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Address: 11, Portland Road, London, SE25 4UF, United Kingdom

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ANA L. S. LOPES
MARILI M. S. VIEIRA

Ethical Leadership in the Field of Education in Europe: A Comparative Analysis

Evangelia Papaloi

Hellenic Open University, Greece

Aikaterini Balasi

University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Georgios Iordanidis

University of Western Macedonia, Greece

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to explore the characteristics of ethical leadership in the field of education in Europe. In an era, when there are no transcendental principles and universally accepted values and, within organizations, a mainly “situational” and “procedural” ethics has been developed (Voyé, 1999), educational mission, goals and procedures are changing. Thus, it could be extremely challenging to explore aspects of educational leadership that are not considered necessarily self-evident, maintaining at the same time a critical and skeptical attitude regarding power relations and the promotion of moral values and democratic processes at school. The present research was carried out in Greece, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, France and Spain and, the sample consisted of 451 primary and secondary education teachers. The findings of this research demonstrated that, according to teachers’ perceptions, principals at schools- in carrying out their duties- have to develop responsibility and moral values so as not to deviate from the main goals of education, which are system’s eudaimonia through the all-round development of the future citizens of a democratic society (Goldring & Greenfield, 2002). More specifically, teachers from all participating countries affirmed that educational leaders put the emphasis- to a great extend- on core values such as honesty, sincerity, integrity, altruism, trust, rewarding ethical contribution and moral responsibility.

Keywords: ethical leadership, moral values, educational leader’s ethical characteristics

Introduction

Litterature Review

Ethical Leadership Characteristics

The role of leadership could be described as the encouragement of cooperation (Greenberg & Baron, 2013) as well as the contribution to the greater common good of their organization, beyond narrowly understood self-interest (Tsoukas, 2004). Interestingly, behaviors and types of exercising leadership are considered to be vital for establishing ethical standards in modern organizations which have to respond to diverse and multi-level challenges. This requires from the part of the leader to have the willingness and the ability to fundamentally transform, on the one hand, the way organizational members perceive themselves and, on the other hand, the organization's interaction with the wider context, fostering significant changes at the level of organizational learning as well as at the level of collaboration and communication.

Research in the field shows that, during the decision-making process, leaders must have strong moral values (Collins, & Porras, 1994). Values are the compass in one's life, guiding one's action, behavior and targets (Schwartz, 2007; Schwartz, 1992). Ethical leadership is defined as an ethically correct behavior that is promoted and reinforced through meaningful leader-subordinate communication (Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2004), while it focuses on the concept of humanity and justice with the aim of organization's sustainability (Eissenbeiss, 2012). Scholars argue that, in the workplace, leader's ethics and integrity significantly affect employees' performance, prompting them to develop attitudes and behaviors beyond the typical requirements of their role (Nikolic & Halvorsen, 2017; Warr, 2007).

Undoubtedly, in all forms of leadership, there is always a tension between personal & collective goals (von Hippel, Ronay, & Maddux, 2016). In any case, leadership must balance countervailing forces and relationships, create conditions for organization members' development and, serve the "common good" by incorporating the ethical dimension into leaders' practices (Tsoukas, 2004).

Given that there may exist a "dark side" even in charismatic and transformational leaders (Brown & Mitchell, 2010), we assume that, a value-based leadership could serve as an "antidote" to the absence of ethical constructs which may lead to self-serving, toxic (Watt, Javidi, & Normore, 2015), unethical, immoral, narcissistic (Higgs, 2009; Rosenthal & Pittinsky, 2006), irresponsible, ineffective (Brown & Mitchell, 2010; Trevino, Hartman & Brown, 2000), or catastrophic leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999).

According to ethical leadership models deriving from international research, it appears that, central to the topic of ethical leadership are fundamental traits such as the creation of ethical standards (Lee & Cheng, 2011) as well as integrity,

responsibility and moral vigilance (Memiyanti, Putera, & Salleh, 2010). From their part, Spangenberg & Theron (2005), identify six important dimensions of ethical leadership: the creation of ethical vision, cultivation of a culture encouraging the creation of moral behavior, ethical guidance, encouragement of moral behavior, ethical motivation, rewarding, promotion of members' contribution to ethical issues within the organization. Ethical leaders possess integrity, values, set an ethical example and seek moral behavior from their subordinates, giving them opportunities for meaningful work (Nikolic & Halvorsen, 2017 · Brown & Trevino, 2014 · Eisenbeiss, 2012). Furthermore, recent research stresses that ethical leadership is bound to reduce workplace deviance and counterproductive behavior (Den Hartog; Belschak, 2012; Mayer et al., 2010; Moore et al., 2018) and promotes subordinates' moral engagement (Trevino, den Nieuwenboer, Kish-Gephart, 2014), while, it is positively related to followers' positive behavior at work, through prosocial motivation (Li & Bao, 2019).

Under this prism, effectiveness (personal & organizational) depends significantly on fundamental principles that govern human relationships and human organizations. These principles are unchanging over time and interwoven with our society (Covey, 2001) and, act as a 'compass', pointing the way to achieving goals, ensuring that we are moving towards the right direction. More precisely, in the workplace, effectiveness presupposes, above all, the ability of the leader to create a vision and to transmit it, maintaining a kind of creative tension in his/her subordinates that motivates them to self-improvement and self-fulfillment. *Without the dream - the deeper meaning that guides our actions - there is no reason to mobilize in order to do more than our contractual obligations provide* (Tsoukas, 2004:79).

Ethical Leadership at School in Europe: Is It Possible?

Educational leadership practices can be understood as by-products of wider processes transforming knowledge, organisational functioning and learners' subjectivities in fundamental ways (Moore, Mayer, Chiang, Crossley, Karlesky, & Birth, 2018). Murphy (2010) argues that educational leadership practices deviate significantly from theoretical models of leadership, making it imperative to open the dialogue on educational leadership based on three fundamental dimensions of principal's role: as moral supervisor & coordinator of school life, as educator and, as creator of an open learning community, ensuring the conditions of safety, equality, justice and collective decision-making. According to Starratt (2017), principals should cultivate moral values and develop, firstly, responsibility as individuals and as education executives, then, responsibility towards teachers, higher administrative hierarchy and, society and, finally, responsibility for creating and maintaining authentic relationships and a healthy organizational climate. According to the researcher, principals should cultivate three core dimensions/virtues of ethical leadership: the virtue of authenticity, the virtue of presence, and the virtue of responsibility.

Based on the above, we can assume the importance of developing traits and skills of ethical leadership in the field of education. These characteristics may encourage the awakening of moral consciousness and the development of a value system, allowing school members to gradually emancipate themselves, gain control over their life as well as to distance themselves from uncritical identification and passive acceptance of others' expectations. Moreover, these traits could foster one to chart one's own course of action with responsibility and self-awareness, contributing at the same time to system's eudaimonia (collective good) (Papaloi, 2020). Hence, a school leader should have the willingness for continuous development while he/ she has to break with old ways of thinking, with habits, patterns and examples that are outdated and ineffective and do not permit walk safely in a constantly changing environment. Undoubtedly, the key to personal success lies in "building" on solid foundations, attempting to change first from within and, investing in the establishment of harmony and maturity on a personal and interpersonal level (Covey, 2001). Ethical leadership requires commitment to ethical roles, ethical responsibility, adherence to ethical rules and standards, ethical strategy, awareness, altruism, honesty, empathy, authenticity, trust, motivation to co-produce, while involving all members in organizational processes.

Nevertheless, the question is, whether in the field of education, where uniformity and stability are promoted so that everyone complies with administrative directives (Papaloi, Dimopoulos, Koutsambelas, 2021), is possible for the school leader to invest on the ethical aspects of leadership, gain acceptance by the school community and achieve high levels of school's efficiency.

In our society, knowledge should happen among and between people as part of a social construction with a critical side and should be seen as something that includes complex perspectives, reduces insecurity, promotes pluralism, invests on both personal and organisational level and is sensitive to local values and culture (Samier, 2003). Moreover, school as an institution should be conceptualized as a "learning organization" adapting to a constantly changing environment rather than a bureaucratic body pursuing predefined goals set by a central administration (Papaloi, Dimopoulos, Koutsambelas, 2021). Thus, in order to depict educational leadership trends in Europe, one has to place oneself in a wider context of discussion regarding human existence, knowledge and school success and, explore leadership dimensions beyond traditional standards and styles.

Based on the aforementioned assumptions, and, given that in Europe, there are two distinct poles along the centralization-decentralization continuum, analyzing different educational realities as far as ethical leadership is concerned, could shed light to educational leaders' priorities as well as to teachers' aspirations throughout Europe.

Methodology

Scope- Research Questions- Methodological Choices

Studies to date have focused mostly on the composite constructs of ethical and transformational leadership without putting the emphasis on the individual moral leadership behaviors that are most dominant influencers of an effective leader. The scope of this research is to identify the individual ethical leadership attributes and behaviors that contribute to a greater understanding of educational leadership's effectiveness in Europe. More specifically, this study analyses the way teachers in Europe affirm that they perceive ethical leadership traits. In addition, it attempts to compare teachers' perception of ethical leadership behavior among different European countries. Therefore, our research questions are as following:

- What are the main ethical leadership traits perceived by teachers as the most dominant influencers of an effective school leader?
- To what extent school leaders' behavior is perceived as moral by teachers?
- Do teachers from different European countries affirm that they perceive ethical leadership in the same way?

We conducted quantitative research along 6 European countries (Greece, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Spain). More specifically, our sample consisted of 451 teachers (243 from Greece and 208 from other European countries). Participants' age ranged from 23 years old to 58+, they worked at primary and secondary schools, in urban/semi-urban and rural regions and, their professional experience ranged from 1year to 30+years of service.

Our questionnaire was based on the model conceptualized by Mitropoulou, Tsaoussis, Xanthopoulou, Petridis (2014) on ethical leadership traits. The authors, after having systematically reviewed international bibliography concerning ethical leadership, concluded in a model comprising 27 traits/ dimensions of ethical leadership as following: Honesty, Sincerity, Integrity, Rewarding Ethical Contribution, Altruism, Ethical Strategy, Clarification of ethical roles, Model of Moral Behavior, Humility/Lowiness, Green Policy Implementations, Ethical Self-Control, Ethical Vision, Moral responsibility, Ethical vigilance, Ethical Possibility, Development of Ethical Vision, Sharing authority, Development of Ethical Culture, Ethical encouragement, Promotion of ethical education, Ethical Determination/Decisiveness, Collaboration, Ethical Evaluation, Ethical influence of Stakeholders, Trust, Ethical Insight, Ethical Guidance.

In Greece, questionnaires in Greek language were distributed via Google Forms to several Education Offices throughout the country. Participants from the other European countries completed the questionnaire in English via PROLIFIC which is considered to be a very reliable platform among social researchers worldwide.

Data from the two questionnaires were analyzed with SPSS and our primordial concern was to proceed to the necessary reliability statistics (Cronbach's Alpha ,963 for the English questionnaire and ,984 for the Greek questionnaire respectively).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The sample

In total, 243 questionnaires were collected from Greece whereas, 208 questionnaires were completed (out of 303 questionnaires which were distributed via PROLIFIC) by teachers working in Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Germany and France as following:

	Greece		Other European Countries	
	Frequency	Valid Percent %	Frequency	Valid Percent %
Valid	Greece 243	100,0	Italy 23	11,1
			Spain 26	12,6
			France 8	3,9
			Germany 13	6,3
			Great Britain 137	66,2
			Total	207
Missing	System		1	
Total	243	100,0	208	

Gender

In the Greek sample, women represented the 67.5% (N=164), while men represented the 32.5% (N=79). Respectively, from our European sample, the 65,4% (N=136) consisted of women, while the 34,6% (N=72) of men. This proportion is explained by the fact that education is a professional field mostly preferred by women.

		Greece		Other European Countries	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	male	146	61,1	72	34,6
	female	93	38,9	136	65,4

Total	239	100,0	208	100,0
Missing System	4			
Total	243		208	

Age

As far as the age is concerned, 45.9% of the Greek teachers (N=111) were 47-57 years old, 14.9% were 58 years old and above (N=36), 12% (N=30) were 23-35 years old, 27.3% (N=66) were 36-46 years old.

The majority (51.4%) of teachers from other European countries were 23-35 years old (N=107), 31.3% (N=65) were 36-46 years old, 13.5% (N=28) were 47-57 years old, while only the 3.8% of the sample (N=8) were 58 years old and above.

	Greece		Other European Countries	
	Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid 23-35 ys	30	12%	107	51,4
36-46 ys	66	27.3%	65	31,3
47-57 ys	111	45.9%	28	13,5
58+ ys	36	14.9%	8	3,8
Total	243	100,0	208	100,0

Professional Experience

Regarding Greek sample's professional experience, 87 teachers (36%) had 11-20 years' professional experience, 80 (33.1%) had 21-30 years of total professional experience in education, 40 participants (16.5%) had a total professional experience of 1-10 years, while 35 (14.5%) had 31 years and above.

In comparison with data from other European countries, there exist some differences. Teachers with a total professional experience of 1-10 years, represented the 65.4% (N=134), 23.9% (N=49) had 11-20 years, 7.8% (N=16) had 21-30 years of total professional experience in education, while only 6 teachers (2.9%) had 31 years and above.

		Greece		Other European Countries	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	1-10 ys	40	16,5	134	65,4
	11-20 ys	87	36,0	49	23,9
	21-30 ys	80	33,1	16	7,8
	31+ ys	35	14,5	6	2,9
	Total	242	100,0	205	100,0
Missing	System	1		3	
Total		243		208	

Type of educational Institution

The 50.2% of the Greek sample (N=122) worked at primary schools and 49.8% (N=121) worked at secondary schools (Gymnasium and Lyceum). On the other hand, the majority of the European participants (61.8%-N=128) worked at primary schools, while the 38.2% (N=79) at secondary schools.

		Greece		Other European Countries	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Primary school-122	59,8		Primary school- 79	38,2
	Secondary school- Gymnasium-66	27,2%		Secondary school-128	61,8
	Secondary school- Lyceum-55	22,6%		207	100,0
Total					
Missing	System			1	
Total		243	100,0	208	

School Location

As far as the school location is concerned, the 59.8% (N=144) of the Greek sample worked at schools in urban areas, 21.2% (N=51) in semi-urban areas, and, 19.1% (N=46) in rural areas or islands. Respectively, the (47,3%) of the participants from

other countries taught at schools in urban areas (N=98), 91 teachers (44%) in semi-urban areas and, 18 teachers (8.7%) in rural/island areas.

		Greece		Other European Countries	
		Frequency	Valid Percent	Frequency	Valid Percent
Valid	Urban area	144	59,8	98	47,3
	Semi-urban area	51	21,2	91	44,0
	Rural area/ islands	46	19,1	18	8,7
	Total	241	100,0	207	100,0
Missing	System	2		1	
Total		243		208	

Ethical leadership characteristics

Teachers' points in both questionnaires (English & Greek) revealed the importance attached by the sample to almost all dimensions of ethical leadership. More specifically, in Greece the most highly scored traits were honesty (M=4,35), sincerity (M=4,30), integrity (M=4,30), altruism (M=4,16), trust (M=4,09), rewarding ethical contribution (M=4,03) and moral responsibility (M=4,03), whereas, in almost all other ethical traits M ranged from 3,62 to 3,98. In this point, it seems that the less scored traits were ethical guidance (M=3,25), promotion of ethical education (M=3,32), green policy implementation (M=3,43), ethical vision (3,45) and ethical evaluation (M=3,48). On the other hand, the English questionnaire revealed also an interest of the sample on integrity (M=4,09), honesty (M=4,03), sincerity (M=4,03). All other statements are highly scored (M ranges from 3,51 to 3,93), with the exception of "green policy implementation" which was the less scored trait (M=3,43).

	Greece		Other European Countries	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
1. Honesty	4,35	,951	4,03	,947
2. Sincerity	4,30	1,005	4,03	,965

3. Integrity	4,30	1,004	4,09	1,001
4. Rewarding Ethical Contribution	4,03	1,109	3,73	1,107
5. Altruism	4,16	1,057	3,93	1,077
6. Ethical Strategy	3,91	1,164	3,86	1,016
7. Clarification of ethical roles	3,98	1,155	3,55	1,098
8. Model of Moral Behavior	3,96	1,234	3,75	1,087
9. Humility/lowiness	3,95	1,249	3,73	1,142
10. Green Policy Implementations	3,40	1,239	3,43	1,118
11. Ethical Self-Control	3,71	1,168	3,87	1,028
12. Ethical Vision	3,45	1,288	3,66	1,094
13. Moral responsibility	4,03	1,163	3,90	1,086
14. Ethical vigilance	3,79	1,198	3,86	1,039
15. Ethical Possibility	3,83	1,129	3,78	,978
16. Development of Ethical Vision	3,62	1,189	3,72	1,050
17. Sharing authority	3,73	1,220	3,62	1,142
18. Development of Ethical Culture	3,64	1,278	3,52	1,194
19. Ethical encouragement	3,78	1,262	3,66	1,131
20. Promotion of ethical education	3,32	1,350	3,50	1,200
21. Ethical Determination/Decisiveness	3,77	1,257	3,93	1,049
22. Collaboration	3,77	1,270	3,64	1,070
23. Ethical Evaluation	3,48	1,305	3,57	1,047
24. Ethical influence of Stakeholders	3,66	1,217	3,68	1,034
25. Trust	4,09	1,194	3,89	1,076
26. Ethical Insight	3,86	1,217	3,78	1,028
27. Ethical Guidance	3,25	1,334	3,51	1,138

Ethical leadership characteristics and demographic data: correlations

With the view to explore whether demographic data affected teachers' perceptions of ethical leadership dimensions, we conducted tests of independent samples (t-test) for correlations between gender and ethical traits as well as analysis of variance (ANOVA) for correlations between age/ professional experience/ type of educational institution and ethical traits.

The tests of independent samples (t-test) and technique of analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a great interdependence between all demographic data and ethical traits, as far as the English questionnaire is concerned. Data analysis of the Greek questionnaire, allowed us to conclude that, the variables of age, years of service, and school location did not reveal any statistically significant difference as far as perceptions of ethical leadership in Greek schools are concerned. However, tests of independent samples (t-test) and technique of analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed statistically significant differences with reference to the variables of participants' gender and educational institution. In more details, there existed a statistically significant difference in male teachers' perceptions compared to female teachers' perceptions. This difference was statistically significant ($t=2.806$, $df=241$, $p=0.001<0.05$). Moreover, ANOVA revealed a statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions according to their educational institution ($F_{2,240}=3.266$, $p=0.040<0.05$). Specifically, LSD post hoc test showed that teachers of primary school perceived to a great extent their principal's ethical traits, compared to those working at a secondary school-Lyceum, or those working at a secondary school- gymnasium.

Individual and school demographic characteristics	Greece	Other European Countries
	ethical leadership test/F-test	ethical leadership test/F-test
Gender	$t=2.806$, $df=241$, $p=0.001<0.05^*$	$t=-1.022$, $df=206$, $p=0.977>0.05$
Age	$F_{3,238}=0.881$, $p=0.451>0.05$	$F_{3,204}=1.135$, $p=0.336>0.05$
Years of service	$F_{3,238}=0.635$, $p=0.593>0.05$	$F_{3,201}=0.278$, $p=0.841>0.05$
Educational institution	$F_{2,240}=3.266$, $p=0.040<0.05^*$	$t=0.266$, $df=205$, $p=0.577>0.05$
School location	$F_{2,238}=0.428$, $p=0.652>0.05$	$F_{2,204}=1.073$, $p=0.344>0.05$
	$*p=<0.05$	

Discussion/ Conclusion

Ethics has been one of the most favorite topics of discussion by philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Epicurus while, with a view to define effective leadership, many contemporary scholars focus on identifying ethical aspects of different leadership styles (Van Wart, 2014).

The findings of this research regarding ethical leadership characteristics at school in Europe, in which participated 451 teachers from Greece, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Spain demonstrated that educational leaders in Europe have developed to a great extend the ethical dimension at the execution of their duties, putting the emphasis on fundamental ethical characteristics such as integrity, honesty and sincerity.

On a first level, regarding our sample, it appears that it was well equilibrated between Greece and other European countries while, at the same time, the “north” and the “south” of Europe were equally represented. In both questionnaires, the sample appeared to have almost the same characteristics as far as gender, is concerned (women represented the majority). Undoubtedly, this similarity is explained by the fact that the field of education is mostly preferred by women. Moreover, there existed some similarities regarding school location: a great percentage of our sample (both in Greece and in other European countries) worked at urban areas. On the other hand, it appears that there existed as well some differences as far as age, professional experience and type of educational institution are concerned. In Greece, middle aged and experienced teachers were more motivated to answer the questionnaire whereas, the English questionnaire was mostly completed by young teachers with little professional experience. In addition, the majority of Greek teachers worked at primary schools while, the majority of the participants from other European countries worked at secondary schools.

