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SOCIALIZATION, LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION IN KORANIC SCHOOLS

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Abstract – *The aim of the first section of this paper is to show how a Koranic School presence has remained constant in spite of the sudden emergence of Western-style schooling introduced by colonization. The second section of the paper revisits the problem of terminology in the study of the Koranic school. In the third section, using the perspective of situated learning, we will try to analyze the pedagogical system of Koranic Schools by describing the social and cognitive processes employed by this institution. In the final part, we hope to show how the current educational situation in several Islamic contexts could be better served through closer interactions between Koranic and Western schools. Research conducted in Africa was primarily undertaken for this text.*

Introduction

𝕬 thorough knowledge of non-Western[1] educators and educational theory remains inadequate in spite of several recent studies (Thanh Khoi, 1995; Reagan, 2000; Akkari & Dasen, 2004). A Koranic School system[2] represents an interesting educational model not only because of its longevity but also because of its widespread geographical diffusion throughout the world. Up until now an understanding of Koranic School systems has suffered because of the lack of a deep anthropological study treating Islam as a religion with a novel cognitive system (Colonna, 1984, IIPE. 1984).

Even if comparative education has been open to including culture in its conceptual frameworks, this inclusion has not gone far enough concerning important theoretical debates on the concept of culture in any analysis of educational institutions (Hoffman, 1999, p.466). The comparison of different educational traditions poses a problem of cultural identity[3] to the researcher as research undertaken within education and anthropology are like all other social and ethno-sciences:

'… (1) Anthropologist cannot adequately describe, let alone explain, any culture different from their own. (2) For any culture to be adequately described and understood, it must be investigated by an anthropologist who himself has been acculturated in it. (3) For the latter to adequately convey the ideas and institutions of that culture, they must be reported in the native language, for there is no way of rendering the conceptual systems of one

culture by the concepts of another…All science is ethnoscience' (Spiro, 1984, p.345).

In spite of these difficulties, inherent in any comparative analysis, an approach of 'other' conceptions is necessary. As Geertz writes (1994) this necessitates 'entering into an alien turn of mind.' This is what we will try to accomplish in this text devoted to an analysis of the educational foundations of the Koranic School.

The characteristics of Koranic School

The history of Islamic teaching and research on Koranic schools have been the subject of studies in the Maghreb (Lecomte, 1954; Eickelman, 1978; El-Sayed Darwish, 1981; Colonna, 1981, 1984) as well as in sub-Saharan Africa (Delval, 1980; Santerre, 1973; Santerre et al., 1982; Désalmand, 1983; Brenner, 1993; Meunier, 1997; Lange, 2000). Taken as a whole these studies show that the pedagogical model of the Koranic School contains six basic characteristics which are more or less stable according to the historical period referred to: (1) openness (2) ritualization (3) permanence (4) flexibility (5) resistance and (6) diversity. We will consider each in turn.

(1) Openness

Admission into a Koranic School is a right for any child of a Muslim father with no restrictions connected to birth, age, intellectual level or physical integrity[4]. The normal age of entrance into a Koranic School is around five years. Once the step towards adherence to Islam has been made, opening of the Koranic School to all social groups and cultures makes this an institution of 'basic education' intended for all, and thus by definition egalitarian. The openness of the Koranic School represents an initiative of cultural integration and of full socialization, and also represents an essential characteristic that differentiates it with any other school system. This ease of access (automaticity), of course, goes with the inevitable corollary: the impossibility of using the Koranic School as a means of social differentiation (Colonna, 1984). The Koranic School embodies a horizontal distribution of basic knowledge that all Muslims are expected to possess.

(2) Ritualization[5]

The intensive demands on memory, mobilization of the body by rhythm and voice are exterior signs of the pedagogy of the Koranic School. It is

completely permeated by the respect of form and the central role of repetition, both a key category and a central practice of this learning method, which consists in ceaselessly repeating the same recitations, the same motions (Colonna, 1984). 'Learning by heart', larger and larger sections of the Koran have remained a central issue of Koranic School pedagogy in spite of a progressive abandon of this method in other educational traditions. Introduction of reading and writing during apprenticeship of the Koran, executed in Arabic characters irrespective of teachers' and pupils' primary language, is organized around an analytical and progressive approach: letter, word, sentence and meaning.

According to the terminology used by Freire (1973), the Koranic School is essentially depository since it treats students as potential 'recipients' of the Koran. They must immerse themselves in Islamic culture, conform to the established norms and values, and those who wander from these are quickly and severely brought to order. Koranic School can be considered as one in which the students gain access to the universality of the Koran by a transmission based approach. By imposing constraints (submission/*adhesion*) it puts in place conditional reflexes, habits built on repetition of a firm program: the mastery of the Koran. Thus, the traditional Islamic education is characterised by 'rigorous discipline' and a 'lack of explicit explanation of memorized material' (Eickelman, 1985). This rigid pedagogy has certain advantages: speed, low cost and rapid teacher training.

(3) Permanence

The permanence of the Koranic School through the ages should not be explained simply as an archaic cultural heritage. How then can one explain that the Koranic School has been able to survive through many centuries while being present in such a vast geographical area? One possible hypothesis regarding this permanence is the absence in Islam of a hierarchical clergy as within the Catholic Church. In fact, the opening of a Koranic School has no connection to a regulatory institution. The 'authority' to teach depends exclusively on the local community of faith. In the last section of this paper we will discuss the current vivacity of the Koranic School, most notably in Western Africa.

(4) Flexibility

The flexibility and shifting of the Koranic School back and forth from a cultural system to another one is realized on an optimal and subtle combination of oral and written language. This mixed nature allows the Koranic School to come in contact

as easily with the greater culture (the written tradition) as with the oral, traditional ones (Colonna, 1984). This ability helps explain the quick implantation of the Koranic School in Western Africa. As Santerre (1973) explained, teachers in Koranic Schools in northern Cameroon are not impeded by their lack of Arabic, as in no way does this lack keep them from playing an important role in the religious socialization of the children under their responsibility. The mode of operation at the Koranic schools is non formal and revolves around the individual operator. Progress of pupils depends on individual ability; they are allowed to progress at their own pace without hindrance. The pupils are first taught the Arabic letters and how to recite the Koran. They then study Islamic jurisprudence and other facets of Islamic education (UNICEF, 1999).

(5) Resistance

The sudden development of the colonial educational system created a situation in which the Koranic School found itself, for the first time in its history, in a position of being dominated. Thus developed a duality, with Western School in charge of educating the children of European settlers and the urban elites and the Koranic School being reserved for the indigenous population and the rural poor. This duality could be seen throughout the colonial period in Northern Africa (Colonna, 1984; Sraeïb, 1974). Even in this inferior position, however, the Koranic School was mobilized in the fight against colonization. While colonial schools (either public or controlled by foreign religious missions) were essentially mobilized for domestication[6], the Koranic Schools were engaged in a process of cultural resistance against colonization (Khayar, 1976; Coulon, 1993; Brenner, 1993). Richard-Molard (1954) found that even if the colonization was able to diminish the influence of Allah, too often this only created people deprived of their cultural roots.

The resistance-transformation of Koranic Schools continued into the post-colonial period where the expansion of modern schooling had become the 'priority of all priorities' of those Western educated elites newly in power. We can note that it took different forms according to the situation:

– devalued against a strong and generalized state system (Tunisia, Turkey)
– incorporated into the state system or at least tolerated within (Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, Morocco)
– complementary with the state system and responding to the needs of marginalized socio-cultural groups (Mali, Senegal, Gambia, Nigeria, Kenya)
– replacing a deficient or totally absent state system (Somalia, Afghanistan).

(6) Diversity of the curriculum, goals, space and time

To show the curricular diversity of Koranic Schools, Colonna (1984) contrasted different types of schools:

– 'Classical' Koranic School where only the Koran is taught/ modernized with a varying degree of secular subjects,
– 'Independent' Koranic School under the control of the community/ Koranic School under the control of the state and of village powers (religious confraternities)
– 'Spiritual supplement' Koranic School (similar to Christian catechism)/ 'Single class Koranic School' which, in certain contexts, remains the only educational institution.

After the development and spread of Western-style schooling throughout the 20th century, the Koranic School lost its central role in a majority of Islamic regions. It retains, however, a certain influence in the socialization process. This influence differs in intensity and degree according to the region, the degree of urbanization, and the strength of what is officially offered as basic education. In the cities in Northern Africa it offers preschool, before children enter public school, and later weekly catechism classes. Its influence declines when going up the social scale. In rural zones, to the north as well as to the south of the Sahara, the Koranic School remains a central institution in education, sometimes the sole actor because of the deterioration of government services.

In Western Africa, the Islamic educational system has a many-leveled structure, less rigid than Western-style schooling. Currently there exists a traditional branch (Koranic studies only), a formal branch or its 'modern' equivalent (Franco-Arabic schools, often called *madrasa*) and intermediate or hybrid forms often called 'improved Koranic instruction.' While professional training is not an explicit part of the goals of Koranic education, most of the students who continue their studies beyond the elementary level end up working in the community as apprentices with a *marabout*, a craftsman or a shopkeeper (Easton, 1999).

The diversity of the Koranic School can also been seen at the level of:

• The management of class space: Koranic Schooling can take place in a mosque, in a single-family home, under a tent, in a shed or under a tree in the open air.
• The management of class time: the temporal organization of the school does not interrupt the economic and social activities of the community.

The problem of terminology in the study of the Koranic school

The diversity of Koranic Schools discussed in the last section can be also analyzed on the linguistic level. We observe a enormous multiplicity of denominations: *Kuttab* (Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt), *Katatib* (koweit), *Msid* (Morocco), *mahadara* (Mauritania) *Dox* (Somalia), *Khalwa Zawia* (Libya, Sudan), *Madrasa* (Pakistan, West Africa), *Pesantrens* (Indonesia) etc… Thus, a terminological clarification is required even if it is difficult to simplify the complexity of a long standing institution.

Let us notice initially that the translation of the term 'Koranic school' in Arabic (language of reference in Islamic education) does not make sense. Indeed, nobody speaks about *madrasa kuraniya*. Eickelman (1985) used the expression 'Koranic education'. The common use of Koranic school is probably the consequence of an Eurocentric portrayal of the most stable local, non-formal education providing basic religious and morale instruction to a large number children in Islamic context.

As stated in Table 1, we distinguish three major terms used in different Islamic settings in Africa to refer to the so called 'Koranic school': (a) *Kuttab* (b) *Madrasa* and (c) *Zawia (Khalwa)*

(a) *Kuttab*

In Arabic root *k-t-b* is expressed as a verbal infinitive as *kataba*, meaning 'to write'. From that basic root we can then get the words *kuttab*, *kitab* 'book' (with a metaphorical meaning of *Koran*), *katib* 'writer', *maktub* 'written' (with a metaphorical meaning of 'predestined') and *maktaba* 'library'. The use of term *Kuttab* is clearly linked to the development of a culture of literacy. *Kuttab* usually used to name a small learning unit (single classroom) for relatively young children. It is the basic education in Islamic contexts before the intrusion of Western style schooling.

(b) *Madrasa*

The word *madrasa*[7] generally has two meanings in Arabic. In a common literal and colloquial usage, it means 'school'. This term indicates the current modern schools in Arab countries. In addition, a *madrasa* is an educational institution offering instruction in Islamic subjects including, but not limited to the Koran. Within this religious school, students learn Islamic theology and others philosophical or profane subjects. Generally, the students receive a purse and are placed in the school. *Madrasa* is an institution of education which is bigger, better organized and more structured that the *kuttab*. It offers secondary as well as tertiary education.

Historically, the term *madrasa* is an institution intended for religious elites. It is a 'school of spiritual thinking'. Well known *madrasas* such as Al Azhar in Egypt or A-Zeitouna in Tunisia have been a major instrument for imparting interest in and fostering acquisition of scholarly knowledge and skills in Muslim societies for centuries. As a key element of the social fabric, they also played a major role in shaping the moral and spiritual development of the students in these societies. Eickelman (1985) analyzed specifically the *madarasa Yusufia* (the Mosque-University in Marrakech) and traces the transformation of this type of traditional school into what he terms the Religious Institute.

With the interplay of internal and external forces, the role and prerogatives of *madrasas* have changed in many Muslim societies, blurring somewhat the common sense perception of these institutions. An analysis of *madrasa* could have different implications within various cultural, political, and geographic contexts.

(c) *Zawia (Khalwa)*

These expressions usually indicate a small room connected to a mosque used especially for meditation and to learn the Koran. A Zawya is usually founded by a Sufi mystic of sufficient piety. His presence attracts followers forming an informal Islamic study group. In the case of a Sufi saint, his students often confine themselves to the monastic enclave and retreat devoting themselves to prayers, education and charitable works.

TABLE 1: Koranic schools

	Geographical area	**Age scope**	**Size localization**
Kuttab	North Africa Middle East	Young children-basic education	Small units Rural and Urban areas
Madrasa	North Africa West Africa South Asia	Life span	Big structures Urban areas
Zawiya	North Africa	Life span	Small and isolated units Rural and Urban areas

Grandin & Gaborieau (1997) show that beyond local and regional specificities, Islamic teaching obeys everywhere and from immemorial time to the same logic. It never seems an autonomous system, but it is included in the general education system. Before the European colonial domination, the knowledge (religious or profane) is an art whose transmission follows a single track, founded on apprenticeship or suhba where written teaching and oral teaching are narrowly overlapping. In other words, the process of learning is based on a personal relationship between a master and his disciple. The Master initiates the disciple at the same time with contents of the knowledge and the chain of the guarantors of the knowledge. The itinerancy is the second characteristic of this traditional Islamic education, the disciple moving in the Islamic space in the search of new Masters with the aim of perfecting its initiation.

After the colonial domination of Islamic countries and regions, the Islamic educational system falls under a strategy of survival in the context of cultural and political domination. The adoption of some aspects of Western schooling (system of organization, formalization of the master-pupil ratios, establishment of levels of qualification sanctioned by examinations and diplomas, introduction of new subjects, teaching of foreign languages, edition of religious works in vernacular languages, development of the education of the women).

The definition of the 'ideal type' of Koranic school is not possible without taking in account the context in which one wants to explain it. This context is determined by three main factors:

– colonial and post-colonial educational policies
– space left by the current formal education system
– the degree of strength of local religious communities

In most Islamic contexts, the State manages to control the recent revival of Islamic schools by tracking the *wakf* funds and fixing the curriculum of Islamic schools. The recent creation in Morocco of a Department of traditional education within the Ministry of Habous and Islamic Affairs aims at extending State control to the network of Islamic schools. El Ayadi (2004) observes that teachers in the public sector play a major role in these new centers of religious training. Today, in the framework of a policy implementation following the development of radical Islamism and the appearance of religious terrorism in the country, the Moroccan authorities are determined to extend the State's control to this private sector.

Luckens-Bull (2001) explores one way in which the Classical Islamic community in Java (Indonesia) seeks to negotiate modernization and globalization through the interface of an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) and higher education. This negotiation requires imagining and (re)inventing both modernity and tradition.

The two first sections of this paper show that the Koranic School is a paradoxical educational model that is difficult to analyze. On one hand, we find an archaic and depository cognitive system distinguished by extreme ritualization, rigid discipline and the exclusive focus on rote and decontextualized learning of the Koran, a sacred work, the mastery of which is difficult even for Arabic-speaking children (who represent a decided minority in Koranic Schools). On the other hand, one finds a great diversity in its organizational methods, a flexible arrangement between the written and the oral and a largely successful socio-cultural embeddedness in the local community.

