples of active learning and story-telling by and for kids** at the *Lekòl Kominotè Matènwa*

(2) Partnerships between schools and universities in Haiti and abroad for the production of Kreyòl-based **technology-enhanced and open education resources** for active learning.

(3) **These resources have to be produced in Kreyòl** to become fully effective in Haiti. Here too, access to linguistically and culturally appropriate content is **essential** to successful education, alongside collaboration with educators and software developers with a social conscience.

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
I can make parade.

I can ride a bike.

I can ride a horse.

I can draw a kite.

I can draw a train.

I can draw a helicopter.

I can water the flowers.

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
Best-practice principles from
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
U.S. Curriculum Standards (1989)

1. “Concrete experiences should ... provide the means by which [students] construct knowledge. From these experiences they abstract more complex meanings and ideas.”

2. “The use of language, both written and oral, helps students clarify their thinking and report their observations as they form and verify their mathematical ideas.”
Chrisla and Dieuricarme’s math duet
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CU4NuFcK8D0
Les Bourricots sont Utiles
Donkeys Are Useful

Alsacrycy Jean

Liv Nan Lang Manman Nou
Livres dans notre langue maternelle
Mather Tongue Books
Chen an ak zo a

Ti moun ki rakonte istwa sa a se:
Audrey, Eben, Grace, Nuriel ak Quinn
Elèv premye ak dezyèm ane nan
lekòl Fayerweather Street School
nan Cambridge, MA

The Dog and the Bone
Audrey, Eben, Grace, Nuriel and Quinn

Students from the Fayerweather Street School
First and Second Grade
Cambridge, Massachusetts - 2011

Hi Regina,
I hope that you like this "card."
It's a book

That we made (Audrey, Eben, Grace, Me and Quinn) for the matenwa kids to read

Date: Nov 8, 2011
Motivation for LKM study

Conclusions of World Bank/USAid/RTI study (2010):

1. In Haiti, nearly half of the children tested in Creole or French at the beginning of grade 3 could not read a single word.

2. The low reading scores indicate a widespread failure of schools in Haiti: from the very first few years of school, children are being handicapped into rote-learning without understanding.

3. The results of this study also suggest that World Bank support does not improve students’ reading scores.

4. Students who own books were able to read 5-12 words more than their counterparts who didn’t own any books. Scores for text comprehension were up to 5 times higher for those who own books.

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
In 3rd grade, 23 words/minute (WB) vs. 60 words/minute (LKM)
Spreading the LKM model

INNOVATION: Teaching & Learning Materials
FRIENDS OF MATÈNWA, INC.

INNOVATION
Mother Tongue Books

INNOVATOR
Friends of Matènwa, Inc.

LOCATION APPLIED
Haiti: Matènwa Community Learning Center (MCLC), Matènwa, Island of Lagonav

POTENTIAL IMPACT
Pilot project includes five schools, children in grades 1-3

Development & Education
This village school in Haiti helped propel a national movement to teach kids in Creole

The World in Words
December 22, 2014 - 3:30 PM EST
Reporter Amy Bracken

Spreading the LKM model

Improvement in Early Grade Reading Assessment (“EGRA”) scores in 5 schools in La Gonave that have adopted LKM’s “Mother Tongue Book” approach
Improvement in Early Grade Reading Assessment ("EGRA") scores in 5 schools in La Gonave that have adopted LKM’s "Mother Tongue Book" approach
What about French? Won’t Kreyòl isolate Haiti?

Kreyòl is an **ESSENTIAL AND SOLID building block** for literacy and for learning second languages **including French, English, Spanish**, alongside **science, math, social sciences, etc.**

Teaching in Kreyòl is **best practice** to promote **quality** education, including multilingualism, while enhancing cultural pride, self-confidence and joy:

*Consider Finnish in Finland, Icelandic in Iceland, Korean in Korea...*
La compréhension des mots déchiffrés et des phrases simples

Une fois que le décodage commence à se mettre en place, la compréhension du message doit être l’objectif suivant. Cette étape ne pose pas de difficulté si l’enfant a compris le « triangle de la lecture », c'est-à-dire la nécessité de décoder de façon systématique, sans deviner : d'abord identifier les lettres, ensuite les transcrire en sons, et enfin « écouter » ce qui est dit, en se servant du vocabulaire oral déjà connu (flèches marquées en jaune dans ce diagramme) :

Un objectif légitime est qu’en fin de CP, l’enfant maîtrise cette boucle et puisse donc lire tous les mots et les phrases qu’il connaît à l’oral, et ce dans les deux acceptions du mot « lire » : (1) prononcer le mot écrit à haute voix (2) comprendre de quel mot il s’agit et à quoi il fait référence.