As far as teachers' perceptions of ethical leadership characteristics are concerned, data comparative analysis revealed major similarities and slight differences among teachers, independently of their workplace and, this finding could be the base for further implications concerning the forms of knowledge which are utilized in the action field throughout Europe. More specifically, descriptive analysis demonstrated that, school leaders have developed ethical leadership dimensions such as honest, sincerity, integrity, altruism, trust, rewarding ethical contribution and moral responsibility. Respectively, in GB, Germany, Italy, France and Spain our sample affirmed that their principals possessed ethical traits such as integrity, honesty and sincerity. In both questionnaires are highly scored leaders' attributes such as ethical strategy, clarification of ethical roles, model of moral behavior, humility/ lowiness, ethical self-control, moral responsibility, ethical vigilance, ethical possibility, sharing authority, development of ethical culture, ethical encouragement, ethical determination/decisiveness, collaboration, ethical influence of stakeholders, and, ethical insight. The less scored item in both questionnaires was the “green policy

implementation” trait. Moreover, in Greek questionnaire, ethical guidance, promotion of ethical education, ethical vision and ethical evaluation were among the less assessed. In Greece, correlations between ethical traits and demographic data revealed a statistical significance between ethical traits with gender and type of educational establishment whereas, no statistically significant correlation was found in the other European countries.

Interestingly, in all participating European countries, school units are depicted by teachers as dynamic systems, focusing on organizational efficiency and well-being rather than bureaucratic bodies pursuing predefined goals set by a central administration. From their part, school leaders seem to act beyond the concrete standards of their institutional role and place themselves in a wider context of discussion regarding human existence, knowledge and school success, exploring leadership dimensions that are interwoven with ethical norms, values and an intense sense of moral responsibility. Hence, they appear to have both the managerial knowledge and the ethical characteristics to face emerging aspects of complexity that push both decision makers and practitioners to prioritize the ethical role school should play in a constantly changing environment. In our opinion, this is a rather optimistic finding since, according to Covey (2001), if we let economic systems to operate without any moral foundation and without continuous education, we will soon create an amoral if not immoral, society.

Overall, these results appear to be consistent with what has been found in previous researches. The research conducted by Mitropoulou, Tsaoussis, Xanthopoulou & Petridis (2014) highlighted three fundamental dimensions of ethical leadership: cooperation, rewarding of behavior and trust. Moreover, teachers’ perception of ethical leadership’s traits is broadly in accordance with other studies that underline the importance of leader’s capacity to adopt new roles and create a strong frame of reference, focusing on fair practices (Vakola & Nicolaou, 2012), establishing trust with teachers (Dimitriou, 2015), re-defining teachers’ role and promoting teachers’ self-mastery (Matsaggouras, 2004).

The findings of this research suggest that we can be optimistic about the cultivation of ethical leadership practices in the field of education in Europe. The great importance attached by teachers on principal’s moral attributes and values may further enlighten school reality and lead to a broader conceptualization of ethical leadership as a catalyst of school effectiveness and prosperity, preventing negative consequences from irresponsible and toxic behaviors.

Limitations

This research, exploring dimensions of ethical leadership in education in 6 European countries, is not without limitations nor does it provide a complete understanding of this social phenomenon. A further analysis of ethical leadership characteristics with ethical climate and teachers’ moral engagement could enlighten different aspects of

school reality as well as enhance our awareness about school success and organisational well-being. Moreover, as social researchers, we have to admit that there always exist certain limitations related to the participants' personal way of interpreting the questions as well as participants' tendency to comply with socially accepted answers (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Hence, qualitative methods such as interviews with teachers and principals in more European countries could enrich our understanding regarding the impact of ethical leadership practices both on leaders and teachers, throughout Europe.

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Experiences of Juvenile Offender Learners in Teaching and Learning Support in the Correctional Schools: A Wellness Perspective

Manzini Theresa Lydia Badiktsie

University of South Africa

Abstract

The study explores selected South African correctional school Juvenile offender learners' experiences regarding the support received for improving teaching and learning and wellness. The study uses qualitative interpretive approach; open-ended questionnaire involving 21 juvenile offender learners was utilized to collect data. The theoretical framework applied in the study is Ubuntu and Wellness. Ethical measures were considered before and during the study. Findings revealed that teachers use various forms of teaching and learning in order to support juvenile offender learners in the correctional schools. In addition, security official, teachers, and peers collaborate with various stakeholders to improve the wellness juvenile offender learners. The teaching and learning support meet the needs of intellectual, social, physical, emotional, spiritual and career/ occupational of juvenile offender learners. It also addresses barriers to learning, create favourable learning environment, enhance their wellness and improve their academic performances.

Keywords: juvenile offender learners, learning support, social, physical, emotional, career, spiritual, intellectual wellness, Ubuntu, correctional schools

Introduction

The Department of Correctional Services in South Africa has correctional centre schools across the country which houses offenders that have increased from an average of 153000 during 2013 to 161054 by 2017 (Department of Correctional Services, 2017). In these correctional centres, 25% of the inmates are juvenile offenders. According to Badenhorst (2011) and Zenzile (2008), juvenile offenders are children who break the rules or children in conflict with the law. The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) identifies offenders of ages between 14 and 24 years as juvenile offenders (Department of Correctional Services, 2009). Moreover, the Department of Correctional Services (2009), offers education to juvenile offenders with the aim of rehabilitation. Rehabilitation encompasses a planned intervention in the form of learning and teaching, which aims to transform the juvenile offender

learners' criminality behaviour and avoid recidivism (Schmalleger & Smykla, 2009; Frantz, 2017). The criminality behaviour includes aspects such as attitudes, intellectual process, personality, morals, or human values and wellness (Department of Correctional Services, 2009).

Background

Currently, the Minister of the Correctional Services in South Africa has announced that the role of correctional services is to collaborate with the institution of higher learning to support in developing meaningful learning programmes (DCS, 2018). There should be a scientifically proven risk assessment tool that is offence specific, which would effectively support learning and rehabilitate juvenile offenders. Hence, supporting them with education and skills to survive in the outside world and reduce the level of recidivism. He is following in the footsteps of the former Minister of Correctional Services Sibusiso Ndebele, who announced that primary education has to be compulsory for all offenders in the correctional centre (DCS, 2009). Since then, the DCS has increased the number of permanent correctional schools from one to 14 since from 2009 to 2014 (Davis, 2015).

The correctional school is a set of learning meant for juvenile offenders incarcerated in the correctional centre. The learning includes education in its broad sense to physical education and sports, social education, spiritual activities, cultural activities, vocational education, academic subjects as well as library services (Lobuglio, 2009). Currently, the correctional schools in South Africa offers education in different phases such as general AET level 1 to 4, Further Education and Training (FET) in Grade 10-12, and N1-N3 (Department of Correctional Services, 2017).

According to Costelloe and Langelid (2011), juvenile offender learners face institutional and situational barriers imposed by their confinement. Despite the type or quality of education and training on offer in the correctional school, the juvenile offender learners encounter situational barriers that are of external factors, which are often beyond their control. such as correctional centre systems (Scurrah, 2010). The institutional barriers are the practices and procedures of the institution that prevent or discourage juvenile offenders from participating in education (Francis, 2010). For example, this might involve dealing with application processes of appeal by juvenile offender learners (Braggins & Talbot, 2006). Because of these situational and institutional barriers, juvenile offender learners have little personal power to change the organisation and have very little self-sufficiency. As a result, they are reliant on the system to provide for all their needs and learning support (Scurrah, 2010). For this reason, the support of learning and improvement of wellness for juvenile offender learners must be inclusive in the correctional centre school. This study had intended to explore and determine the experiences of learning support of juvenile offender learners in the correctional centres.

Within the correctional education setting, support involves assistance, strength, help or encouragement rendered to juvenile offender learners to improve teaching and learning. Moreover, support implies to empower them to learn optimally, realise their potential of being rehabilitated, and enhance wellness (Dzulkipli & Yasin, 2010). Support may come from different sources such as family, friends, teachers, community, or any social groups directed to developing supportive learning environments, eradication of learning barriers and improving quality and effectiveness of teaching activities. Support can come in the form of intangible assistance provided by others when needed which includes the appraisal of different situations, effective coping strategies and emotional support (Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, 2007). For this study, education support structures and services directed to juvenile learners are referred to as learning support.

Mangena (2016) asserts that to ensure successful learning support, correctional schools have to collaborate with various support structures to support juvenile learners holistically to improve the quality of learning and wellness. Etieyibo (2014), also reiterates that collaboration in learning support promotes social cohesion between juvenile learners, the schools and the community members at large (Etieyibo, 2014). Hence, correctional schools, the teachers, communities and all other stakeholders can put their resources together to help and support juvenile learners to learn, rehabilitate, and promote their wellness (Boderick, 2015; Mulaudzi, 2014). To provide learning support for teaching and learning is an essential strategy for the correctional schools to recognise and address several learning barriers; and creating a conducive environment for effective teaching that enhance juvenile learners' academic performance, social, emotional, spiritual, physical and career wellness (Moore & Mokhele, 2017).

Research conducted in correctional schools by Magano (2015), revealed that adequate support for teaching and learning could indirectly enhance the wellness of juvenile learners. Wellness is defined as an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward a more successful existence (Hettler, 1984). The wellness model consists of six-dimensions, namely, physical, emotional, spiritual, social, occupational, and intellectual wellness. Providing learning support to juvenile offender learners is crucial since it has a link to academic achievement, promote wellness, rehabilitate, and avoid recidivism. For this reason, teachers, security officers, correctional management, families, and community, collectively support juvenile offender learners through teaching and learning has a wide range of benefits in enhancing six-wellness dimension.

Problem statement

The majority of research has been conducted on various topics on juvenile education. However, juvenile offender learners' experiences of learning support and enhancement of wellness in the correctional schools are minimal. Although juvenile offender learners are a commonly studied issue, researchers have not fully paid

attention to the degree to which challenges did the juvenile learners' experience in accessing and utilising the support structure services they were offered. Hence, learning support and wellness achievement of a juvenile offender learner occurs within the constructed environment of a learner (Hollingsworth, 2009).

However, little is explored about the forms of learning support were received by juvenile offender learners in the correctional schools. Minimal documentation about the extent of support structures available or needed to improve the quality of learning and wellness in the environment of confinement. This study hopes to link the gap. Hence, the discussion led to the following research question of the study:

The study addressed the following Research Questions:

What are the Juvenile offender learners' experiences of learning support and enhancement of wellness in selected South African correctional schools?

What were forms of learning support received by juvenile offender learners in correctional schools?

What challenges did the juvenile offender learners experience in accessing and utilising the support structure services they were offered?

What is any other additional learning support did the juvenile learners indicated as needed to improve their wellness and quality of learning?

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework guided the study integrated Ubuntu and wellness as a lens. The wellness model developed by Hettler (1980) defines wellness as a continuous, lifelong process of striving towards the realisation of one's full potential, more successful existence and enhances quality life. The wellness model consists of six dimensions, namely, intellectual, emotional, physical, social, spiritual, and career wellness. These six dimensions of wellness intertwine and influence each other. For this study, the researcher focused on intellectual wellness as a lens to explore the juvenile offender learners' experiences of learning support in selected South African correctional schools. Intellectual wellness, as defined by Hettler (1980), encourages creativity, stimulates mental activities, and extends critical thinking of the juvenile learner. It promotes lifelong learning, the use of resources available within the correctional centre to expand knowledge, improving skills, focus on the achievement, development, application and potential for sharing knowledge with others beyond the classroom and the community at larger (Hettler, 1980). The model assisted the researcher in getting a deeper understanding of the context of learning support in the correctional schools and enhancement of their wellness.

The researcher also used an African lens of Ubuntu in exploring how teachers and other stakeholders collaborate and offer services of learning support to juvenile offender learners in correctional schools. Ubuntu is an African philosophy that emphasises 'being human through other people'. It is a way of life and impacts on

every aspect of people's wellbeing. It highlights the principle of collaboration, solidarity and teamwork with different stakeholders' such as parents, correctional centre teachers, social workers, psychologist, pastors, and community businesses to support juvenile offender learners' learning and enhance wellness (Gyekye, 2002). For this reason, the lens was appropriate in ensuring that the researcher explores learning support experienced and received by juvenile offender learners in the correctional schools.

Research design

The study adopted a qualitative approach that facilitated an exploratory study to gain insight into the participants' experiences and understanding of the phenomenon investigated (Creswell, 2007). The study explored the Juvenile offender learners' experiences of learning support in selected South African correctional schools. The qualitative approach helped the researchers to describe and interpret participants' experiences, actions and events of data rather than assuming or controlling the data (Merriam, 2002). It allowed the participants to speak for themselves and maximise what could be learnt. This is supported by Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004). They state that qualitative research focuses strongly on the meaning and significance of the processes that occur in their natural setting as well as their outcomes. This qualitative approach was flexible in data collection because it allowed the researcher to be directly in the process by observing and recording events as they occurred in their natural setting (Creswell, 2007).

Sampling

Sampling was purposive since only juvenile offender learners in AET level four in the correctional schools participated in the study. The researcher purposively sampled participants and settings for this study that increases understanding of the phenomenon (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). This sampling is supported by Henning et al. (2004) and Denzin and Lincoln (2005). They concur that purposive sampling assumes that the researcher knows and informed about the participants suitable for the study. Participants were 21 juvenile offender learners doing AET Level 4 from the seven correctional schools selected on availability bases. The 21 participants (three from each school) aged 18 to 24 years from AET Level 4 who were attending classes, volunteered to participate and were ideal for the study. The selected correctional schools are from the four provinces in South Africa, namely: Kwazulu-Natal, Western Cape, Gauteng Province and Orange Free State Province. This distribution was also influenced by the nature of the correctional centres that contain fully-fledged schools with juvenile offender learners attending to the teaching and learning process on a full-time basis.

Instrument

The researcher developed an open-ended questionnaire as a research instrument for data collection. The participants preferred to write their answers confidentially not to participate in interviews. The questions covered by the open-ended questionnaire were aspects such as experiences of learning in the correctional centre, the subject mostly enjoyed, learning support, wellness, academic performance, challenges experienced and other aspects that can be added to support learning. All questions were open-ended and required the participants to elaborate on their answers.

Data collection

Data collection is a process of collecting information from the participants for gathering in-depth information to substantiate the research purpose and objectives (Henning et al., 2004). The study collected qualitative data on personal experiences of juvenile offender learners regarding learning support received and utilised for improving their quality of learning and enhance their wellness. Open-ended questionnaires were utilised in the data gathering process since participants were not comfortable with interviews but preferred to complete questionnaires. No name was written on the questionnaires, for ethics purposes, anonymous. Topics related to learning support and wellness of juvenile offender learners in the correctional schools was addressed. The open-ended questionnaires were conducted in English, and clarified in their language where clarity was requested. Juvenile offender learners answered questions during free periods of approximately 45 minutes.

Prior to data collection, ethical measures were considered. Ethical clearance was obtained from the University of South Africa research ethics committee. Furthermore, permission to conduct the study in the correctional schools was obtained from the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), and the seven principals of schools selected for the study. Before the distribution of the questionnaires, participants were provided with written information and explanation about the purpose of the study and its intention. The ethical principles of assurance of confidentiality, the anonymity of participants, voluntarily participation, informed consent and permission to withdraw at any stage of the study were explained. All the volunteered participants completed their questionnaires, and the researcher collected them.

Analysis of data

Analysis of Data collected from the open-ended questionnaires; the researcher utilised steps recommended by Creswell (2007). He suggested multiple reading and reviewing of data to facilitate the initial interpretation of participants' responses. Then the researcher transcribed the data manually, wrote notes on the margins, and got the sense of what participants said. Then followed by colour coding, organising information into units, and categorised all the meanings, which were similar and grouped them. After that, categories were further collapsed into similar meaning, and the following themes emerged:

Correctional schools proffer services to learning support and wellness availability of support structures to address the learning support and enhance wellness Peer support challenges experienced by participants in accessing and utilising the learning support additional learning support participants wish to receive

Results

The results of data analysis are presented below in terms of the themes that emerged, with supporting quotations from the open-ended questionnaires of juvenile offender learner.

Correctional schools proffer services to learning support and wellness

Data analysis revealed that the correctional schools, security personnel, peer learners, teachers and various stakeholders make an effort to offer learning support to juvenile offender learners. The participants reported that the learning support received at the correctional schools meet their intellectual, social, emotional, physical, spiritual and career wellness.

The correctional centre, security personnel, and teachers collaborate with various stakeholders to support learning and enhancing the wellness of juvenile learners. Participants mentioned that the correctional centre invites their families, community members and motivational speakers to support learning and promote their wellness. Findings revealed that participants are encouraged to read, and write poems, short stories, and drawings, participate in sports activities. Besides, they indicated that to improve and sustain their mental health to achieve and succeed in learning, the correctional centre refers them to social workers and psychological service for assessment on social issues and emotional challenges.

KZN=D/JLP 9: "SRAC weekly programme we have physical exercises on Fridays it is sports day open field.

KZN=C/JLP 7: "We also have NGO Khulisa it rehabilitate offenders from using drugs, behave well, religion and how to deal with anger issues."

GP=F/JLP 16: "We have very good physical exercise because of SRAC."

GP=E/JLP 14: "Available Support that promotes spiritual wellness is the invited Pastors and spiritual care."

WC=A/JLP 3: "We do have outside people who help."

FS=G/JLP 19: "We get outside business people to motivate us."

E/PT 8: "Educators and external services providers help in this regard."

Challenges experienced by participants in accessing and utilising the learning support

From the findings, participants explained that they experience challenges that hinder ample support for learning and enhancement of wellness. For addressing intellectual wellness, they mention the following as challenges experienced: inadequate and erratic time for class attendance and accessing libraries, shortage of security personnel and teachers, English language as learning barrier, violence that disrupts classes, unfavourable learning environment and lack of learning and teaching materials.

Excerpt from the transcript on learning support for addressing intellectual wellness were:

GP=E/JLP 15: "We do not attend every day. Sometimes teachers are not available; sometimes there are fights at school we are suspended from school."

GP=E/JLP 13: "We attend school sometimes two weeks or a month in a term."

FS=G/JLP21: "Start from 9 am to 11h30 Sometimes section is closed up early, and we have to leave school for lunch early."

FS=G/JLP 20: "Textbooks are not available."

GP=F/JLP 17: "Sometimes, I do not attend because of a workshop with the social worker."

WC=B/JLP4: "I attend three times a week, and the other days are for the social worker."

KZN=C/JLP 9: "We do not write tests during the year, but we write final November exams, but we get no reports that de-motivate me. I do not perform well in English because we do not have a teacher. We have no teachers we are taught by tutors or other offenders I would like to perform well on maths because I like it."

Findings revealed other challenges that encumber the accomplishment of learning and physical wellness as follows: Substances are not allowed, but some juvenile offender learners to smuggle substance to the correctional schools and use in the cell section.

FS=G/JLP 19: "I like to use tobacco, I do not go playground. I like church and school work only."

WC=B/JLP2: "I smoke, but I hide it only does it freely at the section".

WC=A/JLP2: "we almost all smoke here only a few do not smoke some sell cigarettes."

Participants indicated challenges experience that hinders learning support and career wellness such as lack of skills or training to compete for work when released back to society. For this reason, it might lead them to engage in criminal activities when released back to the community.

FS=G/JLP 19: "Nothing, I learn nothing for a career; I do not know skills for creating a business, but there is a training centre for medium B juvenile offender learners".

KZN=D/JLP 11: "None skills to compete for employment after release".

GP=F/JLP 17: "SMME learning about running a business its only theory no practical but nothing training."

Spiritual and emotional instability is a challenge; participants indicated that they feel undermined by gangsters; they end up taking their frustration on wrong people. They lack comfort and feel hopeless due to long sentences.

KZN=D/JLP 10: "Feeling depressed sometimes by the other gangs, like taking frustration on wrong people, I want someone to talk to about how I feel."

WC=B/JLP 5: "I am encouraged to go pray but do not believe it no hope I have a long sentence here no change".

The responses above show that juvenile offender learners lack spiritual and emotional support; it might cause resistance to change, feelings of hopelessness, self-centredness, spiritual conflicts with others and self of which it can exacerbate anxiety, anger, and depression of the juvenile offender learners.

Peer support

Findings revealed that participants receive support from fellow juvenile learners in the correctional schools and the cell sections. The learning support meets their emotional, intellectual, social, spiritual and occupational wellness. The kind of support from peer learners focuses on advice, encouragement, information and motivating each other. Peer support that addresses intellectual wellness includes study groups, peer tutors when in class, assistance from peer mentoring in cell sections.

GP=E/JLP 15: "... taught by tutors or other senior offenders.

KZN=D/JLP5: "When we have no teachers, we are taught by tutors or other offenders."

WC=B/JLP 6: "To be one society helps when I do not understand in class, I ask my friends, and when other people provoke me, my friends help me. It is tough here without friends."