## The Koranic School: a case of situated learning?

It would seem that situated learning theory[8] is a pertinent educational model with which to analyze and explain the socio-cultural rootedness and lasting quality of Koranic School. Instead of considering learning as the acquisition of a specific knowledge, Lave & Wenger (1991) place learning in the center of *social relations and co-participatory situations*. In other terms, instead of wondering about which *cognitive processes* are mobilized in any learning activity, they tried to identify which type of social engagement provides the best learning context. Learning automatically implies a commitment in a community of practice. Lave & Wenger's model suggest the predominance of the social over the psychological in any act of learning:

> 'The central grounds on which forms of education that differ from schooling are condemned [in conventional educational argument/ policy/ discourse] are that changing the person is not the central motive of the enterprise in which learning takes place [...]. The effectiveness of the circulation of information among peers suggests, to the contrary, that engaging in practice, rather than being its object, may well be the condition for the effectiveness of learning.' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93)

The legitimate peripheral participation and the community of practice (or learning community) are at the center of the model initiated by Lave and Wenger. The *practices* constitute the whole of social and individual conduct in relation with the norms, content and context of a field of expertise. We are then dealing with the enculturation of novices which easily exceeds the objective of the instilling of a specific knowledge. Figure 1 attempts to apply the situated learning model to the Koranic School, where the field of expertise covers the mastery and comprehension of the written Koran. Master and students sat together on the floor in a semi-circle; no desks or other barriers between them; the best

regarded seats are those closest to the teacher. Books and writing utensils were viewed as sacred and distinguished tools of knowledge due to the fact that God swears by them in the Koran. Anything that God swears by is regarded in high esteem (Makdisi, 1981). Is learning in Koranic school a legitimate peripheral participation?

FIGURE 1: The koranic school from the perspective of situated learning
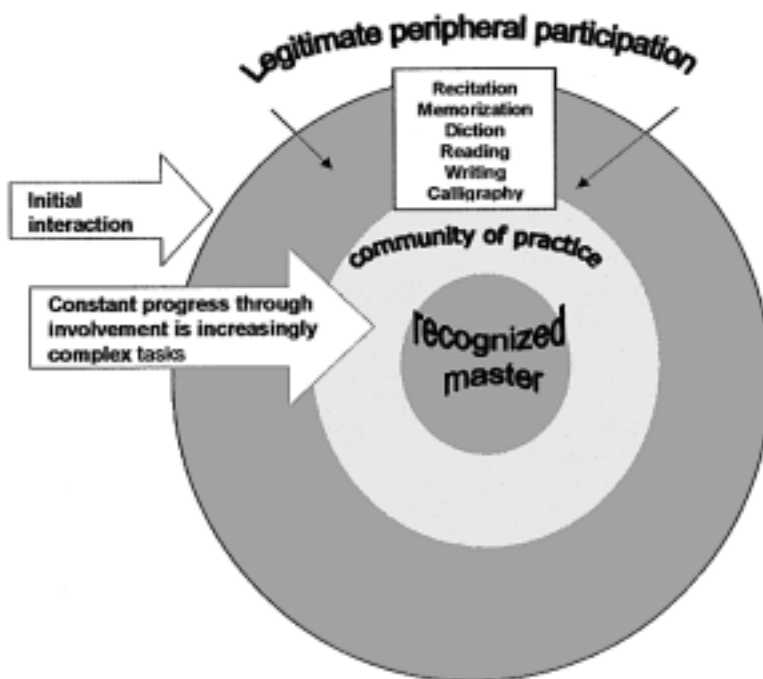
Legitimate: because all participants (students, teachers, parents, local community) accept the position of the children-novices as potential members of the community of Koranic experts (community of believers).

Peripheral: the learners settle in around the teacher by tirelessly repeating the required tasks. In the beginning these tasks are peripheral: preparing the tools (reeds, wooden board, ink...), repeating the words of the teacher. The tasks progressively become more important: reading, writing, reciting longer and longer verses of the Koran, comprehension-commentary of the Koran and the application of its precepts in everyday life.

Participation: it is through action that the knowledge is acquired. The knowledge is situated in the praxis of the community of practice and not in a curriculum to be found outside of the community. The dynamics of knowledge acquisition in early Muslim civilization provided for a concept of Islamic education that placed no barrier between 'religious' and 'secular' learning (Douglass & Shaikh, 2004).

Moreover, Koranic School teaching is fundamentally a form of differentiated teaching since the learner goes at his own speed and is only in competition with himself. The pedagogical division of the group/class is based mainly on the degree of expertise of the student and not on the basis of age or degree. The organization into the large group/class clearly recalls the single-room, rural classroom. The teacher divides the classroom into several levels, which are led by an advanced student. The habitual division consists of two or three groups: *novices, less experienced and experienced*, which curiously happens to correspond to the learning cycles which are in vogue in many current school reforms in Europe. Novice students should not be overburdened, but progress should be systematic. Experienced students should not be stuck with easy material. The masters attend to whole needs of students, assisting all students not just the outstanding ones (Makdisi, 1981).

In relation to the Koranic School we can state that:

- Knowledge is defined through doing: 'recite, read, write and understand the Koran', and to behave outside of the school in a way respectful of the precepts of Islam.
- The Koranic School model rejects the separation into social and religious training, religious learning and exercise of the Koran,
- The evaluation and accreditation work towards the command and consolidation of competences.

More precisely, the procedures of accreditation involve the whole community. Mastery of a part of the Koran (subdivided in sixty sections called *hizb*) is subjected to oral notification by the parents to recompense the student and the teacher. If the student is able to read and write a substantial segment of the Koran, a ceremony of ratification of his competences is organized. If the student becomes an expert and is thus able to recite, read and write the Koran in its entirety, the family offers the teacher a remuneration in relation to their economic standing and in relation to the importance of the event for the community. Understanding and higher-order thinking was gradually introduced as the student advanced. Because of the level of mastery required, teachers adjusted the level of instruction to meet the individual abilities of the students. Students varied in ages and rates of instruction. Students 'graduated' when they were able to demonstrate complete mastery over the subject

matter to the satisfaction of the teacher. Obviously this made education a highly personalized experience where every teacher and student became acquainted with one another at an intimate level (Makdisi, 1981).

One need also keep in mind that the knowledge gained at the Koranic School is theoretically used daily for the five prayers and for other religious ceremonies. It is thus not knowledge for 'professional life' but for 'daily life.' The focus is on the ways in which learning is an evolving, continuously renewed set of relations. In other words, this is a relational view of the person and learning.

Bernstein (1996) uses the metaphor of a mirror and a resonance chamber in which many positive and negative images are projected. The central questions are:

- Who sees oneself as having a *value* in these images?
- In the same vein, one must also ask whose voices are being listened to at school.
- Who speaks?

According to Bernstein, Western school clearly reflects a hierarchy of social class values and a specific distribution of knowledge, which is reflected in the resources, access and acquisition of school culture.

The characteristics of the Koranic School do not enter into Bernstein's analysis as it consists of a non-extractive method of schooling (Serpell, 1999). Thus when, after many years of Koranic study, a student returns to his village, he will be respected since he will be capable of reading and reciting the holy book of the Muslims. This person will then be able to share his knowledge with younger children and thus continue the Koranic tradition.

Nor does the Koranic School model fit with the distinction proposed by Resnick (1978). This author contrasts, on the one hand, individual cognition in school versus shared cognition outside of school, and on the other hand pure mentation in school versus tool manipulation outside of it.

Briefly, despite the seemingly archaic cognitive system (rote memorization and recitation of the Koran), what is at stake in the Koranic School is the entry into a 'community of Islamic believers.' The knowledge of the Koran is of interest only if the individual is recognized as being worthy of the confidence of the local community.

Coming back to the situated learning model it should be noted that this model postulates the examination of a type of social engagement favorable for the learning context rather than for cognitive processes. In other words, everything happens as if, in the Koranic School, *the archaism of the cognitive process* is compensated by *the strength of the social engagement*. Looked at in this way, the understanding of literacy mechanisms in the Koranic tradition should be connected to the general debate on the variety of ways to learn to read and write (Goody, 1979; Serpell &

Hatano, 1997). According to Gough & Juel (1989), the act of understanding the written word necessitates the mobilization of two essential components. The first being the recognition of written words and the second the ability to give meaning to language, both written and oral. To put it in Freire's words 'to read the word *and* the world.' Koranic learning, as identified in many studies, is very far from using this pedagogical productive paradigm advocated by Freire.

The most important weakness of the Koranic school is its inability to put meaning and critical thinking in the center of learning. Fiske (1997) observed in Koranic schools in Burkina Faso, boys learning the Koran by rote memorization in Arabic. Sometimes memorizing major segments of the text without any exegesis or discussion of its meaning—and, it appears, often without much understanding of the Arabic language. So while certain kinds of schooling may entail a dramatic shift from imitation toward explicit conceptual transmission of declarative knowledge and certain formal skills, the shift may be limited within schools, and may not transform the mimetic transmission of more fundamental cultural practices outside of school.

While the fruitfulness of literacy methods based on 'meaning' needs no more proof, it seems that certain authors push us not to forget that 'access to the meaning of a text depends on the proper functioning of certain mechanisms and especially of their automatism' (Chardon, 2000, p. 116). It is precisely on this second component that Koranic School pedagogy is based. One can thus easily understand how, in spite of the numerous criticisms that can be addressed at the Koranic School, it has shown itself to be very effective in literacy training (Wagner & Lotfi, 1983).

In this vein, in this 'post-September 11, 2001' period where everything having to do with Islam is suspicious, it would be useful to come back to the supposed links between 'Koranic School' and 'Islamic Fundamentalism.' As mentioned in the first section, the Koranic School is characterized by an extreme diversity. The hypothesis which sees the Koranic School as the assimilation of the ancestral educational system for the preparation of future generations of fundamentalists is a hypothesis that does not hold up against a sharp analysis of the political, sociological and economical contexts in which contemporary radical fundamentalism has developed (Algeria, Afghanistan...). This is not to say that certain radical groups have not taken advantage of the chaotic situation of certain Islamic countries or of the confusion of the Islamic Diaspora in the West to dispose Koranic Schools for their violent, politico-religious proselytizing.

Concerning the habitual exclusion of females from the Koranic School, it should be kept in mind that this is not original to Islam but can be found in all the principle religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism). Reagan (2000) pointed out that traditional Hindu education excludes not just girls but also inferior castes. Certain historical studies even go against common sense about Islamic education.

Marty (1921), thus noted that girls are quite numerous in Koranic Schools in Foutu in Guinea. They make up a third and sometimes half of the class. It is quite common for wealthy families to send girls for a year, and even for two or three, to learn the *Fatiha* and the *surats* of the end of the book, and to learn proper prayer techniques. In Northern Nigeria, a survey of UNICEF (1999) found that there are 16,648 Koranic schools with 1,145,111 pupils. Only 184,592 or 16.1% are attending primary school, out of which 38.1% are female.

Towards a mobilization of the Koranic School for basic education?

In many countries in Western and Northern Africa one can witness how the recent expansion of the Koranic School has reduced the phenomena of non-schooling delineated by official statistics and international experts. According to Easton & Kane (2000), the search for alternative solutions has taken many forms: community schools sponsored by the state or by an NGO, pilot schools sponsored by the state (generally traditional elementary schools chosen to try innovative, community-based methods), an increase in interest in Koranic instruction or in hybrid forms that combine Muslim and Western instruction and also private schools created by independent businessmen, especially in urban zones.

In Mali, for example, school attendance figures have been in continual decline since the eighties (30% in 1980, 23% in 1990). This loss of interest in public schooling has been counter-balanced by the growth of 'private' schooling. Koranic Schools, *madrasa* (schools which give both secular and religious instruction) and community schools have proliferated and have seen their attendance numbers rise (Etienne, 1994). In the rural area of Kangaré in the southwest of Mali, where Etienne (1994) did his research, the number of *madrasa* quadrupled in ten years. While attendance rates in the public sector continually went down over more than a decade, nearly half (49.6%) of all students in the area took Islamic instruction. Unlike Koranic Schools which deal only with religious instruction, the *madrasa* have the distinctive feature of presenting a syncretic and bilingual instruction: given in both Arabic and French, both religious and secular. This type of instruction conveys not only Koranic precepts but also French, reading, writing and mathematics. This combination responds to a double necessity, on the one hand placing the child 'on the road to God' and on the other on the road to 'progress and modernity.' The weakness of the formal educational system, founded exclusively on the Western model, led to the development of an original education, both religious and secular, in which tradition and modernity come together in a new pedagogical and cultural syncretism.

In Niger, the number of Koranic School is estimated at around 40,000 in 1990. Thus number easily surpasses the number of public schools (Easton, 1999). In reality this type of instruction constitutes an alternative to the official, Western-style schools and presents a 'hidden culture' of knowledge that goes against official school culture but which also integrates certain elements.

This reorientation of the social demand for education cannot solely be explained by a repudiation of public schooling. Considered in the past as a way towards social promotion, public schooling, founded on the extractive, Western model inherited from colonization, no longer fits the expectations of parents. Public schools seems incapable of giving their children a useful base for obtaining a job or instilling them with techniques that they can count on in the future. This observation was made by a working group on informal education, ADEA (Association for the Development of Education in Africa). The credibility granted to the Koranic School has greatly increased in the past few years. Parents choose Koranic Schooling because they consider it to be a factor of social integration because of what it teaches (the laws of the Koran and Islamic morality in particular). In a way it would appear that, by means of the educational strategies of the Koranic School, the populations of Western Africa are 'reinventing' basic education. In addition, this school adapts itself to the lifestyle of the population it serves. Thus, in Mauritania, the Koranic School is perfectly established in nomadic life. The educational situation of the country draws its novelty from the association of modern and traditional instruction (Ould Ahmadou, 1997).

Educational difficulties are often connected to the management style of Western-style school, generally centralized and unconnected to village communities. In addition, as Gatti (2001) correctly points out, the greater and more diverse the participation of the community in school management, the easier the children can access the school and the higher the quality of the education.

According to Easton (1999), the practical outcomes of Koranic instruction in Western Africa can be summarized in three points:

(1) An introduction to writing, and to a lesser degree mathematics, to a large proportion of the population, men and women, of which a large number would otherwise have had no access to such instruction. Those who continue long enough to learn how to read, write and count well enough for practical daily use (generally in an African language, as a functional understanding of Arabic remains fairly limited) make up a minority, often a large minority in certain cases. Among other things, literacy in Arabic has become a point of reference in many small towns and rural areas, largely considered illiterate according to Western criteria.

(2) Training for local leaders, since a solid Muslim education is generally accepted as an indication of morality, honesty and discipline; thus a basic, necessary qualification for holding functions of responsibility in the community.

(3) Economic and social promotion, which has always been the case, but even more so recently given the lack of interest for formal instruction. This is possible because of the close connection between relational networks of Koranic Schools and traditional commercial networks of the region. Koranic School graduates are better able to find work or to find an apprenticeship with traditional businesses and in the informal commercial sector.