On comprend ici l’importance du vocabulaire oral : au moins au départ (en CP), la compréhension en lecture dépend de la connaissance préalable des mots à l’oral, ainsi que des constructions dans lesquelles ils apparaissent. Par la suite, c’est la pratique même de la lecture qui enrichira le vocabulaire de l’enfant, mais au départ, la connaissance préalable des mots à l’oral facilite grandement leur reconnaissance à l’écrit. Au CP, il faut donc continuer le travail sur le langage oral : tous les jours, une petite histoire peut être lue par l’enseignant ou par un élève plus avancé, et son sens expliqué et discuté. L’objectif est toujours d’enrichir le vocabulaire de 10 à 20 mots par jour.
Most children (those who speak Kreyòl only and who are taught in French) are being harmed from the start.

It’s the written text that triggers literacy through a triangle that connects graphs, sounds and meanings. Children who don’t speak French cannot build such a triangle if their texts are in French: they cannot use their Kreyòl sounds and Kreyòl semantics to process the French text.

The phonemes (sound units) are in Kreyòl.

Word meanings are in Kreyòl.

The graphs in the books are in French.

The words are in French.

@StanDehaene : Mèsi anpil!
The MIT-Haiti Initiative

Main Goal: Promote best-practice principles of pedagogy with two basic ingredients:

1. Kreyòl as language of instruction: for maximum access and to accompany students from where they are now to where they should be in the future

2. Technology-enhanced and open-education resources: so the journey can be interactive, collaborative ("konbit-ory"), constructive, fun and accessible to as many as possible

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
**MIT-Haiti Initiative’s Timeline**

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Symposium at MIT</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>First STEM workshop in Haiti</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>Launch of NSF-funded “INSPIRE” Project</td>
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<td>Two “INSPIRE” workshops held in Haiti</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>MIT and Haiti’s PM Lamothe sign agreement</td>
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<td>Three Ministers attend MIT Sloan course</td>
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<td>2014</td>
<td>MIT Sloan leadership workshop in Haiti</td>
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<td>MIT-Haiti presentation at GoH Council</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>January 2015: “INSPIRE” workshop in Haiti</td>
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<td>Deepening the engagement in Haiti and at MIT</td>
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Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
The Initiative by the numbers

1. 5 workshops in Haiti with follow-up classroom projects and surveys—6th workshop scheduled for January 15-17, 2015
2. 165+ faculty and government officials have attended the workshops; 100+ registrants for January 2015 workshop
3. 35+ universities and schools represented at workshops
4. 50+ apps translated to Kreyòl for biology, bio-chemistry, physics & mathematics
5. 6 online video tutorials for genetics and bio-chemistry in Kreyòl
“Men anpil, chay pa lou...”
“Active learning engages students in the process of learning through activities and discussion in class, as opposed to passively listening to an expert. It emphasizes higher-order thinking and often involves collaboration (Bonwell & Eison, 1991)”

Active learning: Antidote against “par coeur” and the “Martelly syndrome” (from his autobiography):

Pour moi, l'école, au lieu d'aider à développer la personnalité de l'enfant, l'étouffait. Le mode d'apprentissage à répétition basé sur la mémorisation «par cœur» d'une masse d'informations muselait la créativité, empêchait l'épanouissement, décourageait et révoltait cet être en moi qui voulait se trouver, qui avait ce désir de bouger sans cesse, d'avancer plus loin pour trouver ce côté positif de la vie que désespérément je cherchais. Du coup, je me suis distingué par mon indiscipline. Pourtant, l'envie de pouvoir poursuivre mon éducation au niveau universitaire était présente.
Ki sa Inisyativ MİT-Ayiti a ye?

http://haiti.mit.edu/2013/04/23/ayiti-pare-haiti-is-ready/

Haiti is Ready

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
This is a massively cooperative project

(1) Broad partnerships at MIT, with Haitian universities and the Ministry of National Education, and with repositories for technology-enhanced and open education resources—bèl konbit!

(2) Here too, access to linguistically and culturally appropriate content is essential to successful education, alongside collaboration with educators and software developers with a social conscience.

(3) We are creating high-quality and open-education resources for active-learning in Kreyòl—toward “cross-border, collaborative learning and teaching systems” that “enhance critical thinking skills and retain students’ interest in math and science.”

For progress reports on this Initiative, see http://haiti.mit.edu

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015
Challenges and opportunities?

1. Create and disseminate a new *lexicon* of science and technology in Kreyòl

2. Create a new *culture* of deep learning—an antidote against “par coeur” (i.e., against rote learning of texts that few can understand)

3. Enlist the un-ambiguous support of the public and private sectors, civil society and the international community.

**Larger consequences?**

1. Millions of students worldwide speak local languages and are thirsty for science. Can Haiti, again, be at the forefront of a revolution toward liberty and equality?

2. Scientists, engineers and humanists can indeed collaborate in solving global challenges.
haiti.mit.edu

Haitian-Americans United, January 3, 2015