GP=E/JLP 14: "my friends help and show me to write a correct CV and set goals and plan for a better life when I am released."

Peer support that addresses emotional and social wellness includes sharing information and assisting each other on personal needs.

GP=F/JLP 16: "our relationships with a peer are good, and we help each other very well."

KZN=C/JLP9: "I respect others so that can respect me. I respect them because they help me with other things.

KZN=D/JLP 12: "... I open up to my friends when I have problems. In my conflicts, I tell someone to help."

WC=B/JLP5: "Social support protects me from being bullied and gangsters here. I ask my friends to help me when I face problems in class."

WC=A/JLP3: "Support provided by friend assists me to cope with stress in various situations I face here in the centre."

Support from the peer to address physical and spiritual wellness, participants mentioned that they motivate each other not to use substances, encouragement to eat healthy meal and exercise always. In addition, they support by singing melodious songs together, inspire each other through inspirational messages that give hope, comfort and spiritual uplift, and that help them to cope eventually improve their learning.

GP=F/JLP 17: "I play sports and exercise with my buddies. We eat healthy, three meals, and vegetable soup. No substances are used."

WC=A/JLP 3: "Singing heals me sometimes we sing with my cellmates in the section, I always feel inspired, have hope and better."

Support structures to address the learning support and enhance wellness

Results of the study from the seven correctional schools revealed similar responses to their support structures that enhance learning and wellness. Lack of support structure is one of the factors that impede the effectiveness of learning and promoting wellness of juvenile offender learners. However, in this study, findings discovered that available learning support structures include the support from a psychologist, social workers, doctors, and or Non-Governmental Organisations to enhance intellectual, physical, social, emotional, spiritual and occupational/career wellness. The findings revealed that the support structure to strengthen intellectual wellness of juvenile offender learners in the seven schools in the Department of Basic Education in providing them with curriculum (CAPS) document, Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) and assessment of final examinations for AET level 4.

WC=B/JPL6: "end of the year, I am going to write my final exam externally from the department of education."

WC=A/JPL2: "I have registered with the department of education for level 4 if I pass my exams, I get a certificate."

KZN=C/JLP 14: "I have joined book club reading for fun and competitions."

The results showed that the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) provides support for effective learning by escort juvenile learners from the cell section to the classrooms. The DCS create a productive and conducive learning environment by assigning security officers to maintain order and discipline when learners attend classes.

GP=E/JPL9: *“warden safeguard, keep order and discipline while we are learning during lessons in class.”*

Participants mentioned the support structures for meeting social, emotional, physical, occupational/career, spiritual wellness, received in various forms improves their learning, understanding of subjects, motivate, up-lift their spirits, improve their self-esteem, make them work harder, assist in preparing them for examination and in achieving better results. Excerpts from the collected data on learning support were as follows:

GP=F/JLP 17: *“...support from Social worker and psychologist they help us a lot.”*

GP=F/JLP 18: *“Psychologist helps me when I have mental problems.”*

FS=G/JLP 20: *“My relationship with family is well; only mother and little brother they keep on visiting me.”*

FS=G/JLP 20: *“Support structures are teachers, Social workers and other people outside.”*

GP=F/JLP 17: *“SRAC helps in playing sports and exercise ... has enough equipment for soccer. When we need soccer balls and boots, Mark Fish supports us.”*

GP=F/JLP 18: *“Support structures that promote physical wellness are celebrity players from outside come to play with us here.”*

FS=G/JLP 21: *“... Nurses come to check and give me treatment for TB and HIV every time.”*

WC=B/JLP5: *“Entrepreneurs and Business owners from the communities come to motivate us about the importance of starting our own business when we released back to the community.”*

GP=E/JLP 15: *“I attended Anger Management courses for seven days from the NGO.”*

WC=A/JLP2: *“Now and then pastors come here to preach, pray and teach us to meditate so that we cope and release anger, learn to ask forgiveness from others and respect people.”*

Additional support participants wish to receive

From the seven schools, findings indicated that participants wish to receive adequate learning support to improve their teaching and learning and enhance the intellectual, physical, social, spiritual, emotional, and career wellness. Additional support they wish to receive includes enough supply of learning and teaching material, extra time for learning in schools and accessing libraries, feedback from their examinations regularly. Moreover, to deal with physical wellness, they wish to have enough guards to escort them to the sports field, extra sports activities and coaches. Besides, they wish to receive more spiritual services and social workers to address their social needs and more time for consulting psychologist to address their emotional, personal

needs and problems. To improve learning support on career wellness, they mentioned the wish to receive more lessons on practical or hands-on lessons than theory. They need practical training on skills such as electrician, building or carpentry, and assistance in learning to start their own business after their release.

GP=F/JLP 18: *"We need textbooks and stationery because it is difficult without."*

FS=G/JLP 20: *"I want resources to support learning such as calculators, textbooks for maths,"*

WC=B/JPL5: *"I could pass if I had textbooks for my subjects."*

GP=F/JLP 18: *"... I ask extra time from teachers and correctional management to do the activity in class."*

WC=A/JLP 1: *"I have many activities to write, but I fail to finish in class, so I want extra time at school."*

GP=E/JLP 15: *"We don't write tests during the year, but we write final November exams, but we get no reports that de-motivate me. I wish to get my report every quarter."*

GP=F/JLP 17: *"I want to pray more, meditate and singing songs for comfort and read uplifting spiritual verses for inspiration."*

KZN=D/JLP 12: *"I want to have building or carpentry or electrician courses."*

WC=A/JLP 2: *"I know to write my CV, but I don't have work experience or training to work. I want to be electrician; I will train when I pass level 4".*

GP=E/JLP 13: *"I want to do engineering and to have a licence for a job I want to learn a new skill so that I can look for employment after release."*

GP=E/JLP 14: *"I want to learn a skill of starting a business because I want to do business at home; my dream is to open my company one day."*

From the responses above indicated, even though there is learning support in the correctional schools, the participants wish to receive adequate learning support to improve their learning and enhance wellness.

Discussions

The study explored the juvenile learners' experiences of receiving and utilising the support to improve their learning and enhance wellness. The findings confirmed that Correctional schools proffer services to learning support and improve wellness. Although the focus was on the support of teaching and learning, other wellness dimensions were indirectly addressed. The forms of support facilitated active learning and met juvenile learners' intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual, physical and career wellness. These forms of learning support addressed barriers to learning, enhanced learners' self-esteem and consequently improved their academic performance and social relations. The study adopted Intellectual wellness and

Ubuntu. Intellectual wellness, as defined by Hettler (1980), encourages creativity, stimulates mental activities, and extends critical thinking of the juvenile learner. It promotes lifelong learning, the use of resources available within the correctional centre to expand knowledge, improving skills, focus on the achievement, development, application and potential for sharing knowledge with others beyond the classroom and the community at larger (Hettler, 1980). While, Ubuntu principles emphasises collaboration, solidarity and teamwork with different stakeholders' such as parents, correctional centre teachers, social workers, psychologist, pastors, and community businesses to support juvenile offender learners' learning and enhance wellness (Gyekye, 2002). The findings of the study indicated that learning support could be effectively achieved through collaboration with various stakeholders to support learning.

The results indicated that even in the contexts that are not necessarily well resourced with learning and teaching support material, participants experienced the correctional schools and teachers able to collaborate with various support structures to support them holistically to improve the quality of learning and wellness. This is evident in participants' reports of support structures to address learning support and enhance wellness. These findings are in line with the literature of Mangena (2016). He urges that through Ubuntu principles, communities, and all other stakeholders can put their resources together to help and support juvenile learners to learn, rehabilitate, and promote their wellness.

Although challenges have been highlighted, participants also emphasised the availability of support structures from the various stakeholders such as a psychologist, social workers, doctors, and or Non-Governmental Organisations as significant in the effectiveness of learning support and promoting wellness. The findings concur with Etieyibo (2014), who reiterates that collaboration in learning support promotes social cohesion between juvenile learners, the schools and the community members at large (Etieyibo, 2014). For this reason, the correctional schools need to collaborate with the communities and various stakeholders to support the learning of juvenile learners.

The assistance from the teachers to arrange peer support such as study groups, peer tutors and peer mentors as reported by participants in the study, motivates and encourages the support of active learning and enhances social, emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual wellness. The findings are in line with Ubuntu principles that embrace sharing of knowledge, strength and expertise to support juvenile learners to engage in meaningful discussions amongst themselves and motivating each other to learn (Mulaudzi, 2014). Furthermore, a study by Etieyibo (2014) has shown that peer support promotes team spirit practise in correctional schools and reduce socio-emotional distress or disengagement in education.

Findings revealed challenges experience that hinders learning support and career wellness such as lack of skills or training to compete for work when released back to

society. Lack of learning support that enhances career wellness might lead them to criminal activities when released back to the community. The findings of the current study coincide with what Boderick (2015) says, that some juvenile offender learners have poor job skills, low education and a poor employment record, which is why they ended up imprisoned. Therefore, it is crucial to create sufficient learning environment for career/ occupational wellness to support and teach learners skills and knowledge to start their own business and be positive to find work after release.

From the findings participants mentioned, they experience challenges that hinder ample support for learning and enhancement of wellness. Aspects that impede successful learning support such as inadequate and erratic time for class attendance and accessing libraries, violence that disrupts classes, unfavourable learning environment, shortage of security personnel and teachers, English language as learning barrier, and lack of learning and teaching support materials are a barrier to teaching and learning. The findings of this study are similar to the research by Magano (2015), who also discovered similar results that correctional schools experience various disturbances regarding teaching and learning. While Moore and Mokhele (2017) articulate that effective learning takes place in a favourable environment; however, the study discovered contrary results. Juvenile offender learners who live in fear of gangsters, bullying and anger for being in the correctional setting, they experience immense psychological strain and emotional pain, which have adverse outcomes in learning support (Moore & Mokhele, 2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed evidence that juvenile offender learners received and used various forms of learning and teaching support from their correctional schools, teachers, security official, peers and collaboration various stakeholders to improve their learning and wellness. The Ubuntu principle shown by the teachers and peer tutors in the correctional schools yielded positive outcomes. The learning support assisted in meeting juvenile offender learners' academic, social, physical, emotional, spiritual and career needs by addressing barriers to learning, creating a conducive environment, enhancing their wellness and improves their academic performances. These support systems need to be fostered and encouraged by the authorities in the Department of Correctional Services and the Department of Basic Education. As regards to challenges associated with the inadequate supply of learning and teaching material, extra time for learning in schools and accessing libraries, feedback from their examinations regularly, participants explained that they struggled. The recommendations here are for the correctional school authorities to add extra time for learning, employ more guards to escort them regularly to classes and sports field for additional sports activities. Also, the researcher feels that there is a need for more lessons on practical or hands-on lessons than theory because participants indicated that they need learning support on practical training of skills such as electrician,

building or carpentry, and assistance in learning to start their own business after their release and to avoid recidivism.

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What Does It Mean to Be a Good Teacher? Beliefs of Future Secondary School Teachers During Their Initial Training in Spain

Juan García Rubio

Phd Lecturer Universidad De Valencia Spain

Abstract

Teachers play a key role in students' learning, especially when it comes to students who have more difficulties in the classroom. Initial teacher training contributes to achieving more competent teachers who are capable of successfully facing the start of their teaching profession, and students' beliefs about what it means to be a good teacher are key. The prior beliefs and ideas with which future teachers come to university classrooms determine their first teaching identity and the beginning of their professional practice. In this paper, research focused on the beliefs of future secondary school teachers regarding what they consider constitutes a good teacher. A qualitative, biographical-descriptive methodology was used, in which the teaching students' narratives were used as a starting point to establish what characterizes a good teacher. The results show that future secondary school teachers place the relationship between the teacher and the students as the key factor when it comes to being a good teacher, above any other factor, which includes aspects related to the way in which the curriculum is taught.

Keywords: secondary education, initial teacher training, teacher identity, students with learning difficulties, beliefs.

Introduction

In Spain, the initial training of future teachers is different for preschool and primary education compared to secondary education. A simultaneous training model is followed for the first stages of education. However, at the age of 18 preschool and primary teachers begin their teaching trajectory with the Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood and Primary Education, in which the different curricular subjects of these stages (mathematics, social sciences, Spanish language, etc.) and their pedagogical training is intermingled. The initial training of secondary teachers in Spain, which will be the subject of our study, follows a consecutive model: first, individuals complete a four-year Bachelor's degree in any specific speciality (Geography and History, English, Mathematics, Economics, etc.) and then they go on to complete a one-year

Master's degree which enables professionals to teach at this stage (Imbernón, 2019). One of the consequences of following this type of training model to become a secondary school teacher is that some students who study the Master's degree had no educational vocation when they began their Bachelor's degree, unlike those who directly started their studies at the Faculty of Education, who have very clear professional preferences and a predilection for teaching.

Students entering this master's degree in Secondary Teacher Training bring with them certain beliefs about what constitutes a good teacher and what does not, as a result of the time they have spent watching teachers work throughout their academic trajectory. Between the ages of 12 and 15, they have spent many hours observing teachers carrying out their practice and their performance in the classroom. This is what Bandura (1982) called observational learning, vicarious learning. In fact, quite a few of these students found a vocation for teaching because of the presence of some teachers who were a reference for them, some who were concerned not only about their learning, but also their more personal problems. Also, a good number of them go on to study a certain university degree related to the subject taught at school by their favourite teacher.

In spite of what they are taught by teachers in university classrooms during their initial training, future teachers will often resort, at the beginning of their teaching practice, to repeating the practices of teachers who have been an example and reference for them. Some authors argue that these beliefs are deeply rooted in the future teacher, and are not changed and transformed, in most cases, during their university training. They are therefore very important in the definition of an initial teacher identity (Garza et al., 2016; Vaillant and Marcelo, 2015).

The term professional teacher identity is a complex concept, which mainly answers questions such as: What am I like as a teacher? How do I exercise my profession? Every teacher has a teaching identity that is different from the rest and which is formed over time and throughout life. This identity comes from observing teachers in the classroom throughout their childhood and is developed until the end of the teacher's time in the profession. A teacher's professional identity is never finished (Berger and Lê Van, 2019; Buitrago-Bonilla and Cárdenas-Soler, 2017). Their first identity is a mixture of their previous beliefs, their initial university training and even the internships carried out in educational centres as part of their university education (Souto,

2018). We have already mentioned that these prior beliefs and ideas play a key role in the beginning of a teacher's career (Farren, 2016).

Good initial teacher training should be based on reflection and addressing these beliefs in university classes, questioning them, or confirming them as relevant to the professional practice. Students in training often complain of excessively theoretical classes. These beliefs could serve to escape this tendency towards theory and replace it with experiences closer to the reality of the classroom. Students who are being trained in the Secondary Teacher Training master's degree also complain about their initial training not being useful for the practical aspect of their profession (García-Rubio, 2021). According to the students themselves, the lack of practicality of the classes, together with the lack of coordination of the teaching staff in the teaching of the contents, are issues which could be improved.

On the other hand, the future teacher, having spent much of his or her life observing teaching, may think that teaching is easy. Nothing could be further from the truth. Many teachers, at the beginning of their professional practice, have great difficulties in being able to properly manage a class and find that the role of the teacher in the classroom is very complex. Significant competences are needed to be able to adequately carry out this profession (Hahl and Mikulec, 2018). Moreover, at the secondary school stage, the difficulties are increased as students with very different interests and motivations coexist in the classroom. In the same classroom, there are students who want to continue studying Bachillerato (non-compulsory secondary education or 11th and 12th grade), others who want to do Vocational Training, and also some who are waiting to turn 16, the compulsory age to be in school in Spain, to abandon their educational trajectory and look for a job.

We cannot forget that numerous studies consider teachers to be the main resource for improving students' educational performance (Gimeno, 2013; Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, 2010). This is even more so in the case of students with severe learning difficulties. If the pandemic has shown us anything, it is the importance of going to school to interact with other students, but also the value of direct contact with teachers. If anyone needs good teachers, it is the students who have the most difficulties and the most negative educational trajectories. Students who are doing well do not need excellent teachers to the same extent because they have already acquired good habits.

The aim of this paper is to find out what beliefs and preconceptions future secondary school teachers in Spain have about what makes a good teacher:

What do they think constitutes being a good teacher? What qualities do they need to have?

Methodology

Secondary education is characterised by the presence of young people with very different attitudes and interests, some with significant learning difficulties. This makes adequate teacher training all the more important. A teacher has to be trained throughout his or her life, but initial training is of fundamental importance in order to stay in the profession and not abandon it prematurely. The TALIS Report indicates that in some countries, such as the United Kingdom, the drop-out rate is as high as 50% (OECD, 2019). And in this initial training, as we have already mentioned, the beliefs of university students who are training to become teachers play a fundamental role.

To find out the beliefs of future secondary school teachers regarding what they consider it means to be a good teacher, we resorted to qualitative research from a biographical-narrative perspective (Bolívar et al., 2014). Through individual narratives, in this case of master's students, we were able to learn about their feelings, experiences and emotions, something that could not have been achieved with other research instruments. These narratives regarding what, in their opinion, constitutes a good teacher helped us access their memories and explore their beliefs and previous conceptions of teaching and learning (Bolívar and Domingo, 2019; Rodrigues and Mogarro, 2020).

Eighty university students participated. They were studying the master's degree in Education to become secondary school teachers during the 2021-22 academic year, in two different specialisations with 40 students each. At the beginning of the course, during the first classes, the students were asked to think about who their best teachers during their time at school had been and what their qualities made them the best. The students' narratives were identified with the letter E (student) and a number from 1 to 80.

Once all the narratives had been collected, in documents written by the students, an exhaustive data analysis was carried out, from which common characteristics emerged about what they considered were the qualities of a good teacher, and these were classified into different categories and subcategories. Following this content analysis, we identified the following categories and subcategories:

- Personal aspects of the teacher: which provides us with information about the most personal characteristics of the teacher and their commitment to the profession. It is divided into two other categories: relationship with students

(how they deal with students) and their attitude towards their profession (their commitment, motivation, vocation, etc.).

- Pedagogical aspects: which collects information on how teaching practice is carried out in the classroom in relation to the curriculum.

Results

The research yielded results regarding the aspects that the future secondary school teachers most valued in their schoolteachers. Below is a summary of the overall results broken down into categories. The number appearing in the tables describes the frequency, the number of times students referred to these categories in their narratives. For ease of interpretation, they are also expressed in percentage terms.

Table 1

Overall results of positive personal and pedagogical aspects of the teaching staff as reported by students

Categories	Beginning of the Master's	
	n	%
Relationship with students	153	49,35
Professional attitude	42	13,55
Pedagogical aspects	115	37,10
Total	310	100

Source: Own elaboration

Table 1 shows how the personal aspects - the relationship with students and the attitude towards the profession - are more important for future secondary school teachers than the pedagogical aspects, with regard to the teachers they remember as having the most positive influence on their lives. Almost half of them, 49.35%, highlighted aspects concerning their relationship with the students as qualities of a good teacher, and less than 40%, 37.10%, pointed out the pedagogical aspects concerning the methodology used in the classroom, the preparation of classes, the type of assessment carried out, etc., as important qualities.

One of the students made the following comment: "This person was such a bad teacher that the only thing they knew how to do was explain" (E57). This sentence sums up the previous table of results very well, as the student tries to emphasize that in addition to the curricular aspects, there are other aspects that they value much more highly in teachers. It is not enough to teach classes in the right way; the teaching staff must have human qualities which are highly valued and taken into account by the students.

Another student pointed out that "the teacher explained things to us with such enthusiasm that it was difficult not to pay attention. You could see that he liked what he was doing" (E24). A total of 13.55% highlighted the passion shown in the teaching activity, the enthusiasm transmitted to the students in order to achieve a good level of learning as one of the keys to being a good teacher. This raises the question of whether teachers need to have a vocation for the profession. In any profession, and even more so in this one, where you are working with young people all the time, you need to like what you do. This is certainly transmitted to the class and the young students perceive it.

In the results presented here, we intend to place special emphasis on the aspects that stand out about the relationship between teachers and students, which are presented below.

Table 2

Subcategories found within the category relationship with the student

Relationship with the student	Beginning of the Master's	
	n	%
Concern for everything that happens to students both in and out of class	43	53,75
Proximity to students, treating students as equals	28	35,00
Pleasant, kind, friendly and affectionate	25	31,25
Calm, serene, with a lot of patience.	20	25,00
An empathetic and very human person, listens and advises the student	17	21,25
A cheerful person, in a good mood, even funny	7	8,75
Respectful always with the students	6	7,50
A serious person, but friendly, pleasant	4	5,00
Equal treatment of all students	1	1,25

A leader and charismatic	1	1,25
Knows how to apply and maintain discipline	1	1,25

Source: Own elaboration

Table 2 shows the subcategories identified in the master's students' narratives of teachers' relationship with students. One of the aspects that stands out the most is "Concern for everything that happens to them". If the teacher shows interest in the student beyond pedagogical terms, it will generate a very important stimulus that will help the student connect with the teacher. One participant commented: "You knew that he was always there, for better or worse, and not only for class-related issues, but for everything" (E14). Teachers share a lot of time during the day in classrooms with students, but also in corridors and playgrounds. A relationship of mutual affection can be created, especially if the same teacher is present for several years.