In Morocco, the revival of the Koranic School is connected to the inability of the state to extend basic education. Thus, Koranic Schools make up the most widespread form of preschool in the country. They provide instruction of a 'renovated traditional' style. Koranic Schools serve 67% of all preschool children. However, the percentage of girls is only 27.1% against 44.6% in modern preschool (Ministry of Education, 2000). Numerous studies on Moroccan village communities and the relationships between teachers and villagers shows that in this rural area the modern school is viewed with distrust and with skepticism regarding its usefulness. Schools and teachers are not chosen by the local community and are clearly seen as culturally outsiders. They are placed by the state and then proceed to impose their lifestyle and their way of thinking, which can be very different from that of the local way (Zouggari, 1991). In Tunisia, rural farmers show the same mistrust towards agricultural technicians who are supposed to be helping them (Akkari, 1993). In a recent study in the North of Morocco, Tawil (1996, 2000) shows that the Koranic School plays an essential role in the education of the rural poor. It alleviates the absence of official schooling more than it expresses a cultural refusal against this school.

All the signs of a revival of the Koranic School should push states with large Muslim populations, and which are having difficulty at developing basic education, to make attempts to integrate Koranic Schools into their educational structures or to gain inspiration from the pedagogical and social experience, often secular, accumulated by such institutions (Colonna, 1984). Such a position in no way rules out an attentive and critical examination of this form of education, and of how it relates to the local culture and the larger society, in such a way as to create the possibility for 'another school,' one which would be socio-culturally appropriate (Wagner, 1988).

Looking at forms of modern schooling introduced in non-Western parts of the world, with very few exceptions, the model is similar to the one that has already been in place since the nineteenth century in Europe. This model exhibits centralizing and urban hegemony, specifically designed to do away with differences, not just on a linguistic level, but more importantly at the level of representations

(representations of the world, or time and space and of social relations), thus constituting a form of violence against villagers and also against the developing urban proletariat (Colanna, 1984). Taken outside of the West[9], these models, while new national powers and the local elite endorsed them, were no less distant from the cultures upon which they were imposed. The Western style schooling is an extractive model, particularly in Africa, where children who succeed go away from their local communities (Serpell, 1999).

By comparison, a Koranic School and the village in which it is located would appear to have a symbiotic relationship, with its temporal rhythm and spatial structure, much more so than the best intentioned modern school could hope. Tawil (2004) pointed out, on the basis of field research in Northern Morocco, that local communities are resisting the supply of 'secular' basic education from the state and, when asked, declare that they would send their children to public schools if the curriculum took more account of Islamic values and if teachers were hired from within their own communities. The strength of Koranic schools rests on its community support and the high level of commitment of both parents and teachers. The *Wakf* provides resources to sustain and develop and adapt Islamic schools to modernity. *Waqf* is a social, legal and religious institution which played an important role in the social, cultural and economic way of life of the Islamic world, especially the period, from middle of the 8th century until the end of the 19th. The Islamic *waqf* (called *habous* in North Africa) can be defined as an action of a member of a Muslim society motivated by an element of the Islamic culture to transform some or all of his personal assets into pious foundations which will serve the public.

To address the problem of basic education in Northern Nigeria, UNICEF (1999) recommends a state policy deliberately and directly addressing the problems of Koranic schools in terms of integrating elements of basic education, funding and management. Adequate learning materials and equipment should be provided for both Koranic literacy as well as for basic education program.

Conclusion

The Koranic school is a traditional mode of schooling and an introduction into the culture of literacy, an aspect which is usually not taken into account by public education policy. It also represents an original form of learning.

It can be regarded as an alternative to public schooling in some Islamic areas, in particular when the State does not have the human and financial capacities of mass schooling. In some Islamic contexts, Koranic schools offer formal education which either replaces or complements state-run education. Beyond the apparent pedagogical archaism of Koranic schools (memorization, fixed curriculum…), this

TABLE 2: The Koranic School: an original form of learning

	Representation of the learner	**Methods of learning**	**Age-space-time of learning**	**Social reproduction**
Society without schooling	Ethnotheories	Empiric participation in the learning process	Everywhere in the social settings	Limited social reproduction through education
Koranic School	Potential believer	Teaching content coming from divine will	Koranic School and social settings	Limited social reproduction through Koranic School
Society with schooling	Representation of the child, the adolescent and the adult	– Imposition of goals and teaching methods – Teaching content coming from scientific rationality	Age-space-time of education are centered in schools	– Strong social reproduction through the school – Social changes through the school

form of education is making schooling more accessible to local communities. It is a highly personalized experience wherein every teacher and student is acquainted with one another at an intimate level. It is certainly possible that the phenomenon of Koranic School revival, in multiple Islamic contexts, is linked to the efficiency of this institution in the development of literacy skills in the least educated layers of society. For researchers in comparative education, schools linked to the Islamic tradition in many parts of the world may represent a new more rooted form of learning in and through revitalized community, a kind of 'no man's land' neither narrowly 'Westerner' nor 'traditional' (Morah, 2000 ; Luckens-Bull, 2001). Emerging here is a 'pedagogy of place,' a theoretical framework that emphasizes the necessary interpenetration of culture, school, community, and environment, whether it's urban, suburban, or rural (Sobel, 2004; Akkari & Dasen, 2004). As an original form of learning, the Koranic School thus deserves to be the subject of future studies in comparative education and anthropology.

Notes

[1] It should be noted that the opposition between Western and Koranic schools has been contested by Lecomte (1954), who underscored the continuity from the Byzantine School to the Koranic one. Reagan (2000), for his part, considers that the Western and Koranic educational traditions draw from the same religious sources. It is also necessary to add that the Koranic School undertook profound transformations towards the end of the 19th century, such as during the introduction of secular subjects. These changes were halted by colonization. Makdisi (1981) has argued convincingly

for a major Islamic contribution to the emergence of the first universities in the medieval West, showing how terms such as having 'fellows' holding a 'chair,' or students 'reading' a subject and obtaining 'degrees,' as well as practices such as inaugural lectures and academic robes, can all be traced back to Islamic concepts and practices. Indeed the idea of a university in the modern sense— a place of learning where students congregate to study a wide variety of subjects under a number of teachers—is generally regarded as an Arabic innovation, developed at the al-Azhar university in Cairo. Makdisi has demonstrated that cities bordering the Islamic world (Salerno, Naples, Bologna, Montpellier) developed the first European universities.

[2] Unless otherwise noted in this paper, the term 'Koranic school' refers to Islamic schools at the primary and secondary levels.

[3] Being an Arabic speaker and a former Koranic School student I purposely did not use any 'autobiographical' elements in the writing of this text. It is however likely that the tone of this text has been influenced by the researcher's personal experience.

[4] One finds a large presence of partially sighted or blind persons among the best 'readers' of the Koran.

[5] It should be noted that this ritual dimension is present in other religious educations, for example Gurugé (1982) in Buddhist pedagogy.

[6] It should be noted that this domestication did not always give the desired results for the colonizers. While the first generation of resistance fighters, against the colonization in Algeria and Tunisia, were taught in Islamic schools, the second generation, which gained independence in Tunisia and which started the war for independence in Algeria, was the product of a double education, 'Arab' and 'French'. A typical example is Bourguiba, who completed his secondary studies in a traditional high school in Tunisia and then went on to obtain a law degree in Paris.

[7] See 'Madrasah,'in the Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995).

[8] Situated learning depends on two claims difficult to find in Koranic schools:
– It makes no sense to talk of knowledge that is decontextualized, abstract or general.
– New knowledge and learning are properly conceived as being located in communities of practice.

[9] Many scholars pointed out that modern schooling in the West contributes to separating children from adults and to make instruction a meaningless activity (Vincent, 1994; Charlot, Bautier & Rochex, 1992).

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GLOBAL THEMES IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM OF GREEK PRIMARY EDUCATION: THE CASE OF THE 1982 AND 2000 REFORMS

GEORGE FLOURIS
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Abstract – *This study features a content analysis of the Greek primary school social studies curriculum of two consecutive educational reforms—those of 1982 and of 2000—both of which are used in schools today. The purpose of the study is to determine if there are global themes in the curricula of both reforms, and to compare which of the reforms includes the most references regarding global themes. The analysis revealed that even though the majority of references address national orientations, both of the reforms contain references to global themes; however, the 1982 reform has more references than that of the year 2000. It is recommended that countries in the European Union and beyond revisit their curricula in order to enhance global orientations and international perspectives, especially in the area of social studies, so that students are better able to make the leap from being national citizens to becoming 'cosmo-citizens'.*

Conceptualizing globalization and global education

*G*lobalization has recently received a great deal of emphasis even though remarkable attention to international matters has been given after World War II. Various recent developments, however, have brought about a new consciousness that individuals, nations, and societies constitute an integral part of the planet. Such developments include: universalization of education, realization that humanity lives on a single planet Earth and that we all constitute an extended family, concern about the ecology of the planet, tremendous development in information and communication technologies, the advent of 'global village' and the fact that there has been a world wide growth of economic, political, cultural, technological, and ecological systems (Billeh, 1999; Flouris, 2001).

Globalization means different things to different groups of people depending on whether they are governmental officials, business leaders, teachers, unemployed groups, human rights activists, environmentalists, and so on. Different groups view globalization as good or bad, positive or negative, a form of exploitation or freedom. Thus, values are key to assessing the impact of globalization on people, cultures and societies. Among the varieties of definitions

we list bellow some of the most common ones with the intent to differentiate the term globalization from the term global education, which is of most importance in the framework of this study.

The term globalization refers to the concepts of 'the compression of the world and the intensification of the consciousness of the world as a whole' (Featherstone et al., 1995, p. 50). Another definition of globalization makes reference to 'the acceleration and intensification of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations' (Rothenberg, 2003, p.1). Globalization is also viewed as 'a multi-facet set of processes which include not only the changes which have flowed from the new information technologies and opening up of markets, but also new concepts which mean that shrinking space, shrinking time and disappearing borders are linking people's lives more deeply, more intensely and more immediately than ever before (Power, 2000, p. 152). Thus, globalization's ever growing and opposing parameters, as motivated by economic forces and directed by communications, seems to link individuals, societies and cultures across the globe with close interconnection and closeness. In some ways it accentuates interdependence among institutions and societies and in other ways it causes reaction and rejection. Globalization seems to potentially promise—even guarantee—international relatedness, higher standards of living as well as forms of freedom but at the same time it potentially threatens the world with a conformist economy and culture rooted in North American and western ideas and interests. Despite the mixed feelings it generates, globalization seems to be spread as a centralist economic and cultural force for the near future.

Global education on the other hand refers to the process of developing in student's awareness of world perspectives in order to understand the complexities of international events, the diversities of world cultures and commonalities of human values, and interests, as well as students' perception of the globe (Tucker & Evans, 1996). Given that globalization is a worldwide phenomenon and that interdependence of nations and countries is a reality and will stay with us, we have inaugurated an era of providing global education to students of the various nations. In this manner global education purports to expand and enrich students' awareness of the world by connecting them with the diverse cultural and technological heritage and human actions by highlighting such issues as literature, cultures, economic systems, human conflicts, social justice and human rights. As some writers note 'global education seeks to weaken the boundaries between the disciplines and encourages emphasis on what interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity studies can bring to the understanding and solution of human problems' (http://globaleducation.edu/ge/vsglobalization.html).

These views of global education call for the development of a common intercontinental and world consciousness that all peoples, nations, and societies,

regardless of their particular beliefs (i.e. religious, political or ethnic/national, etc.) or ideology, are members of a single planetary community. This orientation aims not only at understanding international affairs and world systems but also at learning how to function responsibly, as 'cosmo-citizens'. Thus, it is required that empathetic orientations and/or attitudes towards fellow 'cosmo-citizens' are acquired and a propensity for world actions be developed. These orientations will assist individuals to transform from national citizens in order to reach a cosmopolitan plateau dismantling of their parochial and provincial attitudes. This supranational orientation will enhance people's cosmopolitanism and will gradually increase their socio-political and individual global efficacy so that they 'think globally and act locally' and be in position to affect their life destiny (Diaz et al., 1999).

These notions of global education seem to uplift it as an antidote to globalization since its purposes place a premium to the students' abilities in order to effectively access, analyze, scrutinize human thoughts and actions and to intervene when necessary as ethical and responsible members of an ecumenical community.

In sum, globalization is an international movement driven mainly by economic forces of companies, institutions, governments and groups of different nations, while global education is a teaching-learning paradigm that aims at enlightening students, future citizens, to be aware of human thoughts and actions and motivate them to think critically and ethically for the common good of the entire humanity. Of all the subjects in the school curriculum social studies have the potential to enlighten students' minds and broaden their horizons regarding the peoples of the world, their basic needs, desires, problems, hopes and aspirations. Concurrently, social studies can contribute in equipping future citizens to think reflectively and in decisive ways to all world events, matters and issues. This assumption prompted us to analyze the social studies curriculum presently used in Greece.

The nature of social studies curriculum

Social studies, more than any other subject, is advantageous in offering global literacy due to the interdisciplinary nature of its content. Its content draws ideas, concepts, issues, and values from social sciences such as history, geography, psychology, sociology, economics, demography, and other related fields. Furthermore, a vital goal of social studies is usually associated with preparing good citizens (Engle, 1964). Education for citizenship has been a prevailing conception for social studies since the 1960's as several discipline based scholars have noted (Massialas, 1999). The National Commission on Social Studies in the

schools emphasize that the social studies curriculum ought to 'instill a clear understanding of the roles of citizens in a democracy and provide opportunities for active engaged participation in civic, cultural, and volunteer activities' (National Commission on Social Studies in the Schools, 1989, p.3). According to the above Commission the five main goals for social studies curriculum must enable students to develop:

1. civic responsibility and active civic participation
2. perspectives on their own life experiences so they see themselves as part of the larger human adventure in time and place
3. a critical understanding of the history, geography, economic, political and social institutions, traditions and values…
4. an understanding of other peoples and the unity and diversity of the world…
5. critical attitudes and analytical perspectives appropriate to analysis of the human condition. (Op.cit, p. 6).

In a similar fashion the National Council for Social Studies Task Force has recently linked character development to citizenship. It states that even though character formation is a complex process, adults may model good character so that children have opportunities to live out the ideals of character and citizenship. Children are to be provided with proper knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities as citizens and acquire the disposition to act virtuously in their private and public lives (Task Force on Character Education in Social Studies, 1997).

There have been several approaches to social studies in the last half a century. According to Reinhartz & Beach (1997) there are four main streams of social studies curricula that have appeared since the 1960's. These are: 'social studies as citizenship' which aims at developing values for forming the good citizen mainly, through the transmition of concepts and values via lecturing, questioning, and readings. The second is 'social studies as part of social sciences' which purports to instill learning of concepts, processes and problems of social sciences; the main methods used are discovery learning, collecting and verifying of data for each of the social sciences. The areas of social sciences generate the problems studied or analyzed. The third concerns 'the social studies as a reflective inquiry' which intends to generate knowledge for decision-making and problem solving; the sound methods for this approach are reflective inquiry, analyzing, and solving problem areas. The fourth is 'social studies as integrated inquiry'; its purpose is the interdisciplinary approach involving a multiplicity of skills and integrated ways rather than isolated areas. Proper methods are cooperative learning and action, the use of multiple interdisciplinary sources, etc. (see also Flouris & Pasias, 2003).