Far from considering closeness as a problem, in their narratives, this quality, together with being empathetic, pleasant, and having a good dose of patience, is one of the most important: "It is not by raising your voice too much and keeping your distance too much that you achieve order in the classroom. This teacher managed to keep the order in class because we all respected and appreciated him" (E38). The calmness and serenity, away from any stridency with which the teacher teaches the class, is seen as a great value. They detested the teachers who were always grumpy and constantly losing their temper, and constantly threatening them with punishment. This is one of the main problems beginner teachers tend to have, knowing how to keep their cool and calm in the face of any problem that arises in the classroom. Good training, together with the necessary experience, will help teachers achieve this way of acting.

Being serious or cheerful is not the most important thing. One of the students commented: "He was very serious, but he was very approachable, and you knew that if you had a problem, he was attentive and concerned about solving it" (E7). Each teacher has his or her own personality, it is not about being different, but about showing interest in the students and creating a connection with them. If the teacher makes that connection, he/she has everything to gain with the student: "Whenever he spoke to us, we always listened to him, because we really loved and appreciated him. He was a good person." (E31). This does not mean that students do not value teachers' ability to impose themselves when it is time, nor that teachers have to do what students want in order to be liked.

Discussion and Conclusions

As a result of the conducted research, it has been possible to discover the beliefs and ideas held by future teachers at the beginning of the master's degree that will enable them to become teachers in an educational stage in which they will encounter significant difficulties to be solved in the day-to-day classroom.

It may come as a surprise to some that personal aspects, specifically the relationship between teachers and students, are what university students and future teachers value most when it comes to being a "good teacher". Therefore, as indicated by authors such as Day (2006), the connection established between teacher and student is what motivates one to continue teaching and the other to continue learning. Students do not highlight the teacher who taught their classes with a very innovative methodology so much, although they valued this aspect positively. Above all, they remember the teacher who cared about them and who was always there when they needed them. Those who were close and interested in the young person, in all their dimensions, and not only in their progress at school.

If teachers want to get students' attention, they have to establish a good rapport with their students, paying attention to their academic but also personal needs. Teachers' first mission is to ensure that students do not hate their subject, and to this end, the relationship established with the student is fundamental (Yoo and Carter, 2017). One of the main concerns for teachers starting to teach in schools is to maintain order in the classroom. A good relationship with students and a good classroom climate is the best help they can find to achieve this. Students shy away from teachers who are excessively authoritarian, constantly scolding and in a state of permanent tension (García-Rubio, 2022).

However, although the results obtained leave pedagogical issues in the background, this does not mean that they are not important for the students. It is not the most important, but it is important. They appreciate teachers who have good classroom practice, and who know how to teach knowledge. They appreciate teachers who use an appropriate methodology, and who make classes attractive and participatory (Tardif, 2004). Many authors advocate playful and creative teaching to make students feel interested in the curricular content. If students are bored in class, learning will be more complicated and costly. Learning does not have to be incompatible with having a good time in

class and even having fun; on the contrary, if something motivates you and you like it, it will make learning easier.

The study that has been carried out has focused on university students who are training for the secondary school profession. Future research could be conducted in the field of future preschool and primary school teachers, where, as we have pointed out above, the training model is different, with a mixture of pedagogy and the learning of academic subjects from the very beginning. The results could then be compared to see if they are similar, despite having different models of initial teacher training.

On the other hand, university classes for the initial training of these future secondary school teachers would be better and would reach them more if the problems addressed in them had a more practical utility for their professional practice and for the real problems they will encounter in schools. Combining practice and theory should be one of the main objectives of university teachers in this training. Starting with students' beliefs could contribute to achieving this purpose, and thus question or confirm the previous beliefs and ideas with which students come to the classroom.

The results obtained in this research should serve to highlight the importance of the relationship established between teachers and students and its influence on their motivation to learn. In initial teacher training, this aspect, which is sometimes thought to be of little importance, must be carefully taken care of and future teachers must be made aware of its enormous importance. Far from thinking that it is only important to learn how to plan classes in a methodologically appropriate way, teachers should take care of another series of aspects which have an even greater influence on whether students consider them to be good teachers.

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The Heart of the Citizenship Education and Revival of New Schools in Europe

Sandra Chistolini

PhD, Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy

Abstract

Our present time is characterised by many contradictions and the aspect of uncertainty indicates a sense of our deep loss of values. Education is the traditional space, in which generations create meanings and adults prefigure the future. Despite the idea of liquid modernity, which dominates our existence, we are convinced that we inherit meaningful testimonies of schools born in the spirit of the Reform from the pedagogic culture of the last two centuries. Schools, such as Dalton, Jena Plan, Decroly and Freinet, are still alive and bringing us a new message of citizenship education coherent with the impulse of their founders. Following our field study to investigate the reality of the Schools of Method in the areas of the Flanders and Brussels we were able to draw a solid concept of community. In the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, we assume that the modern western culture reaches its task to convert the dispute into tolerance. Citizenship education wishes to overcome any separations and indicates the road to peace and harmony. It is not by chance that Reform Schools are now reaffirming the original impulse. They are transforming the contradictions of our postmodern society into the management of daily education. Headmasters and teachers are seriously opting for movement and variety of the curriculum against school stereotypes of the disciplines. Children become protagonists of the reformation, using the methodology of dialogue, development and discovery. Teachers and parents appear to be fundamental parts of the process, and learning democracy in school begins with the practice of a council of pupils: discussing, deciding, doing. The external world actively enters schools to shape life. History is composed of the biographies of senior citizens, mainly grandfathers, and languages are matter of pride for children from families with migrant backgrounds.

Keywords: reform, pedagogy, schools of method, values, education, great educators, memory, citizenship education, community schools

Introduction

The definition of uncertainty pursues that of indecision. The certainties of the past span the crisis of postmodernism. The relationship between modernism and postmodernism overcomes the concept of opposition and becomes a challenge to regain the depth of the sense of humanity in each of us. In modernism, the human mind did not encounter uncertainties, but found a way to lead the great processes of the spirit and, indirectly, the great geopolitical formations back to unity. It was a time of grand ideologies, philosophies and religions founded, as Lyotard said, on metanarratives and great empires or nation states. It was a time governed by strong thinking, broad meaningful horizons and a calling that was a deep-rooted belief in what one was doing. Postmodernism is exactly the opposite: it is a time of weak thinking, a time of thinking based on small and multiple horizons and a time of the disintegration and crumbling of the great spiritual and geopolitical processes. Grand ideologies, universal philosophies and rock-like religions no longer exist. Empires and Nations vacillate in search of lost identities. As Friedrich Hölderlin understood so well, postmodernism is the beginning of the theoretical and empirical break-up of a civilisation. During this ambivalent era of transition, everything is reduced to scale and is virtual. Specialisation breaks up the great conceptual frameworks. In its highest meaning of general cultural, the Greek “*paideia*” disappears (Ferracuti, 2008). And yet, man always resurfaces, searching for a new way to see postmodernism that gives hope by overcoming illusions and is capable of releasing its humanist spirit.

The vision of the *Angelus Novus* that Walter Benjamin recovers from Paul Klee translates the emancipation of modern man. Looking back means not losing the past, it means looking at what happened in its entirety, of good and evil, it means drawing inspiration to build the future. Progress cannot be stopped and, thus, it is necessary to send its own strong messages created by great public figures to be able to redirect one’s life and, through this, the world of interpersonal relations. History is not destruction, but teaching and remembering. In the vision of a new humanism, the past, present and future are simultaneous, because man knows how to rebuild the sense of himself, and the world in which he lives, from the fragments.

During this shift from illuminist trust to the search for new hope, what happens to education? What has happened to those ideas of renewal of the school that, during the second Millennium, had revolutionised the way of thinking about teaching and that had combined nature, science and culture so well? Which educational paradigm is more plausible today?

The theoretical paradigm of this research is the result of an original composition of ethnomethodology, using interactive personalism and the strategy known as *Decoding the Disciplines*, intended to guide learning by means of an in-depth analysis of the difficulties of the pupils (Morel 2013; Warren 2016; Pace 2017).

Educate despite uncertainty

The concept of fragment contains the idea of the difficulty of gathering meanings into a uniform entity. The meanings multiply and need new interpretations in order to be introduced into living situations that are essential for growth.

Among the fragments that arise in daily life, there is a separation between nature and culture, between the need for general human development and economic development; hence, the necessity to find paths of meaning that are able to re-establish continuity between the environment and the person, which creates feelings of belonging to that environment, starting from one's own story. Among its main tasks, the school counts that of promoting an education full of meanings for the children; for this reason, teachers try to construct learning situations, in which communication between the outside and the inside world is constant and is rekindled by the initiative of the pupils who relate positively to the educational proposal. To have independence and freedom internalised requires an educational process founded on a method of experimentation and verification.

Our research on the best practices for the modern school led us to brush up on the methods of the active school of the late 1800s, created by educators and scientists who knew how to observe natural childhood development in relation to planning educational activities and social progress.

To counter the subject of uncertainty, we sought experiences of educational certainty; to do this, we directed ourselves to what exists today, starting with Belgium, as a country in which there are current new schools, situated in a space of reasonable proximity and easily reached.

The main objective of renewing education according to the pioneers of Pedagogy of the Reformation in Europa was precisely that of creating meanings, building ties, connecting contexts and permitting the steady flow of the spontaneous human growth process, transformed into a cultural product of the school and community. School of integration and joy. School of discovery and invention. School of community and active participation.

Driven by the academic knowledge of New Schools, we understood how to familiarise ourselves with the current status of the teaching situation in the Decroly School, the Dalton School, the Freinet School, the School that aspires to the method of the Jena plan. During our trip in the month of February 2017¹, we were able to familiarise

¹ The paper *The heart of citizenship education and the revival of New Schools in Europe* was in the Programme of CiCe Association Conference 2017 incorporating the CiCe Jean Monnet Network conference, *Reaffirming citizenship education in an uncertain world*, VIVES University, Bruges/Brugge, Belgium, June 8-10, 2017. Jean Monnet CiCe (Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe) Network is supported by the European Commission's Erasmus+ Programme. The school visits reported in this paper were organised by Hugo Verkest of Vives University College, in Vives, Belgium.

ourselves with the methods and appreciate the current implementations being adapted to environmental contexts in Belgium, between Brussels and the Flanders area.

The qualitative survey of the separate features of Method Schools involves ten investigative actions; namely, the tools for recognition in the field:

- random choice of four method schools defined as community schools;
- connection of the schools to well-known models of educational innovation;
- semi-structured interviews with privileged observers represented by school rectors, teachers, parents and children;
- observation of the school and classes during morning teaching activities;
- reading of the scholastic material prepared for the teaching and made up of homework, drawing, physical activities, research and evaluation;
- description of the activities by the children in spontaneous conversations, during which the task of the researchers was to bring out the “what” that made that specific school a complete, full learning environment;
- research on the specificity and difference of these schools in the education panorama of the European school;
- connection of these schools to other innovative pedagogical experiences in operation in other countries and, specifically, in Italy;
- persistence of the pedagogical legacy and awareness of the importance of the method;
- interest in the preservation of the original model.

Renewal beyond memory

The renewal work that began with Ovide Decroly (1871-1932), Peter Petersen (1884-1952), Helen Parkhurst (1887-1973) and Célestin Freinet (1896-1966) requires a single-minded passion for teaching. The faith in the liberating activity of the child who experiments and self-educates is a feature common to all these experiences.

The Ecole de l’Ermitage in Brussels is in the same building, in which Decroly worked, and the physician’s living quarters still preserve the material for working with both children and teachers. The original documents collect the perceptions of the language and development of the child. One can see how careful, localised observation was at the basis of the scientific arrangement. The workbooks of the students of the Ecole de l’Ermitage show what was meant by the global method of learning from literature and writings, through word and phrase. From the phase of global perception, one moves to the phase of experimental observation, hereby collecting data that open up teaching to scientific discussion. Just as Decroly used films and documentaries about the daily life of the school, perfected the active method and explained how to follow the interests of the child, so, also, do the children of the Ermitage now describe their experience of knowledge of the world and ascribe the right words to the events experienced inside and outside of the school. The parallelism between the

globalisation explained by Decroly and the globalisation explained by the children that attend the Ermitage makes a sizable qualitative jump. The children with whom we spoke were able to tell us what interested them and why what they were studying was important to their lives. They knew how to distinguish learning by discovery from imitative learning; they knew to say that ties exist among the various curricular and extracurricular activities.

The school that follows the method of the Jena Plan of Peter Petersen was opened in 2011 by decision of the Gent community. It gathers in children of 36 different nationalities. Every child enters the classroom knowing how to speak Dutch; for this, the child may spend one year in a nearby school to learn the language prior to entering the Jena Plan school. Teaching is organised in groups of classes by grade: first and second; third and fourth; fifth and sixth.

The Dalton system of Helen Parkhurst is based on four fundamental principles that guide the educational action of the teachers:

- independence of the children;
- the way of working together;
- freedom;
- thinking.

The children learn how to do their own tasks and think about what they are doing. They know how to ask themselves why a task is completed or not. In pre-school, the work is in groups, while in primary school, individual work is encouraged. Teachers are prepared in training courses organised in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and everyone must know the Dalton method. They may also teach in Dutch and French and sometimes in other languages. One must not neglect to say that this school originated in Gent in 1990, in a poor area of the city, and slowly became a school preferred by families from the middle and upper-middle classes. Today it accepts many children of Turkish and Moroccan families and is considered an international school because various languages are spoken. Dutch is the teaching language and French is compulsory from the age of 10. During the recreation period, the children can speak their mother tongues, even if different from the official languages.

The invention of the free-format text, the practice of typography, the experience of advising and taking decisions, the architecture of the school thought out for play, movement and imagination were all part of Freinet teaching and in schools that recaptured their features and enriched them with new visions, because following the founders does not mean copying their example, but means, rather, understanding their spirit to recreate it in new forms. The same inside and outside architecture of the Tielt and Meulebeke schools expresses the vision of pedagogical cooperativism of Freinet. Contact with nature and care of animals educate towards respect and environmental sustainability. The active participation of families, parents and

grandparents are the writings of personal and group biographies and educate to values of identity of belonging.

The schools of the Jena Plan, Freinet and Dalton are community schools subject to national inspections and can use a free curriculum that is faithful to the method that the school establishes; the municipality is responsible for financing and school policy. Waldorf and Montessori schools are not considered community schools; they are method schools that are inspected by commissions outside the national system of instruction.

Conclusion

The *Weltanschauung* of teachers in the New Schools is recreated daily in contemporaneous experiences, inspired by the founders from which they take their name. Teachers at the Decroly School, the Freinet School, the Dalton School and the Jena Plan deeply believe in their work, to the point of considering it of crucial value that makes existence unique. Over the last 10 years, a noteworthy revival of Method Schools is being witnessed in Belgium.

In talks with persons running the school, one notes the tie that binds those who are continuing with the method and those who initiated it. The expertise of these teachers cannot be measured like university results or career successes, but rather the capacity to enter into the spirit of the project for renewing education and knowing how to invent school situations in keeping with the basic idea: give space to childhood, so that it grows in nature, experience and culture. In nature, according to the needs of the person, for gradual development and contexts of unity between the school and community. In experience, according to educational opportunities of contact with things, animate and inanimate objects that add to the environment. In community, for the contribution of families and persons, who live close to the school and understand its importance for preservation and improvement.

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The Need to Focus on Digital Pedagogy for Online Learning

Halvdan Haugsbakken

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Sociology and
Political Science and Department of Teacher Education, Norway

Shaun Nykvist

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Sociology and
Political Science and Department of Teacher Education, Norway

Dag Atle Lysne

Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Department of Sociology and
Political Science and Department of Teacher Education, Norway

Abstract

As pedagogical approaches to teaching and learning continue to evolve to meet the needs of students in a rapidly changing, globalized world that is heavily influenced and reliant on digital technologies, it is anticipated that the learning environments in Higher Education will also be transformed. Consequently, this transformation of learning environments is often synonymous with the adoption of and continued focus on the potential benefits of online learning in the Higher Education sector. It is within this context that this paper reports on a small-scale case study in a large Nordic university where the learning management system, Blackboard[®] was piloted and implemented using a top-down approach consisting of the comprehensive training of academic staff, students and support staff. The explorative approach used in this study identifies three common themes in the data as it follows a group of academic beta testers (N=23) who are involved in the initial phases of implementation. The study explores the educators' primary use of Blackboard, whilst attempting to understand how academics perceive and interpret the role of online technologies to support effective pedagogical practices. Drawing on data from participant interviews, the study highlights the need for increased academic support for online learning design and a renewed focus on staff development of effective pedagogical practices

Keywords: Online Pedagogy, Higher Education, Learning Design, Blackboard.

Introduction

Background to the Study

The proliferation of digital technologies in society has been met with much gusto by many academics and administrators in Higher Education Institutions (HEI), as they seek to exploit their potential use as a catalyst for transforming teaching and learning practices. Of particular note is the growing number of HEI that are making significant investments in the possible benefits that online teaching and learning strategies can afford them. This is evidenced in the ever-increasing student enrolments in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCS) (Mkhize, Mtsweni, & Buthelezi, 2016) and the increasing number of HEI continuing to invest in Learning Management Systems (LMS) (Allen & Seaman, 2013). However, with an increasing number of online course offerings and the associated increase of students opting into online courses (Gregory & Salmon, 2013; Margaryan, Bianco, & Littlejohn, 2015), there is a growing concern with regards to the pedagogical approaches associated with these online learning environments (Brown, Millichap, & Dehoney, 2015; Kirkwood & Price, 2014; Salmon, 2014).

The transformation of teaching and learning in HEI is often associated with the affordances of digital technologies. However, according to Henderson, Selwyn, and Aston (2017) while digital technologies are clearly evident in the students experience of undergraduate university education, “digital technologies are clearly not transforming the nature of university teaching and learning” (2017:1577). This lack of transformation in teaching and learning practices reinforces the need for HEI to focus further attention on developing highly effective pedagogical practices that meet the needs of learners – especially within these changing online learning environments. MOOCS are often plagued by “relatively low completion rates” (2017:170) and in general there are reports of high dropout rates and achievement problems associated with online courses (Kizilcec, Piech, & Schneider, 2013; Margaryan et al., 2015). There is no doubt that online learning and teaching is complex, and that there is a need for academics to embrace new approaches that meet the demands of the changing student population. It can be further argued that many academics unfamiliar with the new and emerging digital technologies that can be used to support online teaching and learning, struggle to shift beyond traditional approaches that they have used in face-to-face classrooms.

While some of these traditional approaches may be effective in these new online learning environments, there is a need for educators to think differently about their pedagogical approaches and challenge their existing approaches. Academics transitioning from a place of comfort in their teaching (face-to-face) often need to challenge their professional identities as they redefine themselves in a new role as a facilitator and designer of online learning experiences (M. Kebritchi, 2014). According to Kebritchi, “the teaching methods of online instructors are one of the major factors that greatly influence the atmosphere and effectiveness of online

courses” (2014:468). In a recent study of the design of online learning opportunities associated with MOOCs (Nash, 2015), it was found that the quality of instructional design across 76 MOOCs was limited and there was a need to rethink the principles of online course design. While the educator cannot control all factors associated with a successful online course, they do play a very important role. It has been noted that an inherent problem associated with the design and facilitation of online courses is associated with the fact that many educators have not taken online courses as students and are unaware of the many challenges that are faced by students in these environments (M. Kebritchi, 2014).

The role of the educator and their ability to adapt to new approaches while also understanding effective digital pedagogies that can support innovative approaches to teaching and learning are central to the success of online courses. There are many different digital tools associated with the delivery of online courses and each of these tools can serve multiple purposes. The focus of this study relates to online learning delivered through an LMS. The role of the LMS is varied and it can be argued that the intention of such a tool is to support students as a supplement to face-to-face learning (in a blended learning mode) and for students undertaking online learning without a face-to-face component. A 2014 study into how LMS were used, found that the majority of the academics using an LMS, predominantly used the basic features of the LMS to merely distribute content, though it was noted that there were academics that saw the potential of the LMS to enhance learning and teaching (LLC, 2016). According to Luckin, Bligh, Manches, Ainsworth, Crook and Noss, “what is clear is that no technology has an impact on learning in its own right; rather, its impact depends upon the way in which it is used” (2012:9), hence placing an emphasis on the important role that the educator plays.

It is within this context that this study explores the relationship between the introduction and implementation of an LMS to support effective pedagogical practice in a large Nordic university. This study explores the educators’ primary use of Blackboard, whilst attempting to understand how academics perceive and interpret the role of Blackboard to support effective pedagogical practices for the delivery of online courses.

Research Approach

A qualitative case study approach was used to examine the ways in which academics designed and facilitated online courses. The study is situated within a large Nordic university where students attend in either a face-to-face, blended or online learning mode. The participants (N=23) are academics at the university and have had previous experience using digital technologies to design and facilitate learning experiences for their students. The participants describe themselves as professional users of digital technologies and as having a passive consumer approach to use of social media. For example, they are registered users on most common social media platforms like Facebook but have a reluctant relationship towards an active engagement with these

tools in their personal lives, using them only where needed within their role as an academic.

In 2016, the university publicly procured a new LMS (Blackboard) after a costly drawn out process. It is the implementation and pilot of the new Blackboard system in 2016 that is the focus of this study. The LMS was implemented according to a controlled technology mature approach, starting with a pilot phase and then a second phase to include targeted user groups consisting of university educators and students. The implementation process was a large and complex undertaking, consisting of the internal promotion of Blackboard, beta testing, creation of learning resources on how to use the LMS and the training of educators and students. This research paper reports on the initial phase of the study as the participants pilot the use of Blackboard pilot of Blackboard where a small group of participants (N=23) interested in the use of digital technology to enhance learning and teaching used the new LMS to design and implement learning experiences for their students. The participants taught across the disciplines of geomatics, teacher education, radiography, informatics, nursing, bio engineering, sociology, psychology, public health, and business management studies. The implementation of Blackboard and associated training employed a “top-down” approach which is not dis-similar to other implementations of an LMS in HEI (M. Kebritchi, Lipschuetz, & Santiago, 2017).

The study made use of an explorative qualitative research strategy. This approach was applied to facilitate an in-depth investigation of the ways in which university educators interpreted and used Blackboard. Participants in the study were selected from volunteers based on pre-established criteria to ensure that a range of disciplines from across the university were represented. Data was collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews which were conducted between October 2016 and March 2017. Each participant was interviewed individually with each interview approximately 30mins in length. The focus of the interviews was on how the educators used blackboard and designed learning experiences for their students. Interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed. The study was based on informed consent and the informants were anonymized. The data analysis was inspired by an open coding strategy of the interview data. Here, the main focus was on finding emerging patterns, which consisted of grouping and comparing the informants’ perceptions, user patterns, and experiences of with reference to how they use Blackboard. In order to offer the informants a voice, direct quotations are used in the data analysis.

Findings and Discussion

While the literature on facilitating and designing for online learning places an emphasis on the educator, there are a number of additional factors that can play a crucial role in the success of an online course. These factors can include the perceived role of the technology and whether it is used as a tool for administrative tasks or for other tasks such as distributing content or communicating with students. An analysis

of the qualitative data in this study resulted in the emergence of three main themes associated with the design and implementation of online learning in Blackboard; technology issues, pedagogical approaches and social connections. These three emerging themes are consistent with the four different roles that Kebritchi (2014) associates with academics teaching online courses. Kebritchi (2014) refers to these roles as being pedagogical, social, managerial and technical.

Theme 1: Technology issues

Blackboard to design and facilitate online learning courses. This theme identified two common factors associated with technology; user experience and the expertise and experience of the participant in using digital technologies. Blackboard's *user experience* emerged as an important and consistent theme in our data. While the educator has some control over the organization of content in the system, the overall user interface is a design of the Blackboard system. An analysis of data revealed that 60% of participants ($n=14$) experienced issues with the user interface and saw this as problematic. They identified the user interface as being overly messy and complicated to use. Some participants used descriptions such as "rigid", while another participant referred to Blackboard's navigation page as "a web site from the 90s".

The data indicates that the participants were challenged by the many "clicks" needed to access areas of the LMS with some links leading to dead ends. Many features were not self-explanatory and required the participants to search for explanations. The user interface was referred to as being ambiguous, sometimes too complex, and having too many options. The LMS was sometimes perceived as being overly time consuming to manage basic educational tasks.

A number of participants report that some tasks cause continuous frustrations whilst trying to complete simple tasks such as system slowness, changing background colors, arranging media in a visually appealing way and uploading photos to support teaching activities. While these frustrations could be attributed to Blackboard user design, it could be argued that a lack of expertise in using digital tools is the limiting factor causing the participant to be frustrated. Participant x claims:

"I do see that there are limitations, for example, on uploading pictures. If the pictures are too big, then it takes a very long time before it shows. The feedback I get from the students, is that if they use a laptop, then it takes so long before they see the X-rays. And when nothing shows, they go on to the next step because it has not worked".

However, in contrast to this, we must also stress that our data shows that some participants ($n=5$) had a positive experience when navigating the Blackboard user interface and designing learning experiences for students. These participants had few challenges in adopting Blackboard and saw little difference from the previous LMS that they had been using. It is possible that these users could be referred to as having a stronger grasp of digital technologies. This finding is supported by current literature

that places an emphasis on academics having confidence in the use of digital technologies (M. Kebritchi, 2014; LLC, 2016).

Theme 2: Pedagogical Approaches

The second theme pertains to pedagogical approaches associated with academics using blackboard to develop and facilitate online courses. In this theme, most academics used the LMS as a supplementary tool in face-to-face lectures where Blackboard was used for the organizing of learning materials and making these resources available to students. Blackboard does not take on a leading role in the learning processes, as the main educational activities are related to on-campus learning. In general, the academics perceive Blackboard as an “extra space” where learning material is made available to their students. In this sense, they upload PowerPoint presentations from lectures, publish information on compulsory assignments, circulate syllabus, and post other relevant learning materials. This is similar to their traditional approaches used in face-to-face teaching (M. Kebritchi, 2014).

However, the data shows that the participants use Blackboard as a supplement to established educational practice in more nuanced ways, which is at least on display in three different ways in our data.

Firstly, several educators use Blackboard as an *administrative tool*, meaning that the purpose is to store learning material that can be accessed by students. Several participants explained that they used features to structure course content with a simple intent to give a good overview of their courses. Not surprisingly, academics used features to organize course content according to a folder structure logic, which in practical terms indicates that course content is organized according to numbered modules or by themes. In other words, Blackboard works as a type of “Dropbox” function. Participant *y* claims that:

“For me, Blackboard is a content management system. The content of the course is available to the students and not so much of the features”

whereas participant *b* claims:

“I had the learning content, so I have tried to create a good course structure and present it in an intuitive and user-friendly way. In this way, the students can find it quickly and go to the exercises, learning materials, videos and so on. I have spent a great deal of time on that and hope that I have come up with a good solution that can be used by our colleagues in the future”.

Secondly, Blackboard offers opportunities to organize learning experiences beyond being a mere digital space where one uploads and makes learning material available for students. Blackboard can be used in a blended learning context. The LMS has a range of features allowing educators to modulate learning in innovative ways, like using, wikis, blogs, and discussion forums. During the initial phase several educators

used features like blogs, polls, wikis or simple gaming apps like Kahoot. A number of academics also tried a more advanced approach using Blackboard as part of the educational practice of “flipping the classroom”. Here, educators prepare instructional content in online, which students use before they arrive and engage with traditional campus learning. In our interviews, a number of participants (n=3) had this as a pedagogical goal, but to what extent they succeeded with it, is unknown. Participant *a* claims:

“For both courses, we used a flipped classroom approach. We have filmed all the lectures, cut them into 10 to 15 minutes pieces which are put into the various learning modules. So, I'm quite happy that Blackboard is used for something more than managing learning resources or a place to communicate with the students. We need to develop these systems so that they help a new pedagogy. One of the benefits, for example, is that we can find out where the students need feedback, on what is difficult, what is easy, what they master and don't master.

The third approach that emerged in this theme illustrates how Blackboard is used as a supplement to established educational practice, to live stream lectures through Blackboard Collaborate. The initial phases included a number of participants working with off-campus students where this technology could be used to live stream content as an extension to existing lectures. Participant *d* claims:

“I set it up when I was going to have a lecture one day. I uploaded my slides. Those who had signed in saw the slides and heard the sound. I adjusted the camera a little. Those who logged on heard the discussion in the lecture room, or at least what I said. I used it throughout a whole day. Plus, I used the recording function, which is a tool in Blackboard. It worked incredibly well”.

Theme 3: Social Connections

In this theme three methods of social communication were identified; for communicating, providing feedback and as a group tool for communicating.

In the first instance the data contained several examples of how the participants used Blackboard for *informing student practice*. This is where Blackboard was used to push out announcements to students – usually one to many. While this was a positive attribute raised by participants, issues pertained to the ability of the participant to use synchronous and asynchronous communication between a student and an academic. Given that the previous LMS had this ability there was quite a lot of disappointment amongst the participants. Participant *b* claims that:

“The students think the challenge is that the messaging function has disappeared, because they are used to sending us messages through the old LMS, Its learning. The ideal had been to have such a small mail button somewhere in Blackboard, so that they can talk to us”.

Learning that Blackboard cannot be used to effectively communicate between students and academics has resulted in the participants looking for alternative ways to communicate. In this case a number of participants avoided responding individually to emails from students and actively responded to the questions via a frequently asked question (FAQ) discussion forum to ensure transparency and to avoid an overload of inbox emails. As participant *f* claims:

“If I get questions from students by e-mail, I publish the questions. I try to be consistent on using the discussion forum. I wish for the students to access the discussion forum and comment. I hope that the discussion forum will be used, because I think it can be a great way to keep up the communication”.

Consequently, a number of participants commented on the fact that their students have created outside groups via social media to communicate with each other. Participant *g* claims:

“Slack is more for the students talking amongst themselves, while one of the TA’s is a member of the group also, and for the students to contact me or the teaching assistants, they use Skype mostly”.

Secondly, participants recognized that Blackboard provided an easy to use gradecentre for their students to submit assessment and an interface for them to provide feedback on the assessment. However, it should be noted here that a large number of participants experienced challenges in navigating the grade center. This was foremost related to that Blackboard’s user interface was seldom experienced as intuitive and user friendly (see theme 1 – technology issue) resulting in some students not receiving timely feedback. Participant *g* commented:

“This fall when we talked about using Blackboard, we wanted to try something new, a way we couldn't do in its learning. Then we started with digital submission and grading of lab reports. Lab reports have always been submitted on paper. I like the way you can grade in Blackboard. Now, I don't grade student tasks on paper anymore”.

Particular aspects of the student feedback feature have also been commented by some educators, which raises concerns about how educators should give feedback, by using qualitative feedback consisting of comments or the point system embedded in Blackboard. Participant *g* referred to the fact that a quantitative mark was needed even though they had only ever given qualitative grades to their students. This is an example of how the digital technology is dictating how academics should work pedagogically in these online environments. The comment from Participant *g* claims:

“You have to give a score, and that’s not natural to me. We give qualitative feedback on what they have written, and then it is approved or unapproved. So, it’s very unnatural for me to say that it was 70 out of 100, I don't know”.

Thirdly, an aspect creating concern among the participants, is the inability of Blackboard to effectively display and organize the division of students in. For

example, educators claim that they do not have accurate data on the *status of their students*. Some educators have a mixed population of campus and online students in their courses and the participants explain that it would come in handy to know which students were on-campus or off-campus students. Participant *f* claims:

“I don’t think we get a good overview of all the users. We receive a list, but we have several types of groups and students attending different study programs – online and face-to-face. This does not show who belongs to which group and what study program they attend”.

Many participants were used to a *group feature* from an earlier LMS where the educators themselves could select the students into groups according to how they organize them in their campus teachings. This is highly relevant in professional studies like teacher training and nursing education that send their students regularly into practice. Here, the educators rely heavily on having good and exact overview of their groups, but they experienced that Blackboard served the opposite purpose. Instead, the educators could not name the groups, creating organizational mismatch. Participant *d* claims:

“Perhaps not for my own part, but my colleagues have missed the opportunity to create groups within groups. For example, within groups of online students one could create separate group of online students. It could have been helpful”.

Conclusion

The study highlights three main themes associated with the design and facilitation of online learning courses by 23 academics using Blackboard in its initial introduction at a large Nordic university. These themes related to technology issues, pedagogical approaches and social connections. While the theme based around pedagogical approaches was evident in the analyzed data, the responses from the participants demonstrated little evidence of the participants demonstrating pedagogical approaches that went beyond the approaches that they were familiar with in a traditional face-to-face environment. The findings also highlight the differing views that participants had towards the use of Blackboard and how there is a possible link between the participants digital literacy skills and their interpretation of and ease of using the LMS. The study highlights the need for academics to shift their thinking towards pedagogical approaches related to online courses to best activate student learning in online learning environments. While this is a small case study based in a Nordic university these results are significant for Nordic universities as they look further towards online learning courses to support a wider audience of students. It also demonstrates the need for Higher Education Institutions to invest more in staff development related the design and facilitation of online courses.

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Social and Communication Competences of Students: Future Teachers

Marjan Ninčević

University of Zagreb, Department for Croatian Studies, Zagreb, Croatia

Dunja Jurić Vukelić

University of Zagreb, Department for Croatian Studies, Zagreb, Croatia

Abstract

Numerous studies have shown that teachers significantly shape student's learning context. Socially and emotionally competent teachers tend to develop supportive and encouraging relationship with their students by promoting intrinsic motivation, focusing on student's strengths and abilities, mediating through conflict situations and encouraging appropriate communication and prosocial behaviour. Teachers with good communication skills will create a more successful teaching and learning ambience for the students, and without communication, the teaching and learning process will not take place. Educators, parents and public today recognize the need for an educational agenda to improve academic performance, but also to enhance students' social and communicational competence. The aim of the present study was to examine social and communication competence of the students of educational sciences and teacher education at the University of Zagreb Department Of Croatian Studies. As part of the most important aspects of the future educational work, the participants pointed out independence at work, the awareness that they would contribute to the future of the society and the awareness that they play a useful role in society. Participants also expressed optimism about their communication skills with students, planning and organizing teaching process and maintaining discipline, and to some less extent their competences for successful cooperation with students' parents. Results were discussed in terms of possibilities to contribute to future teachers' education.

Keywords: Social, Communication Competences, Students, Future Teachers

Introduction

Quality, expertise and pedagogical competencies of teachers significantly determine the level of educational achievement of the students, so future teacher education is an

important aspect of education policy of each country. Educational systems in European countries differ in many specificities, but what they all have in common is a strong tendency for harmonization (Vidović, Vlahović-Štetić, Pavin, Rijavec, Miljević-Riđički and Žižak, 2005).

Studies of perception of the students' needs emphasize the need for social and communication competencies development; the skills of cooperation with students, parents and other participants of the educational process, while the opinion polls of high school teachers indicate the need for quality fundamental psycho-pedagogical training and methodology with the purpose of preparing to face real and concrete situations and problems.

The requirement for educational work with students is formal pedagogical-psychological-didactic-methodical education, in other words, acquired pedagogical competencies. Individual characteristics of the educational process, such as teaching practice, monitoring and evaluating students' obligations and further professional training, are also regulated by specific regulations. In addition to professional-pedagogical alterations and new trends, there is an increasing need for systematic professional training of teachers in the field of information-communication technologies and the corresponding methods.

In order for teachers to do their job successfully, their education must be in line with the expectations of practice. Building a knowledge-based society is based on the quality and continuous improvement of the system of education and science, the meaning recognized by the most developed states, and education and science were proclaimed as the basis of development (Zrno, 2012). Requirements of the modern educational system are focused on the continuous development of pedagogical competencies: the teacher should be communicative, develop informatic literacy; it is necessary to continuously evaluate their own level of competence, and to develop personal emotional and social adaptation at the same time (Ninčević, 2013). Teacher takes new tasks and appears in a new role, rarely following given concepts and increasingly using reflective practice and the exploratory, critical and creative situational approach (Sučević, Cvjetičanin & Sakač, 2011).

Therefore we have examined students' perceptions of the teaching profession of competencies that are important for teaching, with the purpose of facilitating assessment of the area that should be specifically emphasized in teacher education, in the opinion of those participants directly involved in educational process. In the present study students of teaching studies were asked about importance of competencies for quality teaching and on the quality of the education in which they participate or have participated. Participants were students of University of Zagreb.

Methodology

Participants

Participants in the present study were students of teaching studies whose Master's Programs were in Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, Pedagogy, Latin, History, Croatology, Croatian language and literature and Religious science. A total of 201 students of the University of Zagreb participated in the study. Their age ranged from 19 to 28 years ($M=24.1$). Seventy-two percent of the participants were female and twenty-eight percent male participants. The selection of participants was based on willingness to participate in the research.

Instrument and procedure

Questionnaire used in the present study was Pedagogical competence profile of students. Participants assessed their personal level of specific pedagogical competences. Demographic questions examined age, gender, college, study and study year. The study was conducted by the method of online surveys. The paper used empirical results obtained by self-assessment.

Results

Table 1. Importance of certain aspects of teaching profession

	M	SD
Everyday work with students	4,16	,932
Compatibility of work and private life	4,29	,735
Intellectual interest in the profession	4,32	,798
Salary level	3,47	,891
Employment security	4,15	,917
Leisure and holidays	4,24	,791
Independence in work	4,39	,638
Social status	3,64	,942
Awareness of making a useful role in society	4,30	,752
Awareness of doing good for the future of society	4,36	,724

Participants were asked to assess the importance of specific aspects of teaching profession. They assessed the importance of individual knowledge and skills by evaluating their agreements with a total of 10 statements on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was *completely irrelevant* and 5 was *absolutely important*. As shown in *Table 1*, students assessed independence in work, awareness of doing good for the future of society as well as making a useful role in society as most important. Salary and social status were assessed as least important aspects of work.

Table 2. Self-assessment of social and communication competence

	M	SD
Dealing with social and emotional problems of students I will teach	3.45	0.80
Teamwork with other teachers	3.51	1.04
Classroom discipline maintaining	3.69	0.91
Not letting the pupils notice that I'm provoked	3.98	0.97
Effective communication with pupils	4.07	1.00
Cooperation with parents	3.79	0.91
Social and communication competence in general	3.36	0.46

Participants then assessed the level of their own social and communication competence. Factor analysis revealed one latent variable, named social and communication competence in general. Observed individually, effective communication with pupils was assessed as the most developed competence. Participants anticipate difficulties in terms of dealing with social and emotional problems of students they will teach and teamwork with colleagues – other teachers. Surprisingly, classroom discipline maintaining and cooperation with parents were in the middle, not highlighted as the most problematic areas, which was expected according to previous studies.

Discussion

Defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes needed for efficient work (Vizek Vidović, 2009), competences are important factor in quality and effective teaching. In order to solve the problem in a responsible way, a person should possess a range of professional, methodological, social and personal competencies (Frey, 2004, as cited in Palekčić, 2008). Professional competence refers to disciplinary-oriented areas of ability, methodical competence to the thought and active ability to work within the defined professional area. Social competence implies the ability to achieve the goal in co-operation with others, and the personal competence abilities needed to act responsibly and motivated.

The estimates of students, future teachers, emphasize the need for greater emphasis on practical work, linkage of the teaching material, orientation to the development of social and professional competences and subject didactics training (Palekčić, 2008). Studies also point out the need for development of skills to cooperate with students, parents and other participants in the educational process, as well as the need for quality basic psycho-pedagogical training and methodology for the purpose of preparing for real and concrete situations and problems (Vidović et al., 2005). In the present study, participants evaluated the competence of teaching, specifically, social and communication competences, as very important for quality teaching. Participants

also assessed competence to cooperate with colleagues as the least expressed. It is possible that students assess individual items about collaborations as less important for work in education, since they do not have a concrete experience in communication with parents, pupils, colleagues, and associates.

The results are in line with the expectations and past studies that, by examining the perception of the education system of teachers and students, pointed out the need to improve the quality of initial teacher education, the acquisition of teaching competences related to various aspects of communication and cooperation, both with students and other participants in the educational process, and the need for practical experience early in the education process (Vizek Vidović et al., 2005). This research attempted to point out the need for the development of certain areas of competence that active participants in the educational process assessed as most needed, given that active and continuous work on their own cognitive, emotional and social competences is one of the fundamental preconditions for developing a quality pedagogical profile of teachers within the contemporary education system (Čirić, 2016).

Conclusion

In the present study, students of teaching studies assessed the importance of pedagogic competencies. Students assessed the pedagogical and didactical competencies as very important for successful teaching. The study pointed out the need for development of competencies during study and later in different forms of lifelong education.