In a similar fashion Massialas (1999) summarizes respective patterns for social studies education which are predominant in certain parts of the world which he

summarizes as follows: The first pattern, which is prevalent mostly in North America, emphasizes social studies as 'education for citizenship'. Its main objective is to 'provide decision making skills and knowledge to students so that they may be enlightened and become participating citizens' (p. 468). The second pattern, which is mostly applied in Europe and the rest of the formerly colonial world, stresses the teaching of history and geography as a core of offerings in the field. This pattern adheres to the traditional curriculum, which includes teaching in history, geography and to a lesser degree the rest of the social sciences. Given the history of Europe many elements of nationalism have entered the curriculum. This pattern is now under change since the creation of the European Union (EU) has come about and calls for a new 'supra-national' intercontinental European identity which has been reflected in the curriculum as European dimension in education (Flouris & Ivrideli, 2000, 2002). The third pattern is entitled 'civic education for democratic citizenship' which emerged primarily in East Central Europe in order to transform society from a totalitarian system to a democratic one. Its main goal is to use social studies as an instrument for training in the principles of democracy (Massialas, 1999).

From the above patterns Massialas (1999) evaluates the first one as the most sound in order to meet the challenges of the new century. This is because this pattern of social studies directly prepares for citizenship since it emphasizes skills and school processes for decision-making and social participation. This type of preparation enables students to take actions on their local, national, and international environments and develop affinity for humanity and the global community.

These traditional or nation oriented focus was connected to nation building concept and philosophy which had been a key goal or factor of the school curriculum in the last two centuries. This practice, however, must be discontinued and countries as well as societies ought to uplift the concept of nation to a state of global community. To this end, social studies have an important role to play due to the interdisciplinarity of the subjects that constitute the social sciences. What is actually needed is to apply an integrated approach to school knowledge and skill development as well as the issues based approach to curriculum. These changes to curriculum do not cancel the essence of the disciplines but they signal their revitalization.

The teaching of social studies

The challenges of the 21st century and the new consciousness that emerged after September 11, 2001 call for a shift from the traditional ethnocentric and eurocentric way of developing and implementing the social studies curriculum around the world.

There is a concensus in the leterature about changing the educational focus of teaching social studies. Among the most essential views about reorienting the teaching of social studies is those of Diem (2002, p.147) who supports that we ought to: Teach beyond borders, provide instruction in cultural understanding, help students understand the effects of propaganda, develop historical perspective, show the effects of changes in interpreting the concept of civil liberties, and develop critical thinking skills.

A fundamental principle in viewing social studies from a global focus is to approach them from multiple perspectives and horizons. There exist several such approaches that provide structure to this task. Several models have been developed that generate global perspectives and information. Kniep (1989) proposed a model for global education in which he stresses the following concepts: interdependence, change, conflict, scarcity and culture. Harvey's (1976) model consists of five dimensions to attain global awareness. These include perspective consciousness, state-of-the planet- awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics and awareness of human choices. *Perspective consciousness* refers to an awareness of and appreciation for other images of the world- or to see a phenomenon from different perspectives-. *State of-the-planet awareness* includes an awareness of world conditions, issues and problems. *Cross-cultural awareness* calls for an awareness of diverse ideas and pratices embeded in human societies arround the globe. *Knowledge of global dynamics* requires a multi level understanding of the world as an interconnected system with unanticipated consequemces. *Awareness of human choices* refers to responsible decision-making processes by an individual having a tolerance towards the views of others and how his/her choices will affect future generations (Diaz, et al., 1999).

In a similar vein, The Charles County-University of Maryland model was structured to permeate the entire curriculum of social studies instead of being part of it. To this end, the materials focus on the following eight concepts: individuality, cultural pattern, subsistence, social structure, inderdependence, communication, exploitation and pluralism. It must be noted that all eight concepts were infused throught all curriculum areas including social studies, language, science, the arts, mathematics, physical education, literature and vocational education, k-12 (Weaver, 1988, p.108). This cross curricular approach to global education is more holistic and substantive.

The nature of the Greek social studies curricula of 1982 and 2000

Given Reinhartz & Beach's (1997) four main streams of social studies curricula and Massialas' (1999) three patterns for social studies education with the corresponding curricula, we attempted to examine the nature of the Greek social

studies curricula (the 1982 and 2000 reforms presently used in schools). Our analysis, among other things, indicated that both of the 1982 and 2000 curricula rely heavily on the first stream 'social studies as citizenship' and less on the second 'social studies as part of social sciences', in Reinhartz & Beach's typology. This is because on a theoretical basis the Greek curricula stress the making of a citizen via the transmission of concepts and values expecting students to committ to memory these concepts and values for citizenship, although there exist several opportunities for the students to enhance their political culture throughout their everyday school life.

In a similar vein, Greek curricula coincide with the second pattern in Massialas' description since they adhere to the traditional perspective, that is to teach separately and independently subjects such as history, geography, and civics and to a lesser degree the rest of social sciences. Furthermore, lots of nationalistic perspectives were identified, both in this study and in previous studies we have conducted (Flouris & Ivrinteli, 2000, 2002; Flouris & Kalogiannakis, 1996), which indicated a national oriented aproach to the various disciplines of social sciences, at the elementary level.

As other writers support this curriculum practice is similar to many countries since 'educational curricula show dramatic similarities accross convergent changes...Studies of specific subject curricula accross countries and over time show the same patterns of relative isomorphism and convergent change' (Myer, 1999, p.5). This situation calls for a shift from the present nationally or continent oriented approach to a global perspective for the teaching of social studies.

Collecting the research evidence: methods and procedures

The discussion above supports that nation states have a conflicting role to perform. They seek to build a 'distinctive national identity' among their members and to support a 'transnational multiculturalism' (both European and global), which is expected to lead to cooperation, solidarity and peace. The increasing globalizing interdependence of the world, (economics, technology, mass media, transportation, etc.), as well as common global problems (ecological, population explosion, etc.) create a growing need for nation states to rely heavily on the second role mentioned above. They need to promote a supranational continental structure or cosmosystem over and beyond their own ethnoculture, such as the European Union and the World Community.

Given the commitments of governments of states throughout the world the problem for the present study, then, was to probe to what degree global themes

are portrayed in the 1982 and 2000 social studies curriculum guides of Primary Education in Greece. The task, thus, was to examine the above-mentioned national curricula by conducting a content analysis in order to ascertain if and to what degree global themes are presented in them. The reader must bear in mind that Greece has a highly centralized educational system and operates under a national curriculum.

In order to assess the degree to which the global themes are portrayed, both of the curriculum guides (1982 and 2000) of social studies subjects of Primary Education in Greece, grades one through six, were analyzed. Those subjects are: history, geography, social and political education (civics), environmental studies as well as religion. Each curriculum guide was examined to determine the quantity and quality of information related to global themes and issues. In the framework of this study global themes were defined the problems or issues of supranational nature or interest, which are shared by all and each one of today's existing cultures, and affect or could affect one or more continents, and lead humanity to a common destiny.

The analytic categories that were used to record the content of the Greek curriculum were: *protection of the environment, climatic conditions, energy, economy, technology, wars, human rights, nutrition, arts-symbols.*

Content, regardless of category, was classified as positive, neutral or negative. Positive are those references that promote world peace and reflect friendly sentiments. Negative we considered those that cause or create aggressiveness, xenophobia and violent emotions. Finally, neutral references were considered those, which do not carry out neither negative nor positive feelings, or those, which do not trigger positive or negative evaluative judgments.

Findings of the content analysis

Analysis of the year 1982 social studies curriculum

The analysis of the year 1982 curriculum subjects revealed that the greatest percentage of references on global themes exists in the subject of Environmental Studies entitled 'we and the world'. Table 1 shows that the sum total of references was recorded to be 7.2% for all grades in this subject. The greatest percentage was concentrated in the category 'protection of the environment', followed by the category 'human rights'.

TABLE 1: References on global themes by subject

SUBJECT CATEGORY	Environmental Studies		History		Geography		Social and Political Education		Religion	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Protection of Environment	74	3.9	7	0.4	20	1.1	-	-	-	-
Human Rights	25	1.3	19	1	12	0.6	23	1.2	10	0.5
Climatic Conditions	15	0.8	9	0.5	21	1.1	-	-	-	-
Technology	19	1	24	1.3	-	-	-	-	2	0.1
Arts-Sumbols	-	-	31	1.7	7	0.4	1	0.1	-	-
Wars	-	-	12	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Economy	3	0.2	1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nutrition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	136	7.2	103	5.5	60	3.2	24	1.3	12	0.6

The second largest percentage of references on global themes – a sum total of 5.5% – was concentrated in the subject of History, while the category 'arts-symbols' received the highest percentage.

The next highest percentage resulted in the subject of Geography with a sum total of 3.2%. Of this, the largest percentage deals with 'climatic conditions' followed by the category 'protection of the environment'.

The subject of Social & Political Education concentrated the next largest percentage with a sum total of 1.3% references, while the category 'human rights' received the highest percentage.

Finally, the smallest percentage of references on global themes 0.6% exists in the subject of Religion. Most of these references were concentrated in the category 'human rights'.

Table 2 reveals that most of references on specific categories, regardless of curriculum subject, concerned 'protection of the environment' 5.4%, followed by the category of 'human rights' 4.7%. The category 'economy', concentrated the least amount of references 0.2%, while no references were recorded in the categories 'energy' and 'nutrition'.

Lastly, most of the references, regardless of curriculum subject and category, were neutral 17.7%, followed by positive ones 0.1%, while no negative references were recorded.

REFERENCES CATEGORY	POSITIVE		NEUTRAL		NEGATIVE		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Protection of Environment	-	-	101	5.4	-	-	101	5.4
Human Rights	2	0.1	87	4.6	-	-	89	4.7
Climatic Conditions	-	-	45	2.4	-	-	45	2.4
Technology	-	-	43	2.3	-	-	43	2.3
Arts- Symbols	-	-	41	2.2	-	-	41	2.2
Wars	-	-	12	0.6	-	-	12	0.6
Economy	-	-	4	0.2	-	-	4	0.2
Energy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nutrition	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	2	0.1	333	17.7	-	-	335	17.8

Analysis of the year 2000 social studies curriculum

The analysis of the year 2000 curriculum subjects revealed that the greatest percentage of references on global themes also exists in the subject of Environmental Studies. Table 3 shows that the sum total of references was 12.3% for all grades in this subject. The greatest percentage was concentrated again, in the category 'protection of the environment', followed by the category 'human rights'.

TABLE 3: References on global themes by subject

SUBJECT	Environmental Studies		Geography		Civics		History		Religion	
CATEGORY	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Human Rights	44	3.1	13	0.9	41	3	4	0.3	14	1
Protection of Environment	60	4.3	38	2.7	-	-	1	0.07	1	0.07
Technology	28	2	16	1.2	-	-	6	0.4	-	-
Arts- Sumbols	5	0.3	16	1.2	3	0.2	4	0.3	1	0.07
Economy	12	0.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nutrition	6	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.2
Wars	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	0.5	-	-
Climatic Conditions	17	1.2	5	0.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	172	12.3	92	6.6	44	3.2	22	1.6	19	1.4

The second largest percentage of references on global themes was concentrated in the subject of Geography; there is a sum total of 6.6%, while the category 'protection of the environment' received the highest percentage.

The next highest percentage resulted in the subject of Social and Political Education with a sum total of 3.2%. Of this, the largest percentage deals with 'human rights' followed by 'arts-symbols'.

The subject of History concentrated the next largest percentage with a sum total of 1.6%, while the category 'wars' received the highest percentage of that.

Finally, the smallest percentage of references on global themes, 1.4% (as in the case of year 1982 curriculum) exists in the subject of Religion. Most of these references were concentrated in the category 'human rights'.

Table 4 revealed that the greatest number of references on specific categories regardless of curriculum subject was concerned in the category 'human rights' 8.3%, followed by the category 'protection of the environment' 7.2%, while the category 'energy', received the least amount of references 0.2%.

TABLE 4: Aspects of global themes in the social studies curriculum

REFERENCES	POSITIVE		NEUTRAL		NEGATIVE		TOTAL	
CATEGORY	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Human Rights	22	1.6	94	6.7	-	-	116	8.3
Protection of Environment	4	0.3	96	6.9	-	-	100	7.2
Technology	7	0.5	33	2.4	-	-	40	2.9
Arts- Symbols	9	0.6	20	1.4	-	-	29	2.1
Economy	2	0.1	10	0.7	-	-	12	0.9
Nutrition	-	-	9	0.6	-	-	9	0.6
Wars	-	-	7	0.5	-	-	7	0.5
Climatic Conditions	-	-	5	0.4	-	-	5	0.4
Energy	-	-	3	0.2	-	-	3	0.2
TOTAL	44	3.1	305	22	-	-	349	25.1

All in all, the content analysis of the year 2000 Social Studies Greek curriculum reveals that most of the references on global themes were neutral, 22%, followed by the positive ones 3.1%, while no negative references were found.

In sum, the content analysis of both of the Greek primary education curriculum guides reveals that for the most part, as expected by a nation state, nationalistic messages seem to prevail but supranational dimensions are also present. The largest amount of references on global themes was found in the year 2000 curriculum guide and not in that one of year 1982. More specifically, the 1982 social studies curriculum contains 17.8% references of global themes, while the corresponding curriculum guide for the year 2000 includes a percentage of 25.1%.

The fact that no negative references were recorded in neither of the two curriculum guides shows that in Greece, despite the nationalistic ethos, the intent has been to instill affinity to Greek students towards the global community.

In conclusion, the percentages devoted to global themes, even though they are not scant, they do not totally harmonize with the pronouncements of the primary school curricula and their goals, which include supranational commitments such as to cope with 'problems faced by common efforts by the world community…resolved… with the cooperation and mutual exchange of all people' (Flouris, 1997, p.32). Thus, the findings of this study tend to support the observation that the formal curricula of the Primary Education in Greece are organized more according to a national and regional perspective rather than supranational or global ones. This situation may potentially direct teachers to promote national loyalty and ethnocentric orientations in students, which can perhaps hinder the attainment of a global awareness (Ivrideli, 1998, 2002).

Globalizing curriculum and education

The results above reveal that the intended curricula in Greece of both years 1982 and 2000 are not totally committed to global concerns and it may potentially cloud students' orientations towards the globe. Such practices are short of crosscultural understanding and supranational sentiments since they promote the maintenance of a state-endorsed curriculum but potentially negate cosmopolitanism (Massialas, 1995).

Given that world conditions require that individuals, nations, and societies develop a global consciousness and a cosmopolitan perspective, what type of curriculum—i.e. content of school knowledge, activities, etc.—and instructional strategies are needed in order to meet the challenges of the new century and millennium? How will the postmodern schools be able to facilitate the development of the global perspective in students of all ages and prioritize their school content and processes so that national partisan and patriotic citizens are transformed into global ones?

Schools around the world need to provide reliable and 'objective knowledge' which is oriented in world matters and interconnect the planet instead of drawing it from the 'pool' of the traditional 'mainstream academic knowledge'. To bridge the mainstream or centralist knowledge systems (Coulby, 1997) with the transformative knowledge, which aims at elevating students at a supranational plateau, a very vital role can be played by multicultural education, which can act as a buffer to harmonize the two. Afterall, there is an interconnection between multicultural and global education. Multicultural education usually refers to the

process of promoting the recognition, understanding and acceptance of individual uniqueness and cultural diversity within a pluralist society (Weaver, 1988, p. 108). However, some writers draw a distinction between the two forms of education. Multicultural education is defined as the process of 'emphasizing issues that are indigenous to the country in which students and their teachers live versus global education which focuses on world issues' (Diaz, Massialas & Xanthopoulos, 1999, p.209).