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Technology as a Motivational Factor in Foreign Language Learning

Panagiotis Panagiotidis

Professor, Department of Literature (School of French Language and Literature),
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

Pinelopi Krystalli

Panagiotis Arvanitis

Abstract

It is a common belief that engagement and motivation are crucial factors in learning and especially in language learning. In particular, increasing motivation can lead to the mobilization of students' personal, cognitive, emotional and behavioral resources and, consequently to better learning results. As digital technology has become more sophisticated, its tools and applications can be used in and outside the classroom, in both formal and informal settings, in order to increase students' motivation. Amongst the various factors -tools, methods or strategies- that can lead to increased motivation, this paper examines the role of technology as a motivational factor in foreign language learning. The relationship between the use of technological means such as web tools and services, digital games, mobile apps or communication tools and motivation in language learning context, has been studied extensively, with a wide variety of approaches, and within the framework of several language learning applications. In order to determine the real impact of technology on learners' motivation, an extensive literature review focusing on studies that have examined the impact of technology use in language learning and teaching on motivation to learn, has been carried out. Furthermore, this paper discusses the concept of motivation in learning context and the relationship between technology and language learning, summarizes some of the numerous studies and researches on this subject, presents a synthesis of the studies examined, and formulates conclusions and perspectives for effective integration of technology as a motivational tool / factor in language learning context.

Keywords: language learning technology, motivation.

Introduction

Nowadays technology is not any more a privilege for the minority of students but it is accessible to all the students, as it has become considerably cheaper. Technology is ubiquitous and, hence, the wealth of the world's information can be easily accessed through a variety of devices. According to recent statistics, 5 billion people worldwide use mobile devices (eWeek, 2017). The growing use of mobile devices (personal digital assistants-PDAs, mobile phones, iPods, laptops, Tablet PCs) and wireless technologies (Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, GPS, 3G, 4G, satellite systems), enable the user to access any type of training and instructional material from anywhere and at any time.

Today's students, who are considered digital natives, are familiar with any type of technology and they are highly skilled at multitasking in the modern information era where ubiquitous connections are now possible. Millennials interact continuously and seamlessly with technology and this is affecting both how they want to learn and to be taught in any level of education, and, the teaching and learning practices used. They use technology as an integral part of everyday life, both in formal and informal learning contexts, not for the sake of technology but as a fundamental tool to access information and communication, as a basic element of everyday life and as an essential tool for their existence (Prensky, 2007, Housand and Housand, 2012, Thomas, O'Bannon, and Bolton, 2013).

Research has shown that technology-enhanced environments can increase students' motivation and engagement and improve students' productivity (Prensky, 2007; Roblyer & Doering, 2010). But is this the case in the foreign language learning context? What is the real impact of technology on learners' motivation? In this paper, we tried to answer this question by examining the results of previous research carried out in the field of foreign language focusing on the impact of technology use in language learning and teaching on motivation to learn.

Technology and Motivation in Foreign Language Learning

The integration of digital technology into foreign language teaching and learning is not an innovation. However, the advent of Web 2.0 and the great variety of tools that are more numerous and easier to access and handle seem to have given it an accelerating effect. This integration has changed teachers' pedagogical practices and renewed learning strategies among learners.

Actually, as Lamb states, “... *developments in digital technology are probably the most prolific source of innovation in L2 teaching methodology in contemporary times, at least in western or developed world contexts, and the motivational properties of each innovation are usually considered an important aspect of its instructional qualities ...*”. (Lamb, 2017: 30).

In the context of an action-oriented approach, as proposed by the Council of Europe, the solid ground of the use of technology is that one can learn by action, by experience,

“by doing”. The use of technology has two main purposes: to facilitate the transfer of what is learned outside the school, in other social contexts, and motivate learners by engaging them in the proposed learning tasks and activities.

According to Brophy (2004: 3) “... *motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior...*”. Motivation is important because it helps to determine whether a learner persists in a course, the level of engagement shown, the quality of work produced, and the level of achievement attained (Maggie Hartnett, 2016: 13). Motivation is the “tensor” of the original forces, internal and external (situational, contextual and global), directed or not by an aim that influences an individual cognitively, emotionally or behaviorally (Karsenty, 1999).

Lamb (2017, 30) listed the main motivational benefits of using technology in foreign language learning:

- Greater autonomy and individualization;
- Enhanced opportunities for communication;
- Identity development;
- Recognizing and utilizing learners’ existing IT skills;
- Content-based instruction;
- Intercultural content;
- Designing motivating tasks;
- Increasing the relevance of the L2;
- Alternative forms of assessment.

The growing amount of research evidence has shown that teachers and researchers have used a variety of software and applications in order to face motivational challenges. We have grouped the results of our literature review into four parts according to the type of technology used: Web tools, services and applications, games and MUVes, communication tools and mobile technologies.

Literature Review

In the following section, we will briefly present and summarize some of the numerous studies and researches on how the use of various technological means can reinforce and maintain learners’ motivation and increase their engagement in the educational process.

Web tools, Services and Applications

The relationship between Web 2.0 tools and motivation has been studied extensively. According to Terrell (2011) access to online tools (wikis, avatars, games, interactive

stories), increases English Language learners motivation to practice English outside the classroom. Furthermore, as McLoughlin & Lee (2008a) argue, Web 2.0 tools appear to motivate the individual to link personal interests to broader social networks, participating, thus, in a dynamic community that provides feedback and reciprocity. The following studies relate to specific web 2.0 services and tools:

Mazer, Murphy and Simonds (2007) carried out a study in order to explore the impact of teacher self-disclosure on Facebook on student motivation, affective learning and classroom climate. The results of the study confirmed that this practice may lead students to higher levels of anticipated motivation and affective learning and to create a more pleasant classroom climate.

Shih (2011) also studied the effect of integrating social networks (in that case facebook) in a College English writing class, using a blended learning approach and peer assessment. The findings demonstrated that using cooperative learning, this facebook integrated instruction could also significantly enhance students' interest and motivation.

Lee, McLoughlin and Chan (2008b) experimentally used the production of podcasts to better prepare their students for the content of the course. The conclusion was that the students-producers found the task both challenging and motivating, as evidenced by the quality and intensity of their interaction and by the successful production of the podcasts.

Mahoney (2014:36, cited by Richards, 2015) investigated the use of blogging in a writing course. The results showed that this has a highly motivating effect on students.

Wilkinson (2016) used media sharing services to increase the motivation of students. The study confirmed that the public exposure of student work (eg publishing to YouTube) drives them to do their best.

Sun (2009), in an experiment on the effectiveness of voice blogs, concluded that voice-blogging can increase learning motivation, authorship, and development of learning strategies, as it encourages students to present themselves, exchange information and connect to peers.

Yang & Wu (2012) developed a Digital Storytelling (DST) program to investigate whether it has an impact on academic achievement, critical thinking, and learning motivation of senior high school students learning English as a foreign language. The results after a period of 6 months showed that the participants achieved a better level in English language, but also showed improvement in critical thinking and learning motivation, especially for task value and self-efficacy. Yang & Wu also refer to other studies (eg. Pintrich et al, 1993; Pintrich, 1999; Robin, 2005, 2008; Sadik, 2008; Van Gils, 2005), that lead to the general conclusion that DST can trigger users' interest, increase their cooperative skills, and help them improve in foreign language.

Games, Video Games and MUVes

Many researchers argue about the benefits of using video games in education. Games can be used in a variety of learning approaches, and they are able to motivate and engage the students in the learning process:

O'Neil, Wainess and Baker (2005) argue that when learning content is combined with game elements, motivation of the learner is positively affected as games offer high level of interaction.

Randel, Morris, Wetzel and Whitehill (1992) state that competitive games motivate via challenge, fantasy and curiosity (Randel et al. 1992).

Bisson and Luckner (1996), argue that games create a complete, interactive, virtual playing environment, which offers an immersive experience and motivate users via fun, challenge and instant, visual feedback.

Mitchell and Saville-Smith (2004) claim that well-designed computer games are engaging and seductive, and motivate the player to continue using rewards and feedback.

Prensky (2007), Kirriemuir & McFarlane (2003) and Susi, Johannesson and Backlund (2007), agree that the desire to win, challenge and set goals that characterize games, implies an increase in user motivation.

Rosas, Nussbaum, Cumsille, Marianov, Correa, Flores and Rodriguez (2003) investigated the effects of introducing educational video games into the classroom and noticed positive effects on learning, motivation and classroom dynamics.

Mitchell & Saville-Smith (2004) believe that video games can stimulate the enjoyment, motivation and engagement of users and promote the development of various social and cognitive skills.

Woo (2014), carried out a survey among 63 university students for 8 weeks in order to find out whether Digital Game-Based Learning supports student motivation and cognitive success. The results showed that, using the online game, motivation and cognitive load exhibited a significant canonical correlation with performance.

Liu & Chu (2010) studied the ways in which ubiquitous games influence English learning achievement and learners' motivation. The research concluded that integrating ubiquitous games into the English class can result in better learning outcomes and motivation than the use of a traditional method.

Several other studies (Papastergiou, 2008; Tüzün, Yılmaz-Soylu, Karakus, Inal and Kizilkaya (2009) have concluded that GBL can improve learning motivation, attention and interest.

MUVes provide students with an opportunity to visualise and engage with complex learning systems in a setting that is motivating and engaging (Kennedy-Clark, 2009).

Wehner, Gump and Downey (2011) investigated the effect of learning a foreign language (in that case Spanish language) in a virtual world (in that case Second Life) on the motivation of users. Results demonstrated that virtual worlds can increase student motivation, lower their anxiety and help them learn a foreign language.

Connolly, Stansfield and Hainey (2011) developed an Augmented Reality Game to investigate if AR Games can increase student motivation in foreign language learning. ARG project was part of a European Commission Comenius project and involved 6 European partners, 328 14–16 year old students and 95 language teachers in 17 European countries. The students who participated in the research believe that they developed not only motivation but also cooperation, collaboration and teamwork skills.

Other software applications, tools, and learning activities have also been used to motivate students. Mullamaa (2010) investigated the ways of using a web-based environment (in that case the Blackboard LMS) in creating study materials for teaching English and Swedish (ESP and terminology) courses. Research has shown that the use of this environment improved cooperation among students and increase their motivation. Finally, Norbrook & Scott (2003) believe that quizzes are also capable to increase students' motivation.

Communication Tools

The potential of technology to increase motivation through synchronous or asynchronous communication has also been thoroughly explored:

Sun (2009) refers to several researches concerning the possibilities of CMC (Computer Mediated Communication). Results have shown that carefully prepared textual or audiovisual communication activities, both synchronous and asynchronous, can foster learner autonomy and enhance student motivation (Beauvois, 1992, 1998; Godwin-Jones, 2003; González-Bueno, 1998; Kern, 1995; Pellettieri, 2000; Shield & Weininger, 1999, all cited by Sun, 2009).

Alamer (2015), investigated the possibility of using the instant messaging application WhatsApp in L2 learning. Feedback showed that informal use of such application can foster their motivation to learn an L2.

Freiermuth & Huang (2012) examined in detail the motivation of Japanese students of English as a foreign language (EFL) who chatted electronically with Taiwanese EFL students using online synchronous chat software. The results reveal that students can be highly motivated when they participate in well-designed synchronous online chat tasks.

Freiermuth & Huang (2012) referring to a number of related studies, argue that CMC is naturally attractive as a tool, as students seemed highly motivated by the activities.

(Beauvois, 1995, 1999; Chun, 1994; Darhower, 2002; Freiermuth, 1998, 2001; Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006; Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Meunier, 1998; Warschauer, 1996, 1997; Warschauer et al., 1998 all cited by Freiermuth & Huang, 2012).

In another published research, Mayer pointed out that text messaging improves motivation (Mayer, 2002)

Mobile Technologies

Nowadays, the main trend seems to be the exploitation of mobile technologies. M-learning uses mobile computing technologies to enhance learning and therefore has an excellent potential to motivate learners as it is available anytime, anywhere and provides learners with rich, real-time, convenient, collaborative, contextual and continuous learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom (Kukulka-Hulme, 2005). Indeed, the latest generation of smartphones offers great possibilities to deliver multimedia content, location-based learning materials, and serious games to enhance the learners' enjoyment and motivation (Claudill, 2007). Foreign language courses developed for smart-phones, encompassing video clips, exercises, and other useful tools, are, according to the users, highly motivating (Chinnery, 2006). This is a common belief among many researchers who argue about the benefits of using mobile technologies in education:

Burston (2013) analysed some 575 works that was conducted relating to MALL (Mobile Assisted Language Learning) and conducted from 1994 to 2012. Among those publications, were 360 descriptions of projects concerning the use of mobile technologies in language learning and covering a variety of topics concerning MALL. Some of these applications studied the motivational effects of MALL applications in students (all cited by Burston, 2013): Chan et al (2011) explored the use of podcasting to support the learning of L2; Chiang (2012) investigated the effect on subsequent motivation to do extensive L2 English reading comparing Kindle ebook reader and printed materials; Gjedde & Bo-Kristensen (2012) conducted a lifelong learning project in which adult L2 learners complement classroom instruction using mobile phones to take textual notes, capture photos and videos, and make audio recordings; Hung & Young (2007), reported on the rationale of designing a PDA-based L2 English vocabulary acquisition game aiming to help elementary school students learn English words through collaborative and competitive group learning activities; Hung et al (2009) explored the effectiveness of a tablet PC-based Wireless Crossword Fan-Tan Game (WiCFG) on L2 English vocabulary acquisition; Kim & Lim (2010), explored how Twitter can be utilized to increase the motivation of L2 English students to write in English. Lan et al (2007), developed a tablet-PC based peer-assisted learning system (MPAL) to support the collaborative acquisition of L2 English reading skills; Lin et al (2008), studied the effect of hand-drawn sketches using the Group Scribbles application on web-linked tablet PCs to support the in-class collaborative learning of L2 English vocabulary by primary school children; Lin et al (2007), designed and tested a mobile-based system intended as a textbook complement; Liu & Chu (2010)

reported on the use of location-aware HELLO language learning system; Song (2008), developed an hybrid website + mobile phone SMS vocabulary learning program; Yamada et al (2011), reported on the effectiveness of a smartphone + web server program on the improvement of L2 English listening comprehension. In all of the above MALL projects, there has been less or more positive effect on the motivation of users thanks to the use of mobile technologies.

Huang, Yang, Chiang and Su (2016) developed a 5-step vocabulary learning (FSVL) strategy and a mobile learning tool in order to investigate their effects on the learning motivation and performance of their (80) students in English as a foreign language (EFL). The results showed that the learning motivation and performance of the students that used the mobile learning tool were superior to those of students taught via the traditional learning tools. This study also found that the learning approach did not significantly affect students' motivation to learn the teaching materials, which leads to the conclusion that the increased motivation is due to the mobile tool.

Sandberg, Maris and De Geus (2011) conducted a survey on the added value of mobile technology for learning English as a second language for primary school students. The results showed that the use of the mobile application motivated users and increased the total learning time with obvious benefits to their learning. The conclusion is that that formal school learning can be augmented by learning in an informal context, outside school, due to motivation created by the mobile app.

In a study conducted at Middlesex University in the UK, mobile learning activities (3D simulations) which encompass quiz and game functions were incorporated into certain sections of anatomy courses. The results were positive, as students found the iPad educational app fun and motivating (Adams Becker, Cummins, Davis, Freeman, Hall, Giesinger and Ananthanarayanan, 2017)

Thornton and Houser (2005) used mobile phones to teach English at a Japanese university, comparing web-based with SMS-based learning. The results of this study showed that the SMS-based lessons had been more effective because the use of mobile phones motivated the students to rehearse more frequently, which resulted in better retention of the material.

The JISC Case Studies in Wireless and Mobile Learning, which reviewed innovative practice in the United Kingdom, identified a number of benefits to 125 learners, including increased engagement and motivation. In that case, the use of mobile technology served as a motivator, since the variety of media and self-pacing attributes encouraged students to engage with learning material (Kukulaska-Hulme, 2005).

Technology Based Learning Activities

As can be deduced from the numerous studies presented in the previous paragraphs, the use of technologies can, beyond any doubt, increase the motivation of users, make

them follow the courses with more interest, and engage more actively in the learning process.

As far as language learning is concerned, the use of technologies involves a variety of tools and strategies. In foreign language classroom, properly designed activities for presentation, practice, assessment, testing, reference, communication or simulations, but also for creation, production and publishing are used by students.

It is a common belief among the researchers who investigate the effectiveness of technology use in FL learning / teaching that learning activities supported by technology can promote motivation by engaging students in activities which are enjoyable and fulfilling (Huang et al, 2016; Golonka et al, 2014). However, although the use of all these technologies can guarantee an increase in motivation, it does not necessarily guarantee better learning outcomes. Golonka et al, claim that it is unclear whether technology by itself actually improves students' learning.

As this is the crucial issue and the ultimate goal of teaching, the challenge is to use technology in such a way as to make the best possible use of the very positive attitude and motivation it brings to users. In this context, designing activities to achieve the best pedagogical use of technology is crucial.

According to Yang & Wu (2012), technology-based activities must have clear objectives that incite students' interest and, thus, increase their willingness to participate. Respectively, Ushioda (2011) claims that defining and monitoring targets can help learners develop self-determined behavior, conform to the wider requirements, and consequently, achieve better results. In the same spirit, Adams-Becker et al (2017) believe that the connection between coursework and the real world must be easily identifiable by the students, as it helps them to understand how the new knowledge and skills will impact them.

Concluding from the views outlined above, the integration of technology in well-designed and prepared activities increases motivation of both teachers and learners, and leads to improved performance and better learning results (Atkinson, 2000). However, it is obvious that pedagogical relevance is an important driving force (Sun, 2009). Choosing a method that supports active learning experiences (such as project-based learning), seems to be important as well. Derntl & Motschnig-Pitrik (2005) reach the same conclusion, by arguing that the blended learning approach in particular, can enhance students' motivation to participate actively in class and, thus, improve learning.

Conclusion

As is evident from the data presented above, the use of technology in the foreign language classroom can undoubtedly have a positive effect on increasing students' motivation and eventually lead them to better learning outcomes (Woodrow, 2017). Actually, this does not only apply in the context of institutionalized education, but it

seems to be true for learning outside the classroom. Several researches concerning Self-Regulated Learning, concluded that ICT can increase students' motivation in self-directed learning aspects of informal learning when using online learning resources (Lucas & Moreira, 2009; Song & Bonk, 2016). Lai & Gu (2011) also observed students' use of technology for language learning in Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) scenarios. The results reflect a clear increase in participants' motivation when they used technology to achieve their learning goals.

As digital technology is progressing and becoming more sophisticated and, at the same time, simple to use, its tools and applications are increasingly becoming part of everyday life and, of course, education in both formal and informal settings.

Having proven that the use of technology in language learning is an important factor in order to increase student motivation, future research should concern the integration of technologies into learning activities that have the appropriate pedagogical approach to exploit their potential and lead learners to higher learning outcomes.

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Tracing the Global Child: Global Politics Shaping Local Childhoods

Angela Bushati

Freie Universität Berlin

Abstract

The concept of childhood, and particularly considering the social and cultural construction of childhood, has not received enough focus in the ongoing debates on globalization and its consequences. Yet, essential elements of globalization are omnipresent in the guise of new discourses around childhood, which have become particularly resonant transnationally. A lot of international treaties or conventions, such as the United Nations Children's Rights Convention (1989) shape national and local realities of children worldwide based on global conceptualisations of childhood, which are based mainly on western ideals of what it means to be a child. Applying such global notions of childhood in different contexts around the world often does not consider local realities and cultural ideologies of childhood, and indirectly does more harm than good. Childhood constitutes an essential and very delicate nexus in the continuously changing realities. Since childhood occupies a symbolic space where the consequences of globalization can be reflected, it cannot be left unconsidered. Not only childhood comprehends the basis of cultural connection, but it is the main mechanism of social recreation. Building on postcolonial and critical whiteness studies, the paper tries to analyse a few aspects relating the westernization and construction of the global child ideal and presenting an overview of the impacts of children global policies towards shaping local childhoods.

Keywords: Tracing the Global Child, Global Politics, Shaping Local Childhoods.

Introduction

The emerging ideas about children's rights and recent theories regarding childhood continue to contour and frame our ideas about childhood and also the everyday reality of many children in different parts of the globe. Globalisation is changing the very notion of childhood and is introducing new constructions of childhood that dictate what childhood or a child should be like. The interplays between global vs. local dynamics nowadays affect the development and the everyday life of children in different parts of the globe. These dynamics often agitate existing practices, cultures,

identities and socio-economic realities which translate in significant changes. With the emergence of global conventions and international treaties regarding children's rights and protection such as The Child's Rights Convention (1989) national and local realities of children worldwide are shaped regarding global conceptualisations of childhood, which are based mainly on western ideals and mostly Anglo-American social constructions of what it means to be a child. "The Convention on the Rights of the Child is premised upon the notion that concepts such as human rights or children's rights are not negotiable at the local level and that differences between cultures and between individuals within cultures can be ignored" (Montgomery, 2001 :82). Besides focusing on the growing influence of globalism, on the other hand, there needs to be a better consideration of how such global changes impact different childhood local realities in different parts of the globe.

The Global Child Construct

Childhood in the 20th century is seen as a separate category from adulthood, and being regarded as such, childhood is constructed based on the opposite characteristics of adulthood. A child is represented as not belonging to the adult world, and childhood is regarded as a 'safe space' which needs to be fostered and nurtured from adults.

The notion of 'childhood' is both historically and culturally conditioned and "how the conception of childhood has changed historically and how conceptions differ across cultures is a matter of scholarly controversy and philosophical interest" (see Kennedy 2006, in Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Belonging to the category of "childhood" it often means being portrayed as innocent, vulnerable, and in need to be protected from adults. Nevertheless, this remains a westernized and generalized notion of what childhood means, since there are many definitions. According to one definition, a child is "a person below the age of eighteen years of age" (The Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989: Article 1).

Arguing on another general definition : "A child is a human being in the early stages of its life-course, biologically, psychologically and socially; it is a member of a generation referred to collectively by adults as children, who together temporarily occupy the social space that is created for them by adults and referred to as childhood" (James & James, 2008: 14). Even though there are many definitions, it should not be forgotten that childhood as a definition differs across time and space and it should not be regarded as an invariable entity. Ariès (1962) argues how the idea of childhood is relatively new and that modern western societies. Ariès's theory also stresses that the way how children are perceived, being treated or socially institutionalized by adults, how childhood is socially constructed has significant impacts on children's experiences and their engagement in the social spheres. With the rise of the Children's Rights movement, the social construction of childhood is very central to discourses related to children's development and children's rights fulfilment and these discourses have spread globally, nurturing ideals, practices and

changing realities worldwide. The fundamentals of many children's rights initiatives are based on a universal – global child ideal.

Understanding and deconstructing the Global Child ideal means at first considering the term “global”. This term has been conceptualised as meaning “universal” – development occurs in the same way for every child in every context but it has been understood also as global in the sense of spreading dominant ideologies, mainly coming from the West, to other parts of the globe (Fleer et al., 2012:1-2). These definitions are reflected in laws and policies and also implemented in the social practices that affect children.

Educational institutions such as schools for example, play an important role when speaking about the construction of an ongoing culture of childhood. Nsamenang (2008:23-24) talks about educational colonization, where the norms of the Anglo-American cultures are taught in schools all over the world. Progress is measured according to global standards of achievement such as PISA assessments, which make development and school achievements standardized all over the world. In addition, the author explains how education all over the world needs to take under consideration the importance of the cultural component regarding child development and cultural notions of childhood in general when considering discourses or policy regarding child development. Nsamenang (2008:24) cites Smale that stresses that “the needs to recognize the importance of cultural conceptualisations of childhood, and of the child development theories and practices that follow on from these in a given culture”. Prout (2005) notes that the human nature is moulded in a certain way that it possesses hybrid characteristics of biology and culture, and it cannot simply be reduced to one or the other.

Considering rights and children's well-being in the big picture means considering the social identities and development as an inseparable process from the context where children grow. By valuing different components that do not belong to a certain culture and imposing them as the “good way”, the identities of that given culture will not be valorised but instead will be depreciated and diminished, which does not contribute positively to children's development.

On the other hand, conceptualising development as a universal and linear process which depends on universal characteristics can be quite detrimental. If we consider the normative of “good development” only coming from countries in the West and the North hemisphere of the globe, it means that other perceptions of “good development” coming from other realities have been left out and do not belong to the norm.

For many children childhood is a very troubled time, unlike how it is presumed it should be. A lot of children face abuse, violence, war, maltreatment, hunger, and other life threatening situations which for many signifies a sort of “lost childhood”. Following this sense, the contemporary rights movement focuses on the priority and

regulations of a child's life in order to make childhood as Sommerville describes it a "carefree, safe, secure and happy phase of human existence" (Boyden, 1997: 191). Such regulations have expanded in different parts of the globe, making childhood a sort of "universal category" which needs to be protected from international and state mechanisms. It is now a general acknowledgement that goes beyond the borders of Western societies that issues such as children who live in the streets, child prostitutes, children suffering from hunger etc. are considered as threatening to the "childhood experience", leading these children with "no childhood".

On the other hand, it should be important to underline that different cultures have different perceptions towards childhood and especially when speaking about children in the Global South, life realities differ significantly with children growing in the Global North and more specifically in Western countries. By signing standardized and universal declarations of children's rights, all the signing member states take on the responsibility to monitor and regulate childhood and child welfare. "Whilst international law has traditionally embodied the image of the dependent child, the potential victim, many national welfare programmes, in addition to protective measures, contain a large element of control or constraint." (Boyden, 1997:198). Global standards towards childhood often do not take under consideration cultural components or adapt to local sensibilities, which produces disaccord and non-desired results.

Global changes, local realities

Contemporary approaches and discourses towards the implementation of children's rights are based on the universal principle of childhood and as a result, policies and practices that are embodied in everyday life circumstances are also reflected in the relationships between adults and children (Fleer et al.,2012:xvii). The childhood ideology and normative principles derive from the experienced realities of a specific and privileged part of the world and such principles are applied to countries and places where such norms are difficult to be achieved and as Fleer et al. (2012) argue, a one-sided minority world endorsement of the so called "good practice" and good norms of childhood means that local realities, practices, cultures and meanings towards childhood are marginalized (p. xvii). A lot of communities do not fit the expectations of "good practice" of childhood and as a result they are failing to meet the global norms. This can be quite a tricky interplay between global forces and local practices which can lead in detrimental aspects towards the development of children. Global discourses and practices towards children's rights have evolved greatly since their genesis but nonetheless the ideology towards children's rights still remains somehow constructed according to narrow perspectives of childhood.

"Whilst contemporary approaches in social work in many industrialized countries may have moved a long way from these beginnings – setting social problems more firmly in the context of social structure and organisation – their influence can still be seen in welfare practice in a large number of countries, in the South especially, and is

gradually having the effect of creating a universal standard of childhood.” (Boyden, 1997:198)

Global discourses and policy practices regarding childhood contribute to a new construction of childhood since existing realities and practices are being transformed and go through a process of metamorphosis. Such transformations and changes towards child rearing or protection politics are different in different contexts, and the outcomes of applying a universal model of childhood differ significantly from one context to another. The dominant force which determines the rights movement, as post-colonial and critical whiteness studies demonstrate is the white western child ideal, which represents the norm imposed to the rest of the children in the world. One of the main intentions of whiteness studies, as mentioned in Clarke & Watson (2014) by citing Shome, is to show how “the everyday, invisible, subtle, cultural and social practices, ideas and codes that discursively secure the power and privilege of white people” (p.70). Therefore, understanding and challenging “whiteness” is necessary, in order to consider not just one model of childhood but many *childhoods*. According to post-colonialist and critical whiteness perspectives (see Ploesser & Mecheril 2010), the figure of the child and related discourses that construct the child, are understood under the perspective of ‘colonising the child’ where the other-child is produced as a subject. Bühler Niederberger & van Kriken (2008) note that the concept of childhood can be seen as a social structural character similar to class, race or gender. ‘Childhood’, therefore is also a product of power relations and as Foucault (1971, 1980) articulates, power discourses affect our way of perception towards categories and what we accept as being “normal”. At the same time Foucault also argues that power relations are involved in dynamic processes and therefore that are subjected to change.

Globalism is changing the very idea of childhood, making children also more active in the sense of being seen as future consumers. While spreading ideals of global education standards as well as ideals of how a child should be raised and what constitutes a good development. On another level, globalised media plays an important role in terms of children’s culture. Images of children are omnipresent in commercials, TV-programs, movies, etc. and nowadays marketers are interested in getting into the child’s world at the very beginning and into shaping the child’s views and preferences and most importantly make this child a future consumer. Children have become more and more important, not only as consumers themselves but also for their purchasing influence. On the other hand, as Buckingham & De Block (2007) articulate, such global media influences have contributed in creating a sort of discontinuance in terms of cultural and moral values. “Commercial forces are seen to have disrupted the process of socialisation, upsetting the smooth transmission of cultural values from one generation to the next. According to the critics, globalisation will inevitably result in the construction of a homogenised global children’s culture” (Buckingham & De Block, 2007:78). The issue here at stake is the kind of culture

which is currently being promoted and popularized, which does not reflect aspects of different cultures but rather offers a westernized version of the ideal culture.

Distributing a global culture on the other hand rises important questions in terms of the distribution of cultural values and the continuity of existing cultures. Many communities do not agree with a lot of ideas in the models that are offered as the standard which needs to be followed, claiming that a lot of things coming from the 'West' are disrupting their way of teaching children and bringing them up under a certain way, according to their cultures. Technology is also changing fast and contributing to faster and easily reachable information, which makes patterns of globalization even stronger.

Montgomery (2001: 80) argues that globalization tendencies and transnational obligations often tend to problematize issues regarding childhood such as child prostitution for example under a narrow perspective, since such issues are rarely as simple as they are portrayed. Following a western model of childhood it means that children have the rights to live a childhood that does not include work, early child marriage, sex, money etc. which does not reflect the reality in which most of the children of the world live. Montgomery articulates that children in developing countries are not able to fulfil this western ideal of childhood and "while setting up an ideal may be benevolent (if naïve) wish, it is dangerous to codify an unchanging standard" (2001:83). The author also explains that during her field work with children as sex-workers in Thailand, she experienced that the reality is very different from what is demanded from the CRC (1989), and that this convention often fails to protect children in the real sense since it does not take under consideration issues such as family support or linking it with global issues of poverty, cultural background and discrimination (p. 87)

"Indeed, Article 9 of the Convention specifically states that if it is in the best interests of a child, he or she can be removed from their parents. Parents who allow the sexual exploitation of their children are, by definition, bad parents and must be punished in order to protect the children. However, this may be harder to justify at the grassroots level, where the situation looks very different" (Montgomery, 2001: 87)

Understanding the local implications under an anthropological perspective is definitely necessary for the process of ascribing rights and implementing policies. A better consideration of rights and making use of all articles in the CRC, without leaving out important components of the cultural backgrounds is crucial. There is no doubt that issues regarding children such as abuse or prostitution are detrimental and that there needs to be an awareness and action towards eliminating what violates children's rights. But, what stands out as absolutely fundamental is to understand that eliminating such phenomena needs a deeper understanding of the complexities involved.

Conclusion

Understanding globalisation and local realities is crucial for acknowledging and practising children's rights. However, the processes involving the implementation of rights can be quite complex and very challenging. Critical engagement with the notion of 'whiteness' can be very beneficial when considering new ways of exploring identities and an empowering children and their communities. Critical whiteness studies, as well as postcolonial perspectives help in the process of understanding the interplays between the dominant groups and the marginalized, by introducing new ways of conceptualisation towards children's rights. Acknowledging local realities and approaching rights from an anthropological perspectives is crucial in resolving dilemmas and mediating between both universal and cultural relativist positions. Such perspectives need to be considered in policy analysis as well as during the process of implementation, since not every context will have the same outcomes. Given this understanding, ascribing rights needs to be a mediated process and not imposed, where also the right holders – children – get a chance to be heard.

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Teacher Training as an Influential Factor in the Use of Visual Materials in Education

Archontia Foutsitzi

Laboratory Teaching Staff, Department of Primary Level Education
Democritus University of Thrace

Abstract

The use of visual materials in education is a traditional way of teaching. Images are one of the many kinds of teaching methods used by teachers in order to enrich the teaching of their lessons and to revitalise the way they teach. The utilisation of illustrative material when teaching depends on many factors. One of these is the instruction and training of the teachers. This study aims to investigate the influence of the teachers' profile on the use of images in the teaching of lessons.

Keywords: image, illustration, image and education

Introduction

The current requirements to develop and improve education have established further education and training as now being a necessity (Kostika, 2004). For this reason, the Greek state has designed a series of further education programmes (Taratori-Tsalkatidou, 2000), so that Greek schools can provide pupils with an up-to-date education. Teachers have been asked to implement these programmes and to spread the belief that, in addition to a targeted education policy, a correct use and utilisation of teaching aids in education also depends on the teachers' knowledge and training.

Given this viewpoint, all the activities of the teachers should be aimed at adopting a new educational role where the teachers are not the sole and exclusive provider of knowledge (Pange, 2009), but a means of interconnecting knowledge with their pupils. Within this kind of learning environment, the teacher encourages the pupils to acquire abilities and skills, so that learning becomes a process of personal discovery for them (Flouris, 2003). The further education programmes inform teachers about new ways of teaching and the results that these bring (Taratori-Tsalkatidou, 2000).

The use and the utilisation of teaching tools in education (Salvaras & Salvara, 2011) is an important topic which is tackled by the further education programmes. There are many kinds of educational tools. One of these tools is that of images (Tisseron, 2008). Images are a factor of crucial importance in teaching and learning. Through them teachers enrich their lessons and bring their way of teaching up to date. The

illustrative material, in both its traditional and modern form, occupies an important position in the learning process.

Starting point, goal and methodology of the research

The starting point for carrying out this survey was the importance of illustrative material in conducting the teaching process. The goal of the research was to show *how much the teacher's profile affects the frequency with which images are used in the teaching of the lesson*. For the above goal to be achieved and for the research to be carried out, a questionnaire was used as a research tool for collecting data (Keeves, 1990; Daoutopoulos, 2002; Zafeiropoulos, 2005; Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2008). The processing of the research data statistics was carried out with the help of the SPSS programme (Kelpanidis, 1999; Roussos & Tsaousis, 2011).

Analysis of the research data

Two hundred and eighty eight teachers took part in the survey. Of these, 63 were men (a percentage of 20.5%) and 225 were women (a percentage of 79.5%) (Table 1).

Table 1.

Distribution of teachers according to their gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Men	63	20.5
Women	225	79.5
Total	288	100%

Regarding the *years of service*, the participants in the survey could be split up as follows: 41 individuals (a percentage of 14.2%) had been working for from 1-5 years, 89 individuals (a percentage of 30.9%) had been working for from 6-12 years, 72 individuals (a percentage of 25%) had been working for from 13-20 years, 49 individuals (a percentage of 17%) had been working for from 21-26 years, whilst 37 individuals (a percentage of 12.8%) had more than 27 years of service (Table 2).

Table 2.

Distribution of teachers according to their years of service

Years of service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5	41	14.2
6-12	89	30.9
13-20	72	25
21-26	49	17
> 27	37	12.8
Total	288	100%

The teachers who took part in the survey were asked to answer the following questions:

how much do you think that the basic studies affect the frequency with which images are used in the teaching of a lesson?

how much do you think that further education programmes influence teachers in including illustrative material in the teaching of their lessons?

how much do you think that having a Master's Degree contributes to teachers deciding to use images in the classroom?

how much do think that having a PhD affects teachers' wishes to enrich the teaching of their lessons with images?

how much help is given by other factors which have a decisive effect on whether teachers choose to use illustrative material in their lessons or not?

All the questions included in this module, apart from the last one, were “closed-end” questions and the answers which they could give to these were as follows: “not at all”, “a bit”, “quite a lot” and “a lot”. For the last question the teachers were able to mention one or more factors which they considered as being decisive in their decision to include illustrative material in the teaching of their lessons.

The answers from the teachers in the survey indicate the following things: 95 individuals (a percentage of 35.1%) stated that the *basic studies* contribute “quite a lot” in motivating teachers to use images when teaching their lessons. Eighty-six of them (a percentage of 31.7%) stated that the basic studies help “a bit” in this direction. Fifty-six of their colleagues (a percentage of 20.7%) gave this assistance a positive rating of “a lot”, whilst 34 teachers (a percentage of 12.5%) did not credit it “at all” (Table 3).

Table 3.

Contribution of basic studies to the use of images

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not at all	34	12.5
A bit	86	31.7
Quite a lot	95	35.1
A lot	56	20.7
No answer (missing)	17	-
Total	288	100%

The answers from teachers who think that *further education programmes* contribute “quite a lot” or “a lot” to the use of images were at about the same level (88 individuals, a percentage of 42.7% put “quite a lot” and 83 individuals, a percentage of 40.3%, put

“a lot”). Another twenty-five (a percentage of 12.1%) stated that further education programmes had helped them “a bit” in this direction, whilst 10 of their colleagues (a percentage of 4.9%) maintained that they were “not at all” helped in this field (Table 4).

Table 4.

Contribution of further education programmes in the use of images

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not at all	10	4.9
A bit	25	12.1
Quite a lot	83	40.3
A lot	88	42.7
No answer (missing)	82	-
Total	288	100%

Thirty-eight of the teachers taking part in the survey expressed an opinion on whether a *Master’s Degree* contributed towards teachers deciding to use images when teaching their lessons. To be precise, 21 of them (a percentage of 47.7%) thought that their subsequent studies had helped them “a lot” in making this choice, whilst another 17 (a percentage of 38.6%) thought it helped “quite a lot”. It is worth noting that a large number of teachers did not answer this question, something which indicates that these individuals probably did not have this qualification (Table 5).

Table 5.

Contribution of Master’s Degree to the use of images

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not at all	5	11.4
A bit	1	2.3
Quite a lot	17	38.6
A lot	21	47.7
No answer (missing)	244	-
Total	288	100%

To the question “whether and to what extent a *PhD* contributes to the decision by teachers to include illustrative material when teaching their lessons”, the answers given are of no relevance for the purposes of this research (Table 6).

Table 6.

Contribution of a PhD to the use of images

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not at all	2	28.6
A bit	2	28.6
Quite a lot	1	14.3
A lot	2	28.6
No answer(missing)	281	-
Total	288	100%

Six of the teachers asked mentioned the contribution of *other factors* in introducing illustrative material when teaching lessons, without, however, specifying what these factors are (Table 7).

Table 7.

Contribution of other factors in the use of the images

Answers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Quite a lot	2	33.3
A lot	4	66.7
No answer(missing)	282	-
Total	288	100%

Conclusions

An analysis of the above data shows that the participants in this survey sample do not think that the basic studies help teachers to recognise the contribution made by images and to include them when teaching their lessons. On the other hand, they consider that further education programmes, with the structure and content which they provide, contribute more in this direction. This could be due to the fact that the majority of the teachers in the survey sample had not done any post-graduate studies, whilst a minimal number of respondents had a PhD.

The training and further education of teachers in relation to the use of visual material in education is of crucial importance. Since the processes of representation and communication in contemporary societies have shifted the centre of gravity from the word to the image, the utilisation of illustrative material in the teaching of lessons (Kantartzi, 2002) has become an issue of paramount importance.

As has been evidenced, studying further education programmes can help teachers to reassess their ideas and recognise the contribution of images to the learning process (Bonidis, 2004). But the state, too, through training sessions, should train both current and future teachers so that they realise the value of visual education and intersperse their lessons with images.

However, in addition to the further education programmes (Hatzidimou, 2011), the teachers themselves will, on the one hand, have to aim at changing the current mindset and, on the other hand, to experiment with something new (Fykaris, 2012), modern and innovative: the inclusion of images in the educational process (Zangotas, 2016). A factor which will boost this activity is the individual will and the personal inclination shown by each person. Only in this way will the traditional method of teaching be brought up to date (Hatzidimou, 2003) and educational practices improved.

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Meaningful Learning and Effectiveness in Virtual Learning Spaces

Ana L. S. Lopes

Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Marili M. S. Vieira

Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, SP, Brazil

Abstract

Contemporary educational practices impose challenges and necessary changes in teaching and learning processes in which cyberspace and virtual contexts become places of learning. Affection, emotion, perception, and imagination compose the construction of meaningful adult knowledge. Such theoretical assumptions become fundamental for teaching and learning processes in virtual contexts in the online or distance modality. We adopted a qualitative analysis of the data of the postings in the forums and individual records of the students of the Course Methods of Studies for Distance Learning. The affectivity in virtual environments is a resource of great relevance to enhance the processes of teaching and learning. The study revealed that affectivity occurs to the extent that the student's needs are met, and he can construct knowledge in a meaningful and conscious way.

Keywords: Affectivity. Significant learning. Distance education.

Introduction

Contemporary educational practices impose changes that are necessary for 21st-century education, especially as regards teaching and learning processes in increasingly virtual contexts, where cyberspace also becomes a “place” for learning. The cyberspace, in a fluid perspective, pointed out by Bauman (2007) is a powerful resource for the expansion of learning to other means, in virtual contexts and online education emerges as a modality with the capacity to promote important transformations in the field of knowledge and teaching and learning processes that occur increasingly in a collaborative way and through digital resources.

Technology-mediated communication gains strength in interactive relationships in educational processes insofar as resources and tools are used with pedagogical intent and allow new configurations for the construction of knowledge and the development of collaborative works.

[. . .] ICTs extend the design and methodology of processes and teaching and learning by creating new work environments, communication, and learning based on a platform, educational resources, and interactive tools, all located on the web, is very flexible and accessible easy. These conditions make distance education more an educational modality than a methodology. (Gonzales, Rosa & Rodriguez, 2015, p. 123, translated by the authors).¹

In this type of teaching, the set of resources available in the virtual environment, such as didactic materials, videotapes, and mediation activities carried out by the teacher bring the dynamism and interaction necessary for success in the processes of appropriation and cognition of these students. According to Bannell et al. (2016, p. 57), “people take ownership of the world through experiences they have had, not through abstract calculations and generalizations”. For him, values are acquired and attributed socially, and the “appropriation of these meanings is the result of the interaction between human beings.” (Bannell et al., 2016, p. 58).