As many educators note, multicultural education focuses on issues that are indigenous to one's country as well as those which transcend countries and nations and has a great deal in common with global education. Both areas share in common humanistic and educational values, which emphasize compassion for otherness and foster local and world environments such as human rights, overarching values, equity, justice, etc. (Diaz et al., 1999). More specifically, multicultural education 'connects the study of other countries, the concept of the world as a global village, and recognizes of the need for everyone on this planet to collaborate…Focus on international studies brings an awareness of the shared concerns of nations around the world' (Tiedt & Tiedt, 1995, p.17). Such approaches challenge the traditional school knowledge of the nation states and tend to transform the national oriented 'knowledge systems' as well as the 'regimes of truth' which are presently used, to a new orientation that can harmonize with postmodern realities and global perspectives (Flouris & Pasias, 2004).

Nation states in every part of the world can no longer afford to offer students a parochial pedagogy and ethnocentric orientations. These orientations ignore global views and themes, which can mediate effectively for the formation of a global identity and world citizenry (Flouris & Spiridakis, 1992). Perhaps the time has come to engage in a systematic reappraisal of national curricula by moving away from maintaining existing systems and establishing new ways of life, which enlighten the minds of the future citizens of the world. Students need to become good national as well as global citizens who are able to think reflectively, and are willing to participate in the democratic processes by taking appropriate actions. The balanced development of the above-mentioned virtues is still considered the fundamental precondition for an actual democratic citizenship (Kymlicka & Norman, 2000) in the late modern and diverse societies.

Thus, the prime goal of schools today is to enhance quality and meet the current needs and future challenges by creating learning environments that foster knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes which can bring about a meaningful and peaceful life in regional, national, and global contexts. As Billeh (1999) puts it 'in this global era there is no place for isolation, passivity or mediocrity. Salvation resides in dynamism, quality…and compliance with universal rules' (p.119).

In conclusion, this study revealed that nationalistic features continue to co-exist with some global principles. Curricula of all countries around the world ought to discontinue their practice of developing nationally oriented approaches to the various disciplines and centralist knowledge especially in the social studies subjects. Times call for new curricular models and designs which celebrate global themes and ecumenical issues such as human rights, ecological principles, notions of equality of world cultures and societies based in solidarity and interdependence. As a scholar wrote 'the reorientation of education towards global rather than national society involves shifts in curricular perspectives: the editing out of some past realities, and the construction of a [brave] new world' (Myer 1999, p.13). In order to infuse global views into the curriculum we need to abandon not only our nationalistic emphasis on school knowledge but also to shift from Eurocentric orientations of the curriculum to multiple global perspectives of content. This way, students, future citizens, can critically reflect on what they are taught at the local, national, supranational and global levels, and learn to perceive a spectrum of realities not only through their nation centred perspective but also through the vision of other people in the entire planet.

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EXPLORING BEGINNING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PREPARATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALTA

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Abstract – *The Maltese Government, being concerned about the quality of school education, is attempting to increase teacher effectiveness and student learning. To achieve these goals, it is argued, that current in-service programmes need to be improved and focused, especially by giving due attention to the induction phase. The important phase of induction within the professional development continuum for teachers is lacking. Schools need to devise appropriate professional induction seminars and workshops for new teachers to extend their professional knowledge and skills acquired during the pre-service stage. As such a number of discussion documents, research studies and papers have and are being written in order to provide the authorities with the appropriate data on which to base future educational policies in relation to teacher preparation and induction schemes. This paper explores the perceptions of primary and secondary school teachers who are currently in their induction phase (i.e. their first three years after graduation). It reports the views of around three cohorts (approximately 300 teachers) about two main areas: teacher preparation and professional development. The methodological approach adopted was a questionnaire survey followed by in-depth interviews of around 18 teachers. Through this study we hope to shed light on ways and means of improving the current B.Ed (Hons) teacher education programme and also point out how teachers feel once they are full-time graduates. This will provide direction as to how the education authorities, the respective teacher training institutions and schools in particular can support beginning teachers. The essential link between pre-service and continuing professional development is explored and identified as key to quality improvements at the school level. New teacher induction schemes for the Maltese education system are discussed.*

Introduction

*T*his particular study arose due to an interest in learning about the perceptions of teachers with regards to their preparation (during the four years of the Bachelor of Education course or the one year Post Graduate Certificate in Education course), induction and professional development. Understanding what teachers

experience once they have embarked on their new career as well as what they feel regarding their preparation is not only essential for the new graduates themselves but also for the respective teacher education institutions as it helps us to keep in touch with the realities of school life as perceived by beginning teachers.

The main aim of this paper is therefore to shed some light on what beginning teachers experience and how the teacher training courses in the island state of Malta can be improved, altered and enhanced in order to help newly qualified teachers settle down in their induction phase. The following four questions were central to this study:

- What are the current perceptions about the teacher training programmes given the experiences gained in school as full-time teachers?
- What problems do teachers face once they commence full-time teaching?
- What qualities or skills do they value as beginning teachers?
- What opportunities do teachers have to develop professionally?

Induction and ongoing professional development: a brief review

The quality of a teacher's experience in the initial years of teaching is critical to developing and applying the knowledge and skills acquired during initial teacher training and to forming positive attitudes to teaching as a career. There is a general acceptance of the value of good induction processes for the beginning teacher, but, as Coolahan (2002) argues, there has tended to be a lack of coherent policy on its implementation, despite 'the high probability that solid induction programs represent one of the most cost-effective preventative strategies around' (Fullan, 1993, p.106).

The entry of newly qualified teachers into full-time teaching is widely acknowledged as problematic. The beginning teacher is often 'thrown in at the deep end', with a full-teaching load and associated responsibilities. She/He often has few, if any, support structures to draw upon and can feel isolated, stressed and anxious. Research shows that poor induction can have serious consequences (Freiberg, 2002). On the other hand, beginning teachers who are provided with a system of support are able to overcome initial problems of class management and planning and focus on student learning much sooner than others (e.g. Breaux & Wong, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 1998; Lieberman, 1995). The purpose of induction is the further development in newly qualified teachers (NQTs) of those skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that are necessary to carry out those roles effectively. Induction forms a bridging process between their initial teacher education programme (i.e. pre-service phase) and getting fully established as a

confident and competent practitioner. Coolahan (2002, p.26) has expressed concerns that whilst there have been a number of research studies conducted and experiments undertaken in the area there has tended to be a 'failure in follow-up consolidation'. Hopefully, the recent study introduced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) research into 'Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers' across a number of European countries will help to address this lacunae.

A number of these reports help to highlight some major developments taking place in various European countries. Some of these developments are presented here with a focus on the induction phase.

In the United Kingdom the induction arrangements in all four countries (i.e. England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) have been substantially revised and developed in recent years and so for various reasons. As Ross & Hutchings (2003, p. 53) report, the main pressures for these developments have been the following: it has been argued that securing an early foundation for continuing professional development is a necessary element of successful career development; that newly qualified teachers need particular attention and support that will build on their initial teacher training; that induction support will help teacher retention in the first year; and that a probationary period acts as a further check on teacher competence. In all cases the revisions relate to a general move to see professional development as a continuous process throughout the teaching career. Teachers in their induction build on the various competencies and standards that they would have been introduced during their initial teacher training. In Northern Ireland this is part of a continuous process of development extending into the second and third years of teaching.

The induction policy has two main principles: an entitlement to support and professional development for newly qualified teachers (NQTs), and assessment against defined national standards. NQTs have an individualized programme of support during their induction year from a designated induction tutor. This takes account of the NQTs strengths and areas for development as set out in the Career Entry Profile that each NQT brings from initial teacher training to the first teaching post. The programme includes observation of their teaching, watching more experienced teachers in different settings, and a professional review of progress at least every half term. The headteacher of their school plans that the NQT does not teach more than 90% of a normal timetable during the induction period. (In Scotland the amount of time that inductees have for teaching and professional development is 70% and 30% respectively.) This allows for the other professional activities to take place. Initial studies (Totterdell et al., 2002) show that for many NQTs the induction period is a supportive and positive experience, and acts as an incentive to stay in the profession. However, implementation is not

uniformly good, and a minority of inductees experience lack of support leading to stress and disaffection.

An interesting development in the UK is the introduction of Early Professional Development Schemes (in the second and third year of teaching), which follow the induction year. This is meant to serve as a bridge between induction and continuing professional development. In Wales, teachers get funding for this, whilst in Northern Ireland what is covered and developed may be submitted to gain accreditation towards postgraduate qualifications.

In France, one of the most recent developments is that newly qualified teachers are to benefit from at least five weeks of training at the University Institutes for Teacher Training (IUFM) during the first two years of service (Cros & Obin, 2003, p.40).

During the initial year of teaching, Chinese teachers are on 'probation'. They have a lighter teaching load in comparison to that of 'experienced' teachers (Paine, 1990), although one notes that even experienced teachers have a relatively 'light' load, having 6 to 12 lessons a week. The lighter load is meant to help teachers adjust to the school environment and to give beginning teachers more time for preparation. Schools are very helpful in the induction phase – the process of helping novice teachers is an active part of a school's faculty. Teachers work in teams – in groups containing a mix of teachers with varied experience. There is also a lot of mentoring in order to aid the beginning teacher (Paine, 1990).

In Japan, the boards of education provide induction training for beginning teachers. This takes place at education centres and within schools (internship training programmes) under the guidance of an experienced teacher selected by the school head (San, 1999).

Beginning teachers are faced with a number of challenges as soon as they take on full-time teaching in a school. Research shows that they are overwhelmed and exhausted dealing with non-teaching duties (Moreira, 1996, Humphrey, 2000). They also realise just how difficult it is to address students' diverse learning needs (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1989; Grudnoff & Tuck, 2001; Humphrey, 2000). Novice teachers feel inadequate with their lack of understanding of students they are about to teach, maybe reflecting different home backgrounds, different views and expectations about education (Schernpp et al., 1998).

Lack of curriculum knowledge (coverage and depth) (Elliot & Sinlarat, 1999; Parkinson & Rea, 1999) classroom management concerns (mainly discipline) (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2001), large number of students and disruptive or unmotivated students were other major challenges (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1989; Featherstone, 1993; Moreira, 1996; Fisher et al., 1999; Serow, Eaker & Forrest, 1994). Novice teachers also tend to be inflexible, that is they find it difficult to improvise or change plans to suit students' needs and behaviour (Featherstone,

1993; Fineer, Manross, Schernpp & Tan 1998). They also report finding it difficult to plan long-term and to select suitable material.

Beginning teachers often feel isolated and are reluctant to ask for help (Featherstone, 1993). They desire more assistance regarding school policies, procedures and teaching responsibilities (Wilkinson, 1997). This situation is further complicated when administrators are unresponsive and/or parents are uncooperative (Serow, Eaker & Forrest, 1994). This highlights an important point raised in research conducted by Bleach (1999) and Earley (2001) about the importance of novice teachers having time to establish relationships with experienced teachers or mentors. Beginning teachers also face problems when there is a lack of teaching materials and school resources such as lack of labs or equipment for experiments (Bullough, Knowles & Crow, 1989; Moreira, 1996).

These findings provide an informed picture of the professional needs of NQTs.

Other studies also help to highlight not just the needs of beginning teachers but also what the novice teacher brings with him/her. In Greece, for instance, *'good qualities'* of the teachers are specific attributes of people's mind or character like kindness and honesty. (Peters, 1977 as quoted in Standa, 1996, p. 115). In New Zealand, a paper by Grudnoff & Tuck (2001) shows particular qualities or strengths of beginning teachers such as enthusiasm, commitment, dedication and personal and professional worth. Beginning teachers tend to share ideas and work in teams as well as possess positive interpersonal skills. Chinese beginning teachers highlight 'knowledge mastery' as the main prerequisite, however, this is followed by character and affective skills (Paine, 1990). Japanese beginning teachers also perceive 'professional attitude' to be the most important skill for a teacher to have (San, 1999, p. 22). Teachers wish to be role models; they want to appear enthusiastic and to 'perform' well. Another important skill is to treat all students equally (Paine, 1990). Dedication and investment of time and energy are also considered to be important qualities in a teacher.

A number of studies reviewed support the argument that no initial teacher training programme can fully address the needs of prospective teachers. Neither should it be expected to do so. Often many, even within the teaching profession, assume that NQTs should be able to handle the myriad of responsibilities that make up school life. This supposition, by its very nature, goes against the principles of lifelong learning. Whilst appreciating the need to have a teaching force of high quality we need to bear in mind the ongoing nature of teaching as a vocation/profession and address them from a holistic perspective (i.e. addressing the pre-service, induction and ongoing professional development together rather than as separate entities) (Bezzina, 2002).

The sense of disappointment and powerlessness reported by novice teachers (e.g. Elliot & Sinlarat, 1999) have to be addressed within such a scenario, for as a beginning teacher stated there is a difference between being prepared to teach and actually teaching. There are some things such as management and daily routines which are important but they can not be necessarily taught in teacher education programmes (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2001, p. 12). A study by San (1999, pp.22-23) in Japan helps to contextualise such a view. Japanese beginning teachers (especially primary teachers) are concerned with a number of education-related items such as class management, student guidance, understanding students, school management and relationships with home and community. Secondary school teachers tend to be more concerned with subject related items such as subject knowledge, basic teaching techniques and the study and use of teaching aids. With experience novice teachers tend to overcome initial concerns and challenges.

However, what this study helps to emphasise, whilst reaffirming findings from other studies, is the focus on character and attitudes. The teachers' level of experience did not seem to make a difference regarding the following concerns: teacher's professional attitude, subject knowledge, basic teaching techniques, use of information materials, study and use of teaching aids, relationship with other teachers, and understanding present situations of school education. The personal disposition one has and adopts can be crucial and these may be issues of relevance across the different teacher training phases. For as Coolahan (2002, pp.13-14) argues:

> 'The teacher needs to have a deep understanding of her/himself, and of the nature of her/his work. She/he needs to have developed a wide range of professional skills in teaching, planning, assessment and personal relationships. She/he needs to have flexibility, be open to self renewal and be a life long learner. … be prepared to co-operate as a team member. … It is only intelligent, highly skilled, imaginative, caring and well educated teachers who will be able to respond satisfactorily to the demands placed on the education system …'

The transition or induction Phase involves schools helping newly qualified teachers to settle down in the classroom and into the teaching profession. This is a crucial period in the teachers' lives, since the outcome of the transition between university and the world of work will determine the teachers' attitudes throughout their career. According to Bleach (1999, p.11) the induction programme should include the following:

• Pre-employment induction (involving at least a day in school following appointment to begin to get to know whole-school and departmental procedures)

- A statement of entitlement, setting out school aims with regard to newly qualified teachers, the commitments and expectations
- Use of Career Entry Profiles
- A programme of internally offered INSET
- Encouragement to pursue externally offered INSET
- Observation of more experienced colleagues in order to explore good teaching and learning practice.

Newly qualified teachers go through various kinds of processes and developments during this stage. Kagan (1992, in Fisher et al., 1999, p. 136) noticed that novice teachers undertake three main tasks:

- Acquire knowledge of pupils
- Use that knowledge to modify and reconstruct their personal images of self as teacher
- Develop standard procedural routines that integrate classroom management and instruction.

What has all this got to say about teachers' ongoing professional development? In Kagan's study teachers were interviewed in order to find out what they think about professional development and they admitted various concerns. They argued that sometimes the content they learnt was inappropriate for schools or the quality of training was poor or not suited to all teachers. Moreover, follow up activities or coaching on practice in schools is rare. Professional development is often not given priority by headteachers, therefore the organisation and infrastructure dedicated to professional development is poor. Usually, professional development is targeted by centrally imposed innovations, therefore schools do not actually have a say in choosing a professional development programme. These interviews showed that teachers had clear ideas about what professional development should include. The main criteria by which the teachers judged INSET courses were that it should be relevant and appropriate to their needs and level of knowledge and skill, therefore supplying them with practical advice and suggestions for action (McMahon, 1998).

Professional development

What these studies have helped to identify is the need to focus on formation, during the pre-service stage but then has to be strengthened during the induction phase and throughout the teaching career.

Waters (1998a) sums up the challenge as falling within two domains - personal and professional development. Personal development involves the person as a whole, therefore before being a teacher, the individual is a person. Professional development deals with occupational role development, which enhances skills and knowledge, in order to be able to teach effectively. In teaching, personal and professional development affect each other. Experiencing job satisfaction, means feeling good about oneself. Feeling happy in one's life means feeling good at work. Waters (1998a) suggests that the best option to help teachers develop personally is by providing programmes that develop the inner resourcti of teachers as individuals. This could include aspects, such as, stress management, self-esteem, and assertiveness training. This will assist teachers to cope with pressures of the job.

Reflection, as already emphasized, plays a very important role in looking at the teacher as a whole person. Routman (2002) and Danielson & McGreal (2000), amongst others, argue that reflection is an important tool for teachers' professional development. Reflection includes teacher thinking, meta-cognition, creative learning, and self-directed and self-regulated learning. Reflection does not only mean thinking but also taking action. The process of reflection could be enhanced by providing experiences that improve self-esteem and self confidence through a gradual process.

Furthermore, as Prattle & Rury (1991) argue there is a need for mutual respect, open communication, shared success, mutual support which can help to nurture trust between teachers. The goal of teacher education should be to produce skilled '*practitioners*' who work with others. The concept of mentoring should also be extended throughout the career as it helps to keep the notion of reflection as an ongoing process (Beach & Pearson, 1998).

The introduction of portfolios may also assist teachers in their personal and professional development as it is a means of guiding oneself – one can revisit and revise ideas. Use of portfolios may lead to the development of new understandings, leading teachers to recognize links between different aspects of their life experience and formulating insights for future actions (Chetcuti & Grima, 2003).

It has also been noted that teachers do not tend to change their practice in line with research findings or state mandated change (Kelsay, 1991; Boostrom, Jackson & Hanson, 1994). There seems to be a communication gap between researchers and teachers. One possible way of overcoming this communication gap is to introduce teacher-led research in specific areas that they have identified and deem as important for their situation (Holmesland & Hostmark Tarrou, 2001). In Australia, situations have been established where university academics work with schools in collaborative research projects. The purpose of such research is

to enhance professional development of teachers and academics and to foster relationships between academics and teachers whilst providing opportunities for collaborative sharing of achievements and problems (Johnson et al., 1999; Sachs, 1997). In China, teachers often engage in research on teaching. Individual research sections have been set up in some of the elite schools in order to promote research, which can take place at the school itself (Paine, 1990). Research by Handscomb & MacBeath (2004) also suggests that teachers are being encouraged to become 'learners' and 'researchers' (as part of in-service teacher education); they can learn from their own observations but with instruction teachers can make more sense of their experiences.

Traditional professional development that takes place outside the school by their nature decontextualise the learning needs of teachers (and their students). More in-house, site-based managed programmes need to be organized and supported. Through a system of in-house procedures and also through networking or clustering (Bezzina, 2003; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1997) teacher educators and teachers work together to improve teaching and learning outcomes for students and teachers. Various initiatives where such an approach has been introduced have led to particular developments being noted (Boostrom, Jackson & Hanson, 1994; Johnson et al., 1999). School-based professional development may also help to address the concern raised by teachers that whilst they may be willing to address particular changes, they may lack the confidence or the skills to address them (Licklider, Storer, Lychosz, Wierseme & Fields, 1996).

Apart from participation in in-service training, teachers need to involve themselves in other responsibilities to enhance their learning. Recent developments include the Teacher2Teacher Programme, which engages teachers in pairs or peer coaching, or becoming mentors, tutors to other teacher (Earley, 2001). They could also involve themselves in the creation of websites, conferences, magazines and so forth.

Professional development in the Maltese context

The quality of education in Malta has become a major issue of debate and reform (Giordmaina, 2000; Ministry of Education, 2001). Various initiatives, mainly at policy making level and introduced through Ministerial initiatives have been undertaken especially over the last decade.

A study of the Maltese context shows that the pre-service education of prospective teachers is the sole responsibility of the Faculty of Education within the University of Malta. The Faculty runs a four-year Bachelor's degree in Education [B.Ed. (Hons.)] and a one-year P.G.C.E. course. On completion of

either of these two course teachers are certified as graduate teachers and can seek full-time employment in the elementary or secondary/high school sector.

On the other hand, the continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers is of two kinds:

*   ***Professional education*** – this entails the widening and deepening of a teacher's theoretical and research perspectives by undertaking advanced studies at the University (e.g. diploma, master's and doctoral degrees). The University also provides a variety of courses (e.g. certificate and diploma and master's programs), aimed at enhancing the professional skills and aptitudes of participants.

*   ***Professional training*** – this is aimed at the development of teachers' knowledge and skills relating to daily work (e.g. INSET courses, seminars). The Education Division (similar to a Local Education Authority in the United Kingdom) is the main agent as it provides teachers varied opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge base in specific areas. The Malta University Services, a business enterprise within the University structure, also offers training opportunities in specific areas throughout the school year.

The existing model therefore caters for two important phases in teacher PD – the pre-service phase and the ongoing professional development phase. This model has certain shortcomings. First, there is no link between the pre-service and ongoing PD of teachers. Once students graduate and are employed in the State or Non-State sector they are entrusted with a full teaching load as from day one. It is left entirely in their hands to pursue PD opportunities. Teachers are not provided with support mechanisms at the school site that help them settle down and be gradually induced into the teaching profession. Thus the induction phase is currently non-existent in Malta. Second, there are no organizational structures at the school-site that encourage and facilitate opportunities for immediate and sustained practice, classroom observation, collaboration and peer coaching (Bezzina, 2002).

The educational climate within the Faculty of Education has witnessed, especially over the last ten years, 'a shift from individualism to social relationships' (Bezzina & Camilleri, 1998) The B.Ed. (Hons.) programme is based on the following main features: 'participation, consultation, support, collaboration, reflection, motivation, openness and empowerment'. Various initiatives have been undertaken (e.g. Tomorrow's Teachers Project, 1997) which have helped both the individuals members within the Faculty but also the Faculty's own identity and character to grow.

Faculty members have, through a number of initiatives, explored ways and means of improving the initial teacher education programme, including seminal work in the areas of assessment and portfolios, an improved academic programme linking theory with practice, improved links with schools through stronger and better links with the education authorities and schools, reviewed student-teacher evaluation sheets which include formative forms of assessment (one which is based on the accumulation of competencies in identified domains and focused suggestions for improvement); mentoring courses for heads and envisaged ones for teachers, and a number of initiatives all with the intention of improving the programmes we have.

The Faculty, at the same time, encourages and supports undergraduate and post-graduate studies in various areas that have to do with teaching practice as they provide us with valuable researched information as to how we can enhance and make more relevant our programmes and possibly creating new ones that have been undertaken do tend to express some concerns that students have raised about the programme. Over the years, but especially over the last few years, there has been a concerted effort to encourage undergraduate students to explore areas of study that look into specific aspects of our course. The intent is that such information is then disseminated through various means. Over the past few years, in fact, we have introduced opportunities through seminars and showcases for undergraduates and postgraduates, to present their research findings in formal, organized sessions. This helps to create the appropriate environment for healthy debate.

According to one study (Lia & Mifsud, 2000) newly qualified teachers are of the opinion that the B.Ed. course does not adequately prepare them for most of the realities found in schools. The notion that teacher education should reflect reality was also brought out by Vassallo (2000). Her findings emphasise that since Teaching Practice provides the student teacher with hands on experience in schools, it is often the most valued experience during the four-year course. She argues that during teaching practice the student teachers are often under undue pressure since they have to develop competences which are often not practised in the schools themselves. On the other hand, from the study conducted by Astarita & Pirotta (1999), it resulted that other newly qualified teachers see the teaching practice phase as somewhat artificial and it did not provide realistic training in gaining control in the classroom.

Similar to findings in international studies, Maltese beginning teachers experience difficulties in discipline, classroom control and work overload. The transition also involves stress, uncertainty, frustration and sometimes despair. Teachers feel that they do not have enough support and sometimes they feel embarrassed to ask for help (Astarita & Pirotta, 1999).

From this brief review it appears that although teacher training courses in various countries are structured in different ways, there are many similarities. In brief, teacher education at the pre-service stage:

- Has limited impact on beginning teachers; teachers do not feel completely satisfied with the training they receive
- Needs to create better links between theory and practice
- Needs to include more or extended field experiences (teaching practice)

There are also similarities with regards to what teachers consider as important and there are also similarities regarding the constraints or challenges which teachers face. The main difference perhaps emerges when one compares the experiences of Asian teachers with those in other parts of the world. Asian teachers tend to give a lot of focus on becoming masters in their subject. However, in all cases it emerged that experience is essential for effective teaching; experience helps one to overcome difficulties faced in schools.

In the case of professional development, the issues raised were:

- Teachers may feel that they have a limited role with regards to professional development, that is, they cannot do much for themselves
- The need to explore the ongoing personal and professional development of teachers with a clear focus, especially in the initial years, on character formation
- The use of peer-coaching, mentoring, building a portfolio and involvement in research have been identified as means to enhance the teachers' ongoing formation.
- School-based initiatives within a culture of support and collaboration will help teachers to handle professional challenges both coming from within the school and external to the school.

The literature shows that beginning teachers tend to face the same difficulties and to value the same qualities. These similarities exist even though teachers undergo different types of preparation, end up teaching in different school environments, and work in countries with different mentalities and stages of historical, political and cultural development. This is not to say that there are no differences across the different countries, however, the similarities are more striking.

Within this context, conducting a study that would help the Faculty of Education understand what in fact Maltese beginning teachers face was deemed important. It was assumed that going back to cohorts that were in the

induction phase (i.e. the first three years of teaching) would provide us with valuable insights into current practices in two main areas: teacher preparation and teacher professional development. In the next section, an outline will be given, regarding the methodology used in order to carry out the research study. It will give an overview of the methods used and the cohort involved in the research.

Methodological approach

The decision was taken to conduct a questionnaire survey followed by semi-structured interviews (Bezzina & Stanyer, 2004). The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section dealt with the teachers' perceptions of their preparation (the B.Ed/PGCE course). The second section asked teachers to identify desirable skills and to identify the challenges they came across in their induction phase. The final section dealt with teachers' opinions about the importance of professional development and the opportunities available for teachers to develop as professionals.

Beginning teachers' perceptions were measured either through a ranking system (1 being the most important), or teachers were asked to select as many as they desired from a given list. Most of the questions were close-ended, although the respondents were given the opportunity to present suggestions.

The teachers involved in the particular study were selected from the cohort of teachers who graduated between 1999 and 2001 by adopting a random sampling procedure. There were 978 teachers in the cohort (B.Ed, PGCE, Primary and Secondary). Questionnaires were sent by post during February 2003 to 480 teachers. It was decided to mail to the participants' home address the questionnaires so that the respondents were free to answer in the comfort of their own home and probably had more time to reflect before answering. 261 (i.e. 54,4%) teachers responded to the questionnaire. Table 1 highlights the respondents according to years of experience, course, gender, school level and type of school.

As can be seen from Table 1 the majority of respondents came from those having three years experience with very low response rates from those having one or two years experience. They are definitely not representative of the cohort of graduates. This paper aims at presenting the main findings not across all the identified four variables (i.e. course followed, gender, school level and school type) but report what they authors deem to be significant within the current Maltese scenario.

TABLE 1: Respondents according to different cohort groups

According to years of experience	N	%
1 year	28	10,7
2 years	82	31,4
3 years	146	55,9

According to course	N	%
B.Ed	201	77,0
PGCE	60	23,0

According to gender	N	%
Female	173	67,8
Male	82	32,2

According to school level	N	%
Primary	105	39,2
Secondary	163	60,8

According to school type	N	%
Private	76	29,2
State	184	70,8

After the questionnaires had been analysed, 18 interviews were conducted. The interview questions were chosen, in order to elaborate on information derived from the questionnaires. The 18 teachers were chosen to represent the different categories identified in Table 1.

The majority of graduates (58%) describe the teacher training programme as effective, whilst the majority (70%) said it has helped them to become

professional. At the same time, the majority of respondents (93%) found that the course is rather different to the eventual realities of school life, describing it as 'too idealistic' (54%) and 'not practical enough' (51%). Interesting to note that with experience teachers found the course more practical, although still idealistic

In order to minimise the difference between the teacher training course and the realities faced in schools respondents forwarded a number of suggestion. The following list shows the highest responses:

1. Extension of TP (provided that qualified, experienced tutors may coach students and there is less pressure) (N=37)
2. Less theory, more practice (more hands-on experience) more concrete examples. You learn from experience (practical sessions beside TP) (N=34)
3. Tutors should be more in contact with teaching in classroom. Lecturers need to be put in classroom experience first and then come to lecture (N=24)
4. Lecturers should be appointed from amongst practicing teachers – teaching students of the same age as ours (N=22)
5. More classroom observation and variety of schools for TP ('good' schools as well as 'bad') More work in schools and tutorials regarding what has been observed (N=13)
6. Get together with teachers (from different schools) who have experience and exchange ideas and resources that can be used in various situations (N=10)
7. Some tutors and lecturers are not down-to-earth. (N=10)
8. Credits that apply to different realities in schools should be experienced (N=10)
9. More credits on practical issues – discipline and class management etc. (N=6)
10. Methodology units need to focus more on HOW to teach the particular unit/ content of the subject (more practical than theoretical) (N=5)

The respondents were asked to indicate how relevant they perceived the main components covered during their course. The responses are recorded in Table 2 with the main results highlighted in bold. *Teaching Practice* was indicated by the majority (83%) as the 'most relevant', followed by *subject content* (50%) and *psychology* (47%).

The respondents were also asked to identify courses they felt should be introduced at the pre-service stage. As a group beginning teachers felt the need to add First Aid (69,3%), Problem-solving skills (65,9%), relationship skills (54,0%) and Public Speaking (53,2%). The other options suggested to the teachers were chosen by less than 50% of the respondents. When the results were analysed, according to years of experience, all teachers with one year of experience felt the need to add Problem-solving skills (100%). This goes down drastically to 65,8%

and 69,2% respectively. The majority of teachers with one year of experience (89%) identified the need for training in relationship skills. This percentage decreased with experience. Overall, teachers with less experience tended to identify more needs.