It is worth emphasizing that the act of teaching is configured as a process of help for the construction of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The author presents cognition as the result of the coordination of information made between subject and object, through cultural, material and symbolic artifacts. Like this,

Every new human being who enters the world is inserted into an environment in which other generations of human beings have created ways of thinking and acting socially. By having their behavior mediated by cultural artifacts (language being the master artifact), human beings, in addition to benefiting from their own sensory experience about the world, also benefit from the experiences of those who preceded it. The social world, which is based on communication, is of crucial importance in this process (Bannell et al., 2016, p. 63).

Learning requires more than accommodation of content and information. It is important that there is a meaning for that knowledge to be potentially constructed. In this sense, affectivity in online communications, with emphasis on written language, is of fundamental relevance for teaching and learning processes in distance or online mode. Hence we can ask some questions: is it possible to be effective in virtual learning environments? Is it necessary to be affective to teach in virtual environments? What is this affectivity and what is its relationship to learning?

Our discussion will be based on some theoretical references that will help us to establish the relationships between the affectivity theme and the adult learning processes. We will present a study about how the effective relationships between teachers and students in a virtual environment of teaching and learning propitiate the

¹ Original: [. . .] las TIC amplían la concepción y la metodología del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje al crear nuevos entornos de trabajo, comunicación y aprendizaje basDistance Learningos en una plataforma, recursos educativos e herramientas interactivas, todos ellos ubicados en la Web siendo muy flexibles y de relativo acceso. Estas condiciones hacen ver a la educación a distancia más una modalidad educativa que una metodología..

movement of awareness and meaning of knowledge built by the adult in an online course.

We will next address some theoretical assumptions about learning and affectivity that will assist us in our investigation and analysis.

Adult Learning: Emotion, Experience, and Perception

The cognitive view of David Ausebel's Theory of Meaningful Learning, which relies on didactic potential, is considered by us to be important aspects of adult learning perception. This framework seems to us to be very consistent with the problem presented in this study. This is because our investigation is based on the hypothesis that learning happens to the adult when he becomes aware and assigns meaning to what is learned. To do so, he can describe the process he experienced (Dirkx, 2001) when this learning becomes experience (Larrosa, 2014).

Our understanding of affectivity is based on Vygotsky's (1998; 2008) propositions in emphasizing language and mediation in the processes of signification and establishment of meaning. From this, we can identify that the affectivity manifests itself in the adult when it expresses its emotions, as something conscious that allows a self-perception of itself. In this sense, the processes of teaching and learning that favor works with the perception, imagination generate conditions of great relevance in the construction of knowledge.

To understand adult learning experiences when expressing themselves by describing their experience about their learning, Dirkx (2001) states that personal and meaningful learning derives from the emotional and imaginative connection of the adult, i.e. the self and its relationship with the social world. According to the author, adults describe their learning experiences as something "boring," or "fun" or "exciting." In this way, for the author, the images are produced from the experiences, from the emotions and feelings:

These meanings arise through our imaginative connection and engagement with these contexts. Our initial construal of meaning within particular emotional situations is largely an act of fantasy and imagination, guided by our emotional connection with both our inner and outer worlds. They help us understand and make sense of ourselves, our relationships with others, and the world we inhabit (Dirkx, 2001, p. 66).

Therefore, it is worth noting that the emotional and affective experiences of learning, according to the author, contribute to a positive and meaningful educational experience. It is also a question of understanding that experience brings with it something that can not be grasped solely by rational logic. Through the perception of his experience, the subject can become aware of himself as an agent of his

transformation and of the appropriation of meanings that become links in the learning processes in contexts of the formation.

The relationships between attentive and engaging teachers, encouraging students' expression, and listening to them, favors the meaningful learning experience of their students. The adult makes use of images to construct the meaning of what he learns since they are capable of establishing relations between the inner, irrational world and consciousness. The images show the emotions and feelings and, therefore, they potentiate the meaning of a learning situation or reality. This fact can help in the more significant integration of curricular contents, making learning more meaningful (Lopes & Vieira, 2017, p. 2401).

The idea of meaningful learning, presented by Moreira (2008), is that the meaning of the new knowledge is acquired through interaction with some prior knowledge and relevance. The author draws attention to the question of interaction between prior knowledge and new knowledge. This interaction takes place through consciousness and a predisposition to learn. That is, for meaningful learning to occur. It is necessary for the student to "want" to learn meaningfully.

In meaningful learning, the learner initially captures accepted meanings for new knowledge, but then internalizes or reconstructs them internally, adding indiosstricrates. New knowledge is incorporated into its cognitive structure, and it has many connotative aspects. (Moreira, 2008, p. 16).

Considering the two conditions that the author scores for meaningful learning to occur we have: prior knowledge and intentionality. Also, the interaction is fundamental, being necessary the insertion of the figure of the mediator, that is, of the teacher who will articulate the knowledge through different languages. For this theory, didactic materials are powerful resources and also need to be organized in a potentially meaningful way.

It is worth mentioning that when working in an online or distance education perspective, we consider that a student of this modality, in theory, meets the prior knowledge conditions presented so far since the public of this modality in Brazil is composed predominantly by adults. The student who is willing to take a course in distance learning should have a certain autonomy and willingness to learn by interacting with a set of didactic materials that make up the pedagogical model of online and distance courses.

The virtual environment or the virtual classroom should provide the student with moments of interaction with teachers and peers. According to Silva et al. (2015, p. 14-15), it is in the interaction with teachers and colleagues that the effectivity of the students becomes apparent, especially in times of forum and chat, where written language is the main resource.

It is in this relationship with other people in the social group that the subject appropriates socially constructed meanings. As it is not possible to isolate the affectivity of cognition, learning and affection are interwoven and thus the social relations, especially those of teaching-learning marked by manifestations (aversive or pleasant), that will affect in some way the performance of that student.

From the assumptions presented, we understand that affectivity permeates the adult learning relationships in the way the teacher mediation action can offer conditions for the meaningful learning of these students. It is an attention to what is the need of this student and how mediation or available resources may or may not favor this appropriation and awareness of the meaning of what is learned.

We sought to investigate, through the analysis of the written records of an optional distance course called Methods of Studies for Distance Learning, offered to students of the undergraduate courses in the modality Distance Learning, namely: Pedagogy, Philosophy, History, Mathematics, and Letters of a University of Private Education of the state of São Paulo. We start from the initial provocation about the questions we posed at the beginning of this article about the possibility of being effective in virtual environments and if it is necessary to be affective to teach in virtual environments and how this affectivity is expressed in the teacher-student and student-student. How can teacher mediation create conditions for meaningful student learning in virtual learning contexts?

Online Mediation and Pedagogical Intentionality: Affectivity And Meaningful Adult Learning in Distance Learning

The data analyzed in this research were obtained through the records of the activities of the forum, and individual records of learning exchanged between the teacher and the students of the course Methods of Studies for Distance Learning, the optional and introductory course of the 1st. Semester of the five undergraduate courses mentioned above. Mediation occurred on the 1st. Semester of 2017 and the objective of the course is to offer a methodology of studies, based on the specificities of the pedagogical model of the institution and the own characteristics and necessary for studies in the modality Distance Learning.

The course was attended by 17 poles of face-to-face support, located in the Southeast, Midwest and Northeast regions. All students were enrolled in the course, automatically, and were informed that it was an optional course as a resource to support the start of the course in the Distance Learning mode. A total of 189 participants were enrolled and attended the theme 109.

The pedagogical conception of this course is structured from the concepts of meaningful learning, constructing a virtual environment of learning and activities that took into account the creation of conditions so that the information could be anchored insignificant concepts existing in the cognitive structure of the individual. The course lasted eight weeks, counting on a methodological organization that combined didactic

materials such as videotapes, complimentary videos, rDistance Learnings, exercises, learning objects and mediation by forums, chat and personal learning records. In this course the mediation is done exclusively by the teacher, not having the figure of the distance tutor. The mediation took place predominantly asynchronously and counted on a synchronous moment, through a chat for evaluation and closure of the course. All these elements were organized into learning paths, to allow the student to have the opportunity to interact with such contents to establish hierarchical cognitive relations of concepts that “become abstractions of the experience of the individual” (Moreira, 2008, p. 8).

A general forum and three thematic forums were held: 1. My impressions of distance learning courses and the virtual student profile. 2. Time Management. 3. Production of academic papers - difficulties in the elaboration of academic papers. In addition to the forums, the students interacted with the teacher through individual learning records sent to the teacher. All tasks and activities carried out received individual feedback from the teacher. For this research, we will analyze the posts made in the general forum and the thematic forum 1 - My impressions about distance courses and some personal learning records.

3.1. The Mediation of The Forum with Pedagogical Intentionality

At the beginning of the course, the mediator tried to establish an empathic environment for communication, creating a general forum in the first week of class so that the students could present themselves as they were geographically distant and also from different courses. For this initial provocation, there were 53 participations. It is possible to perceive relationships of empathy and sharing of personal matters of the life of each one and the experience of proximity and trust even in a virtual environment.

Figure 3.1.1 – General forum interaction¹

Teacher's provocation
Dear students, be very welcome to discipline study methods for Distance Learning. I am the prof. Maria and I will be with you during this course which is very important for those who decided to study in this modality. At this first moment, I want to ask each of you to introduce yourself, tell us the course you are doing, what kind of pole would you like to tell us about your region? Do you accept the invitation? I'm sure we'll have some great dates! Virtual Hugs! Profa. Maria!
Students' reply
Hello, my name is Daniela, and I'm going to teach pedagogy at the Brás unit. I have always enjoyed studying, and for a long time, I have been focused only on the care

¹ The names of the teacher and students are fictitious. The emphasis were added by the authors for the analysis proposed in this study. Applies to all Figures.

and demands of my eldest son who is special. From this experience also comes the desire to learn more about learning disorders and educational methods. I want to improve myself and learn a lot about this passionate subject. I'm a little shy, but I'll be very welcome to meet new people and exchange ideas.

Good Morning! I am Juliana; I am enrolled in the course of Letras - Português do Brasilia unit. I graduated in journalism five years ago and decided to do second graduation to expand opportunities. A curiosity of Brasilia: the weather forecast is crazy. In one day it can rain torrentially and make the sun crack. 😊

Hello, my name is Helena, I'm studying History Degree at Higienópolis unit. I live in São Paulo - SP. I am happy to be studying at [. . .] University so well regarded. I hope to make this virtual environment as real as possible. Success to all !!!

Hello! I am Tania, 43 years old, married and with two children, graduated material engineer and post graduate in business administration. [. . .] I believe that the dynamics may be different, that the relationship between teacher and student may be more significant. I come here with a lot of desire to learn, to meet people and their experiences. May it be a great year for all of us !!!

Hello, teacher and dear friends My name is Luana, I'm 35 years old, I live in Paulínia, SP, and I'm a nursing technician. I have worked with special children for a long time, and I have realized over the years that this work is very painful, and it does not bring me more pleasure, so I was thinking about what to do to change my profession. I never wanted to go to college, but one day I had a crack, and I decided to go back to school, so I chose mathematics because it was the subject I ran most in college. I made a friend here today in the forum, and I am very happy. I hope I can make more friends. A big hug to all and good study!!!

Good afternoon everyone. I'm studying Pedagogy, at the Alphaville campus. I had coursed Language, some ten years ago, but he did not conclude. I always kept Pedagogy in mind, but I did not have a chance to do it before. When I learned that (this institution) would have ODD I got excited and did not think twice. I'm very excited about the course, with the whole Moodle system of the university, with the interaction that we have here, nor expected all this... And that makes all the difference. Good studies at all.

Hello everyone. My name is Ana Paula, and I am studying pedagogy at Unit Alphaville. I must say I'm enjoying studying Distance Learning, it's better than I expected. I feel that gradually I am getting into the rhythm of the rDistance Learningings, the dDistance Learninglines, and the entire virtual environment. I'm 35 years old; this is my second college. Not that I have resolved to change the area, but I believe I want to expand knowledge, after all, I think that the more information we get, the more incredible the world becomes. A hug to everyone and even more



Good afternoon, Mariana, campus Higienópolis I started the course of letters. I'm having a bit of trouble organizing time, but I think I'll learn in time. Let's go and have a good year for everyone.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

From the analysis of the students' posts, it is observed that they are at ease in this environment, motivated by the possibility and interaction and enthusiastic to study in this modality in a format that meets the requirements and conditions of learning. We can highlight that, by sharing their life histories and the reasons that led them to seek this modality of teaching, students establish learning relationships based on the experience of each one. Still, the initial movements for rapprochement, friendship, and affection among the participants of the course are perceived. Mediation became intense in the thematic forums, and student participation increased significantly. In the thematic forum 1, My impressions about distance courses and the profile of the virtual student, 239 posts were made. In the following Figure, we present some of the interactions between students and the teacher, and students and their peers, highlighting the manifestations of affectivity, understood as corresponding to the learning needs, especially, for the construction of shared knowledge.

Figure 3.1.2 – Thematic forum interaction 1

Theacher's provocation
Dear students, will we use this topic to participate together? Our course aims to offer some steps for the use of technological resources, and as we have a large group, my methodological proposal is that everyone put their considerations in this space and everyone responds here so that we do not miss. I invite the other colleagues to answer the two questions I have put to the discussion. And since we speak of discipline and routine of studies, I ask you to see the 1st. should Video of the Distance Learning Study Environment, Study Habits section, which presents some valuable tips on how to study! It's short: 5 minutes, but worth it! I want to continue this debate with you! Thanks!
Students' reply
I was a student in the classroom, and I was demanding about my studies. With DISTANCE LEARNING, my requirement and dedication be greater, considering that I have reasons that may cause a distraction in my study (example: family, including husband, small child, pregnancy in progress, home, etc.). All these reasons are important in my life, but at the time of my studies, attention, and dedication should be exclusive to "studies," because the success of ODL depends on this. Commitment, focus, and dedication to studies always. The consequence? Not just good grades or good performance, but rather the professional quality that I seek for my future. Let's study!! Juliana.

Hello Juliana, nice to meet you! I thought it was cool that he shared a bit about his life and his routine, I believe that his experience with face-to-face teaching is positive, because just as you had dedication in class in class, you will have with Distance Learning. The important thing is not to let the distractions get in the way, but the flexibility in the studies will give you more time to be able to dedicate to the other tasks (not only student but to be wife, mother, besides everything pregnant). Who knows your child in your womb is not born knowing a little of the content? (laughter). I wish you good luck! Hug, Marcos.

Hello guys! The exchange of experiences that we have in forums like this is sensational because from here we can draw ideas that can help us in the organization, in the studies and the accomplishment of the tasks. For the time being, I must confess that I am having a hard time getting used to this type of teaching, because I greatly appreciate the contact with the teacher and my colleagues, but, little by little, I think everything is going to be right; new means that I will have for this. Flávio.

Good evening everyone! I understand that being a student of a distance course will not require different behavior, because all the skills required in the Distance Learning also serve us in the classroom course. I believe that the difference is the non-obligation to be present in a certain place at a certain time. As well as the use of the tools of this modality. [. . .] A study in the best possible way and when problems or doubts arise to heal with our tutors. The platform offers an immense range of forms of learning such as video lesson, rDistance Learning indication, etc, take advantage of it. Jessica.

Hello teacher! Hi, classmates! Answering the question of 'What is being a distance learning student,' I believe it is a huge way to take responsibility for learning. At Distance Learning if there is no commitment and dedication of the student, nothing will work! I would like to comment on the Study Guide - Study Methods for ODL: I found the subject to be sensational because we think that time passes faster as we get older, I went to the illustrative website that has been linked in the subject, and it all made sense! (LOL). Rosemeire.

I'm feeling kind of lost without knowing where to start or how to organize because I have access to all the content of the material at once and do not know how long it takes to study each one. I'm also trying to get used to the platform. It helped me a lot to have received an email from teacher Maria with the dates of deliveries of activities contributing to my organization in the study of the subject Methods of Study for Distance Learning. But I am optimistic that we are adapting to studying through an online platform and managing to get better organized throughout the course. Hugs to all, Márcia.

Teacher Maria, in this link I expected more guidance. But I found more than that. I have heard, amid the notes and words of delight, his sensitivity, which is one of

these beautiful gifts that God has brought, not just to me, but to all the friends in the class. Thanks. A big hug to you Maria, and to all the friends! Thatiane.

Good afternoon everyone. I am deeply grateful for the generosity of your words teacher. I take the opportunity to congratulate and thank you for your dedication and accompaniment at this beginning of the course. You were the first to send messages and have become so present in helping us and contributing to our learning, punctuality, and interaction with the platform as a whole. He commented and added our posts, gave us valuable tips and general tips, this is very gratifying and demonstrates his extreme dedication to discipline, progress and each one of us. It was indeed extremely gratifying and a great differential!

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

It is noticed that the students address their colleagues and the teacher affectionately and gratefully because they identify that their work contributes to the learning and adaptation to the reality of studies of distance education. In the dialogue between the students, one can also identify aspects related to the own perception and assimilation of this new reality, from previous knowledge, previous experiences and the experience of affection and emotion that give meaning to what they are experiencing and learning in this course. The reference to teaching materials is also of great relevance, since we consider that the combination of the materials, through the learning paths, allied to a mediation with pedagogical intentionality create the conditions for a meaningful learning in the media in which it helps the student “to assimilate structure of the disciplines and to reorganize their cognitive structure, through the acquisition of new meanings that can generate concepts and principles” (Moreira, 2008, p. 41).

We can also understand, according to some reports, that the structure of the course and the form of meditation offer conditions for this means learning to become an experience for the participants. Another interesting aspect to be observed is presented in the form of language with which the students interact with the teacher, in a close, effective and friendly way. We can understand that the relationship established between the students and the teacher, through mediation made possible the broad participation of the students and, according to the last two participations listed in Figure 3.1.2, the experience of gratitude to the teacher for contributing to the students' learning process.

We will present the analysis of reports that corroborate our work hypothesis.

3.2. Personal Learning Records

The learning records present important aspects for our analysis, once the form of learning is perceived and how the consciousness, the emotion, and experience are present in the following reports.

Figure 3.2.1 – Personnal data sent to the teacher

Data

Thank you for the new opportunity you gave me to send out the missing summaries today. [. . .] What I have to say to you is that although your discipline is not compulsory, it was the fundamental tool for me to achieve the other subjects of the course. I learned to organize my time better and with that to develop all my activities, and I enjoyed learning about the main guidelines for the production of our academic work, in short, this discipline was of paramount importance for my course. Thanks for the motivations and your attention with us. Thanks for all the messages, it has helped us a lot. I'm loving the Distance Learning course; I never imagined that I could learn so much in an Distance Learning course, thanks for the attention Andreia.

I am very fond of all the tips for getting organized in Distance Learning, mainly because I have not been studying for years, and now with home, husband, work, and children, in a scenario quite different from my first graduation, these guidelines are being valuable for me to learn to study better and with greater use. On the first day, his energy and excitement in the profession infected me, increasing my interest and willingness to begin this new path. Virtual hugs with affection and gratitude!!! Tania.

Teacher Maria, thank you very much for all the tips and the content of the classes and the forums. Now is to apply this "such" time management, certainly the biggest challenge for us. A hug!!

Teacher Maria, I have seen your comments on my tasks, and I appreciate the words and the guidelines. Yes, I enjoyed your subject very much, and I learned a lot too. You see yourself in the corridors of the school. A hug! Paulo.

Teacher Maria! Thank you very much for your attention and encouragement. The motivation that passed us, from our first contact, was very important for us to feel embraced by the faculty and not give up on the difficulties that were to come! [. . .] I stopped doing two activities of your subject, but I did all the material and learned, tips and insights very important to the course performance. Thank you for the lessons, for the present countryman and for being so affectionate with the students. Virtual hugs and even integrating meetings! Rachel.

Thank you so much. I will try to improve on what has been pointed out. This discipline helped me a lot in organizing my studies. And of course with your help and your affection were fundamental for that to happen. Virtual Abs. Jussara.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

It is possible to perceive in the reports the relationship of gratitude and affectivity for the contribution of the teacher's mediation in the learning processes. We emphasize that it is related to the way in which the student understands the gestures of care of the teacher about the possibility of learning of the student.

Final Considerations

From the analysis of the data obtained through the records written in the course Methods for Studies in Distance Learning, we were able to verify how the elements perception, emotion, and imagination are present in the processes of significant learning of the students. In this sense, the theoretical assumptions were appropriate to the hypothesis presented in this study. It was possible to perceive, although, in the perception of the students, the interaction in the virtual environment with a pedagogical mediation makes the learning easier.

They present themselves with more freedom to participate in this space, to ask questions, share difficulties, make suggestions and praise, and collaborate with colleagues. It was also possible to observe how the affectivity was built along the course development and how it was possible to experience this relation in a perspective of attending the needs of the student in his process of knowledge construction.

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