TABLE 2: Perception of respondents as to the level of relevance of the various components of the course to their day-to-day teaching

Course elements	Most	Relevant	Not so relevant	Irrelevant
Psychology count	124	109	19	2
%	**47,5**	41,8	7,3	0,8
Sociology Count	44	142	59	8
%	16,9	**54,4**	22,6	3,1
Philosophy Count	12	55	127	54
%	4,6	21,1	**48,7**	20,7
Methodology Count	132	96	23	5
%	**50,6**	36,8	8,8	1,9
Teaching Practice Count	217	36	7	1
%	**83,1**	13,8	2,7	0,4
Subject Content Count	94	132	23	5
%	36,0	50,6	8,8	1,9

TABLE 3: Training needs identified by respondents according to years of experience

List	All Respondents		1 year of experience		2 years of experience		3 years of experience	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
First Aid	181	69,3	18	64,3	60	73,2	101	69,2
Problem-Solving Skills	172	65,9	28	100,0	54	65,8	94	64,3
Relationship skills	141	54,0	25	89,3	50	60,9	74	50,6
Public Speaking	139	53,2	24	85,7	45	54,9	86	58,9
I.T.	97	37,1	9	32,1	31	37,8	58	39,7
Extra methodology	92	35,2	8	28,6	43	52,4	45	30,8
Seminars & Workshops	82	31,4	7	25,0	22	26,8	50	34,2
Extracurricular credits	70	26,8	6	21,4	26	31,7	36	24,7
Extra subject content	63	24,1	7	25,0	26	31,7	29	19,9
Extra psychology	51	19,5	6	21,4	38	46,3	30	20,5

The majority of respondents (75 %) found teaching practice most helpful for their career. However, differences regarding choices made by teachers with different amounts of experience do not appear to be significant. Out of the three groups (one year, two years and three years of experience) the highest percentage of teachers who found Teaching Practice 'helpful' belongs to the group with two years of experience. The teachers with three years of experience had the highest percentage for the choice 'artificial' whereas teachers with one year of experience had the highest percentage for the option 'too restricted'.

TABLE 4: Perception re the value of Teaching Practice for respondents

	helpful	artificial	too restricted	too short	too long
Count – one year	21	2	3	1	0
%	77,8	7,4	11,1	3,7	0
Count – two years	69	4	4	4	1
%	84,1	4,9	4,9	4,9	1,2
Count – three years	99	22	10	15	0
%	66,7	15,3	7,3	10,7	0

85% reported that the expectations set/ demands made during the field practicum is not kept up once they graduate. The main reasons identified were time constraints (78%), teaching load (68%) and amount of corrections (49%).

Beginning teachers were asked to select (from a list) the qualities or skills they felt necessary for teachers to have. They were asked to rank three qualities in order of importance.

The majority of teachers felt the *'ability to motivate students'* was most important (93,1%) This was closely followed by '*being well-organised*' (91,2%). '*Good relationships*' with students and '*voice projection*' were the third most popular choice (90,4%) followed by '*efficient classroom management'* (89,3%). Quite a high number of skills/qualities were selected by more than 50% of the respondents. With regards to years of experience, the choices were not so different. However, teachers with one year of experience tended to perceive qualities and skills related to relationships with students as being more important (the ability to motivate students, the ability to make students comfortable especially low achievers and the ability to help students overcome difficulties). The teachers with two and three years of experience focused more on the importance of organisational skills and character (voice projection, efficient classroom management and leadership skills) although they do feel the importance of having good relationships with students. Whilst the ranking of the three most important qualities did not bring out any salient differences between the three cohorts one notes that the respondents with more experience gave less importance to issues such as: patience, flexibility, ability to evaluate one's performance, focusing on the positive and friendliness. Qualities which were actually highlighted more by the respondents with three years of experience were: ability to control one's emotions, putting students' needs first and charisma. The responses of all the respondents and the results according to years of experience have been collated in table 5.

The teachers were also asked to tick the challenges they faced when they started their career. They were asked to rank their choices from 1 to 5 (first being most difficult). The main challenges teachers identified were coping with mixed ability classes (78,9%), class discipline (66,3 %) and curriculum demands (58,6 %). Physical exhaustion also received a high response (54.8 %). The ranking shows that class discipline (26,4%) is the top concern. The second issue was coping with mixed ability classes (20,6%).

Asked to give reasons to these challenges the main choices were: not enough experience (60.9%), the course was not appropriate enough (41.8%), lack of support from the education authorities (31.4%). The results show a significant difference according to the respondents' experience. All teachers with different

TABLE 5: Qualities and skills needed by teachers as perceived by respondents

List	All Respondents		One year		Two years		Three years	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Ability to motivate	243	95,1	26	92,9	76	92,7	133	91,1
Well-organised	238	91,2	21	75,0	68	82,9	122	83,5
Voice projection	236	90,4	23	82,1	71	89,0	133	91,1
Good teacher-student relationships	236	90,4	25	89,3	74	90,2	131	89,7
Class management	233	89,3	23	82,1	72	87,8	130	89,0
Helping sts. overcome difficulties	222	85,1	25	89,3	69	84,1	121	82,9
Confidence	221	84,7	25	89,3	66	80,4	123	84,2
Patience	221	84,7	21	75,0	70	85,3	83	56,8
Making students comfortable	216	82,8	26	92,9	66	80,5	118	80,8
Leadership skills	212	81,2	18	64,3	70	85,4	121	82,9
Ability to involve students	211	80,8	22	78,6	68	82,9	115	78,8
Knowing subject/curriculum	208	79,7	23	82,1	67	81,7	112	76,7
Fairness	207	79,3	23	82,1	67	81,7	115	78,8
Co-operation	205	78,5	20	71,4	67	81,7	112	76,7
Likes teaching subject	205	78,5	23	82,1	62	75,6	114	78,1
Humour	204	78,1	21	75,0	62	75,6	95	65,6
Alertness	188	72,0	19	67,9	61	74,4	106	72,6
Letting sts. learn in their own way	185	70,9	21	75,0	63	76,8	99	67,8
Consistency	181	69,3	20	71,4	58	70,7	97	66,4
Punctuality	181	69,3	21	75,0	54	65,9	96	65,8
Flexibility	181	69,3	23	82,1	63	76,8	61	41,7
Make sure students understand	178	68,2	22	78,6	66	80,5	106	72,6
Ability to evaluate performance	174	66,6	21	75,0	67	81,7	92	63,0
Friendliness	172	65,9	21	75,0	53	64,6	84	57,5
Good listener	171	65,5	20	71,4	63	76,8	111	76,0
Ability to control one's emotions	169	64,8	19	67,9	56	68,2	118	80,8
Ability to focus on the positive	160	61,3	20	71,4	52	63,4	81	55,5
Ability to keep sts.' confidences	159	60,9	20	71,4	49	59,8	84	57,5
Charisma	158	60,5	19	67,9	54	65,9	128	87,7
Putting students' needs first	140	53,6	16	57,1	43	52,4	104	71,2
Kind/generous	139	53,3	16	57,1	45	54,9	75	51,4
Help students monitor progress	135	51,7	15	53,7	45	54,9	63	43,2
Ability to make allowances for students	128	49,0	16	57,1	34	41,5	78	47,9
Showing that one likes students	118	45,2	14	50,0	39	47,6	61	41,7
Stand up for students' rights	109	41,8	16	57,1	37	45,1	53	36,3

years of experience gave the same reasons: '*not enough experience*' (64.3, 65.9 and 57.5%) as first, '*the course was not appropriate enough*' (42.9, 46.3, 40.4%) as second and '*lack of support from education authorities*' (32.1, 30.5, 32.2%) as third concern. However, one can also note that the percentages of less-experienced teachers tend to be higher for all the options (see Table 6).

TABLE 6: Reasons as to the challenges teachers face in class

Reasons	All Respondents		One year		Two years		Three years	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Not enough experience	159	60,9	18	64,3	54	65,9	84	57,5
Course was not appropriate enough	109	41,8	12	42,9	38	46,3	59	40,4
Lack of support from Education Authorities	82	31,4	9	32,1	25	30,5	47	32,2
Lack of support from School Leadership Team	73	28,0	7	25,0	18	22,0	48	32,9
Tension at school	58	22,2	8	28,6	21	25,6	28	19,2
Tension in one's personal life	16	6,1	1	3,6	6	7,3	9	6,2

The teachers were asked whether they wished they had more support as soon as they embarked on their career. The majority wanted more help. A significant difference in the responses were observed when the group was categorised according to sector, that is, private and government. Table 7 shows that 81% of State school teachers identified the need for support as against 69% of private school teachers.

TABLE 7: Perceived need for support by sector in which teaching

	All respondents		Private		State	
	Count	**%**	**Count**	**%**	**Count**	**%**
Yes	203	79,5	52	68,4	148	80,5
No	51	20	24	31,6	35	19
Not sure	1	0,5	0	0,0	1	0,5

Asked to identify what support would address their needs, the three main preferences were resources, teamwork, and an experienced colleague (Table 8). Again, a marked difference was present in the results for private and state school teachers. The percentage of state school teachers who chose resources was twice that of private school teachers. Teamwork and experienced colleague were considered more important by the state school teachers (47,3% and 42,4% for state school teachers as against 32,9% and 30,3% respectively for private school teachers).

TABLE 8: Type of support needed by sector in which teaching

Type of support	All Respondents		Private		State	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Resources	119	45,6	18	23,7	85	46,2
Teamwork	115	44,1	25	32,9	87	47,3
An experienced colleague	100	38,2	23	30,3	78	42,4
Co-operation from school management team	72	27,6	23	30,3	52	28,3
Support from education authorities	57	21,8	17	12,4	42	22,8
Mentor	50	19,2	14	18,4	35	19,0
Support from the government	16	6,1	8	10,5	12	6,5
Help from family or friends	12	4,6	6	7,9	8	4,3

Analysing the results according to years of experience showed that teachers made similar choices. Teachers with one year of experience feel more need for a mentor (35,7%) than their colleagues with two (15,9%) or three years (17,8%) years of experience.

The majority of teachers believed professional development as necessary to keep up-to-date with developments in the teaching profession. No differences were present within different groups of the cohort. The highest choices were '*co-operation*' (70.5%), '*self-evaluation*' (62.1%) and '*further study*' (60.9%). As can be seen from Table 9, co-operation is more important for less experienced teachers.

TABLE 9: Professional development support identified according to years of experience

Choices	All Respondents		One year		Two years		Three years	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Co-operation	184	70,5	21	75,0	60	73,2	95	65,1
Self-evaluation	162	62,1	16	57,1	52	63,4	89	61,0
Further Study	159	60,9	16	57,1	50	61,0	85	58,2
Developing a professional portfolio	45	17,2	5	17,9	6	7,3	32	21,9

45% of teachers identified '*INSET courses*' as the main provider for their professional development, followed by '*seminars*' and '*meetings*'. '*Team teaching*', '*workshops*' and '*conferences*' were very low, below the 20 percentile. The main reasons identified were '*time constraints*' (28%), '*reluctance to change'* (22%) and '*lack of financial resources'* (21%). Teachers who have just one year of experience also identified '*lack of co-operation*' as being one of the top two reasons for the lack of professional development opportunities in their school.

Discussion

Pre-service phase

Responses showed that over half of beginning teachers perceive the B.Ed. (Hons.)/PGCE programme as being effective. This positive attitude was similar to the findings made by Grudnoff and Tuck (2001) in their New Zealand studies. The majority felt that the course does not completely make one a professional. That teachers feel that they are not completely professional may be considered to be a genuine and positive reply. A teacher is always in the making. On the other hand, the fact that 12,6% of the respondents considered themselves to be professionals is worrying. This may mean that they do not feel the need to improve as professionals!

The majority of the respondents viewed the teaching programme as being different from the reality in schools. This had already been noted in previous local studies conducted by Lia and Mifsud (2000) and Vassallo (2000). This shows that teachers in Malta have the same difficulties as their colleagues abroad when it comes to linking theory to practice. They are similar to teachers abroad, with regards to their naivety and unrealistic optimism (discussed by Bullough & Stokes; 1994, Pineau, 1994). They have a similar sense of what Veenman (1984) describes as 'reality shock' – 'the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of classroom life' (p.143).

Respondents believe the course was too idealistic, especially by those with more years of experience. This reflects the need for a symbiotic relationship between expectations and school realities. Therefore, the teacher education programme needs to get closer to schools. The most popular suggestion was to extend the period of Teaching Practice. The need for more field practice was also felt by teachers abroad (Grudnoff & Tuck, 2001). This recommendation was followed by the wish for less theory and more practice. This could be related to the inexperienced teachers' inability to make links between what is taught at university and what they experience at school as mentioned earlier. The third and fourth most common suggestions are related. Both suggestions imply the wish for lecturers (and/or tutors) who teach in schools (or who have taught recently in schools). This was similar to the concept of the clinical faculty as described by Cornbleuth and Ellsworth (1994). A possible solution could be to start a teacher-to-teacher programme similar to those in the UK (Earley, 2001) however, instead of teachers coaching beginning teachers, they could also help teach those still at the pre-service stage.

Looking at these suggestions, it appears that teachers want more exposure and more experiences through engagement in schools. They feel the need for more practice and need more help to see how pedagogies, concepts and theories may be applied in different school situations.

In relation to the various course components taught during the programme, the majority of teachers consider psychology to be quite relevant. It is worth noting that females consider psychology to be more relevant than their male colleagues. This could be linked to traditional views of what males and females consider to be important for their development. Females also consider psychology to help one recognise problems that children might have. In the case of sociology, just over half of the respondents consider this topic to be relevant whilst almost a quarter consider it to be not so relevant.

The majority of teachers find philosophy to be not so relevant. Similarly, in the USA, it is felt that teachers do not consider philosophy to be relevant as teachers are unable to make links between theory and classroom practice (Pineau, 1994).

In Malta, theories/ ideas raised and discussed in lectures but they are not given the opportunities to try out what they have reflected upon. Also, worth noting is that secondary teachers considered philosophy to be more relevant than those teachers who teach in primary schools. Could this be since secondary teachers teach older students, and therefore may be able to apply philosophical ideas in order to deal with problematic situations appropriately?

Slightly over half of the teachers believe methodology to be most relevant. Since Maltese teachers seem to value methodology lectures (mainly because of their immediate sense of application), if educational theories (psychological, sociological and philosophical) were integrated with methodological approaches and subject teaching, teachers may start finding the latter more relevant to their teaching. A modular approach to teaching courses at the university may help redress this issue.

Teaching Practice was considered to be the most relevant domain by a large majority of respondents. The positive response towards the role that teaching practice has within the programme could be utilized in order to make other educational disciplines more relevant for teachers. This could be achieved by adopting a more hands-on approach to teaching these disciplines.

The respondents also found that courses in 'relationship skills', 'public speaking' and 'problem-solving' should be introduced. Studies by Fisher et al., (1999) and Handscomb and MacBeath (2004) emphasised that relationships are vital, especially at the beginning of one's career.

In the case of teachers with different amounts of experience, it emerged that teachers with two years of experience found teaching practice to be more helpful than their colleagues. This difference could be due to the different stages that teachers pass through. The first year is, more often than not, a '*shock*' (this was confirmed by teachers during the interview), therefore, teaching practice is not completely viewed as having been positive. In the second year of teaching, teachers are settling down in the school environment, and therefore may actually appreciate the field experience. In the third year, however, teachers' expectations and attitudes may change again, according to the school context and situations they find themselves in. They may end up believing that the reality of school life is such that it cannot be truly addressed in a teaching practice session.

Respondents identified different challenges. Teachers with less experience found interpersonal relationships to be more problematic than teachers with three years of experience. Teachers who teach in secondary schools emphasised inadequate working conditions and students' characteristics as the main challenges. Responses tended to reflect the environment teachers were in.

Transition

Asked to choose qualities or skills that teachers should possess the majority of teachers felt that a teacher needs to be able to motivate, be well-organised, be a person who establishes good relationships, needs to have good voice projection and is able to manage a classroom efficiently.

Teachers with one year experience emphasised qualities related to establishing good relationships with students. However, teachers with two or three years of experience focused more on the importance of organisational skills and character. Perhaps teachers with more experience find it easier to build relationships with students, that is, they have more experience on how to act and react to students' needs and discipline. Secondary school teachers chose leadership skills and the need to like the subject more than primary school teachers. These differences make sense. Secondary school teachers face a wide variety of students with different abilities and needs. Managing students during adolescence and motivating them is challenging. Secondary teachers also teach a specific subject and their love, or otherwise, for the subject is easily apparent and will affect the way they relate with students. Another difference between primary and secondary teachers is that primary teachers gave more importance to letting students learn in their own ways. Primary teachers get to know their students better than teachers at the secondary level (they spend the whole day with the same group whereas secondary school teachers teach a variety of classes), therefore they are more likely to discover the particular learning styles that students have. In the case of private and government schoolteachers, the difference in choice is more one of degree. Private school teachers marked the qualities more than their state school colleagues. This difference emerged prominently with regards to the following qualities and skills: humour, being a good listener, having confidence, making sure students understand, showing that one likes teenagers, the ability to focus on the positive, keeping the matters shared by students private, and students' ability to evaluate one's work. This could be related to the different school environment that private school teachers find themselves in. Private schools tend to set higher expectations for their students. This in turn leads teachers to have their own personal high expectations. Since the students are more receptive, it is easier to try out new ideas and to relax (be humorous, develop relationships with students, and so forth). With regards to gender, the difference was that females gave more importance to these qualities. This difference could be related to the different upbringing that females and males have. Females give more importance to having good relationships with the people they are working with (in this case the students). Males tend to be less affected by those around them. However, the low regard for these qualities and skills contradict an earlier result, where males' desire

for relationship skills (as a university study unit) was higher than that of their female colleagues.

The teachers were asked to mark the major challenges that they faced as beginning teachers. Responses showed that the greatest emphasis was put on class discipline (very similar to the trend abroad), coping with mixed ability classes and curriculum demands (related to what is felt by teachers in Asian countries and in the UK) and physical exhaustion. Differences in choices were found amongst the three groups. Private school teachers emphasised fitting into the school system more than state school teachers. The school system in government schools and private schools are quite different and teachers who have had no experience in private schools (during teaching practice) may find it difficult to adapt and accept different ideas, different cultures and structures. Teachers in State schools felt the challenges of discipline and the sense of surviving from day to day more than those in private schools. In the case of discipline, problems are more often associated with State schools rather than private schools. The more challenging schools will not be easy for any teacher to settle in, let alone a beginning teacher. Survival becomes key and hence this relates to the importance that beginners give to establishing relationships as this will help them to be accepted by the students. Teaching comes later. Interesting to note is that even teachers with two and three years of experience still felt the same. This goes to show on the one hand the difficulty of settling down in challenging schools, and more so that later on as the years go by, other factors come into play in determining how teachers relate to students.

Professional Development

The majority of teachers expressed the desire for more support. This is in line with a similar study conducted in Malta by Astarita & Pirotta (1999). However, as already noted private school teachers did not feel the need for support as much as State school teachers. This study identified a number of support mechanisms that would be helpful. These included resources, teamwork and the help of an experienced colleague. In the case of teachers with one year of experience, they choose support from an experienced colleague more than teachers with two or more years of experience.

When asked whether professional development was necessary in order to keep up-to-date with developments in the teaching profession, the majority of teachers believed this to be true. The best way to implement professional development is through co-operation. However, teachers interviewed remarked that co-operation is only possible if all the teachers work together. It is difficult to meet in secondary schools and even more so in primary schools. Co-operation was also seen to

extend to the students, their parents, the Head of School, the Faculty of Education and the Ministry of Education, the latter as a provider of resources or information.

The three cohorts considered co-operation to be the best way to improve professional development. However, the enthusiasm for co-operation decreased with amount of experience.

The teachers were also asked to show how professional development was being implemented. The respondents identified INSET courses, seminars and meetings as the three main ways that professional development was being addressed. However, the percentages are not very high. The current options available to teachers are few and most of them are not offered within the school context. A culture of collaboration within schools is still lacking (Bezzina & Camilleri, 2001).

The main reasons sited as to why professional development practices were not implemented were time constraints, reluctance to change, and lack of financial resources. However, one should note that the percentages as a whole are quite low (under 30%). The percentages increase according to the amount of experience that a teacher had. A reason for this may be that teachers with more experience become disaffected with the system. One may also note that teachers with one year of experience felt that lack of co-operation was the main reason for professional development not being implemented. This response can be linked to an earlier response regarding professional development, where teachers with one year of experience felt the need for co-operation more than their more experienced colleagues. 'Lack of interest' on the part of the school was given more importance by State school teachers whilst private school teachers emphasised 'lack of research'.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to present some of the main results of this research study. It did not include the findings from the interview sessions which helped to reinforce and enlighten some of the points presented in the questionnaire survey. A number of salient points and issues and possible explanations were sought. In brief, the analysis of results highlighted the following areas:

- Teachers felt that the course was effective but they were not under the impression that the course automatically turned them into professionals (which implies the formative nature of the profession).
- Beginning teachers felt the difference between university and school realities which can be linked to the gap between theory and practice or teachers' inability to make a connection themselves.

- Although there is a disparity between university studies and school realities, teachers' perceived that differences could be minimized.
- The course could be improved through a more inquiry-based approach with more focus on field practice and other experiences in school involving lecturers and teachers.
- Teaching Practice, methodology and psychology (in order of preference) were considered to be the most relevant course elements as teachers found it easy to apply this knowledge in schools.
- Sociology and subject content were considered only as being relevant (as opposed to most relevant) because they are not always applicable.
- Philosophy, considered to be the most difficult course element to apply to school realities, was marked as being not so relevant and was an area which teachers feel a more practical orientation is required.
- Desire for certain credits (First Aid, Problem Solving Skills, Relationship Skills and Public Skills) showed that teachers identified the varied and demanding skills needed by teachers.
- Teaching Practice was considered to be helpful, yet it was not really considered to reflect the true work of a teacher given the different demands expected of beginning teachers once they take on a full time post.
- The main qualities identified by beginning teachers included the ability to motivate students, being well-organised, good teacher-student relationships, classroom management and voice projection.
- The main challenges identified included coping with mixed ability groups, class discipline, curriculum implementation, and physical exhaustion
- After graduating teachers wanted more support mainly in the form of resources, teamwork or an experienced colleague/ mentor.
- Teachers wanted more support especially in the form of co-operation amongst teachers.
- Only a low percentage of teachers felt that professional development is being adequately implemented (through INSET, seminars and meetings). The current opportunities for growth centre round INSET courses and do not necessarily address teacher needs and do not cover all areas teachers require training in. The rest pursue in the main academic programmes that will help them gain further qualifications. The respondents identify 'fear of change' and 'inertia' as possible reasons as to why professional development is not seriously addressed within the schools.

Whilst the beginning teachers involved in this study perceived the course to be effective they also identified areas for improvement at all three stages - the pre-service, induction and professional development. At the pre-service stage, the

course needs to be closer to reality, hence a stronger bond between the university course and schools need to be further nurtured. During the induction phase teachers need more school-based support and co-operative environments. Professional development needs to be given more importance.

After reflecting upon the issues highlighted in the literature and analyzing the results of the local study, the following recommendations are being presented:

- There should be a continuation between all three levels of teacher development. This could be achieved through closer links between university and schools even after a teacher has graduated.
- Developing a Career Profile that teachers develop throughout their teaching career.
- Stronger and more concrete ways of getting closer to schools need to be introduced to establish links in areas such as curriculum design and development, class management and pedagogy.
- Upon graduation teachers should be given support through a mentor or a school support system (e.g. a member of the school management team should assist newly qualified teachers in the initial years).
- The area of professional development needs to be reviewed. More opportunities and possibilities for teachers to develop further need to be explored. Not much provision or variety of provision is being utilized and varied systems can be introduced to facilitate the learning that can take place, particularly in schools.

The authors are of the opinion that if these issues are taken seriously we will be able to:

a. address the current gap between the three stages of development
b. introduce a culture of ongoing professional development, irrespective of context
c. link education/learning at the pre-service stage with the initial and on-going professional development phase
d. link educators in their different stages in similar learning engagements.

Naturally this research study is far from conclusive. In itself the study has a number of limitations, in that it studied three cohorts that have recently graduated. If other age gaps had been introduced that may have brought with it some more interesting findings. In that regard, it may have been wiser to group the initial two-three years together and compare and contrast them with those who have been

in the profession say between 5 and 8 years and then 10 and 15 years. Such an investigation would provide interesting, maybe even different feedback. Definitely a methodological approach worth exploring.

At the same time we feel confident that this study has gone some way as to introduce the views that teachers have about the area that has been reviewed – the professional development of teachers. They provide us with some interesting insights which can help us not only to improve the teacher education programme from a number of levels, but it also helps to highlight ways and means of bringing the teacher training institution closer to schools, identifies areas for further research, and also indicate clearly the need that the induction phase is a crucial one with special needs that are currently not catered for.

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INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC THEORIES
AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN GREECE
(1976-77)

ANTHI K. PROVATA

Abstract – *In this article I will try to demonstrate that the rift between Greek political parties concerning problems in educational reform in the period 1976-77 was created to a great extent by different interpretations of the new international economic theories which were being expounded in the 70's. During the period of transition from a military regime (1974) to the consolidation of democracy (1981), revolutionary and radical political ideas flourished. The neo-Marxist theory of economics and the theory of dependence had a great influence on Greek political thought. The model of 'modernization' had been called into question by the Left political parties. The problem was not the issue of development but the kind of development. This lack of agreement not only set limits to the possibilities of successful educational reform in Greece but also posed new questions about the role of education in economic development. The discussion on development and education will be correlated with the changes that were taking place in economy, due to the fact that throughout history education has always been closely allied with productivity, either directly or indirectly.*

Introduction

1 nternational interest in the conditions of the poor countries in the decades following World War II brought the concept of development to the attention of administrators and policy makers. The modern theory of development dates back to the end of the Second World War. Interest in the problem of development was growing because several European countries were facing serious problems with their economy. Furthermore, a number of European colonies in Asia and Africa had begun their struggle towards political independence. The beginning of the modern development theory concerning the poor countries should be seen in the light of the development of the economic discipline (Blomstrom & Hettne, 1984) According to these authors we can identify four distinct phases in the history of economic thought: the classical, the neo-classical, the Keynesian and the development of the Marxist theory.

Neo-classical economic theories and human capital theory

One of the most important neo-classical economic theories, Solow's model, formed the corner stone of the theory of economic convergence between rich and poor countries. According to this theory, the poor countries could rise from poverty if they increased their capital per head and thus were enabled to converge with the rich countries. Industrialization and capital formation would be the key factors in economic and social growth (Cypher & Dietz, 1997, Lucas, 1988).

One of the key factors towards achieving this goal is human capital. The increase and the improvement of the quality of the human capital have a significant influence on economic growth in a number of ways: First, it increases productivity, as well as increasing the pool of knowledge and the level of technology. The human capital therefore, combined with a quantitative increase and qualitative improvement, will have a direct bearing on productivity. Expenses that are an integral part of human capital such as education, health care and occupational training become an investment, playing a positive role in the social qualitative improvement. A decline in criminal activity, the development of an ecological conscience, as well as a growth in political participation would be the positive consequences of this investment. On a second level, and as a result of all these factors, is the positive economic environment which creates a favorable climate for business activity and gives an impulse to the economic growth of the country (Schultz, 1963, 1971).

For all the reasons mentioned so far, the discussion on development and education has been correlated with the changes in economy. According to the 'Human capital' theory, education is also an individually and socially productive investment. Laborers can be considered capitalists on account of their investment in the acquisition of knowledge and skill, which has given them ownership of economically valuable capacities. The 'human capital' theory brings basic social institutions (such as schooling and the family), previously related to the purely cultural, into the realm of economic analysis (Bowles & Gintis, 1975).

According to this theory, every worker is a capitalist and the most important capital for every country is the human capital. It follows that education performs a vital function within the school system which carries out economically relevant activities related to screening as well as preordaining worker productivity (Schultz, 1963, 1982). Many countries came to adopt the view that schooling, occupational training, child rearing and healthcare perform dual economic functions and play an essential if indirect role in production.

Human capital and the Greek economy

Amongst these countries was Greece. In Greece people at all points of the political spectrum agreed about the economic value of education and supported the extension of the educational system. The economic literature on 'Human Capital' was full of articles appraising the economic value of education (Zolotas, 1966, 1966, 1973). During the period 1950-70 the establishment of technical and vocational education in Greece was one of the most interesting changes connected with the theory of human capital and development. In addition, there was agreement among the political parties about the theory of human capital and about the role of the educational system in the economy. X. Zolotas, director of the Bank of Greece began his famous book: 'The Economic Development and Technical Education' with a strong argument that: education is an investment and this investment would prove more useful than all other investments. (Zolotas, 1966)

Moreover, Niki Dendrinou Antonakaki of the National Radical Union (ERE) political party and E. Papanoutsos of the Union Center (E.K) political party, agreed that the development of the educational system would contribute to the development of the economy (Dedrinou-Antonacaki, 1959, 1959, Papanoutsos, 1960, 1976).

But the development of the Greek economy during the 20th century, in particular from the end of the civil war until 1980, was not satisfactory. Average income per head was low, unemployment and underemployment were extensive and the disparities in the standard of living between Athens and the rest of the country were considerable. A combination of factors had caused Greece to be worried about the quality of its manpower. It was conscious that labor productivity was low, that many workers were underemployed, that regional development was hampered by a lack of skilled workers (Babanacis, 1981, 122) Taking the above factors into consideration, the importance of education, particularly scientific and technical, for economic progress was recognized by all the political parties. To this end an attempt was made to define the major educational goals necessitated by the economic development plans. The strategy proposed was threefold: first, to try to match the output of the various levels and branches of the education system to the anticipated needs of the market; second, to prepare as many young people as possible for direct transition from school to a job; third, to discourage the rush for university admission by according vocational and technical education a higher status in the public esteem (Kazamias, 1978).

The post-World War II history of Greek education has been marked by efforts at reform with these strategies in mind. The main concern of the government was to modernize the educational system and make it more efficient, working within a policy framework which was based on the belief that education must take into

account the techno-economic needs of society. Underlying this approach, according to Kazamias, there was the assumption that the expansion and improvement of the quality of education, particularly of technical and vocational schooling, promotes economic development without the necessity of making substantial changes in the socio-economic structure. Such a developmental reformist conception of education was not limited to Greek policy makers (Kazamias, 1978).

The educational reform in Greece 1976-77 and dependency theory

One of the most important educational reforms was that of 1976-77. The political debates concerning educational changes went hand in hand with discussions about the problem of development in Greece. The main problem was the kind of economic development, argued most vociferously by the left political parties of the socialists (PASOK) and communists (KKE). Until 1970 development had been understood from an evolutionary perspective. Industrialization, increasing the export of primary products and the improvement of human capital by educational reform, was the solution for development. The main conceptual approach of the government of New Democracy (1974-1981) was the economist notions and assumptions of the development value of education, especially of technical and vocational schooling and of education as investment in human capital.

In their view, school has the potential of ensuring progress, social stability and social welfare, as well as of increasing economic wealth and development. (Ralles, 1976). To serve this purpose the main concern of the government was to modernize the educational system and make it more efficient and relevant to the needs of the labor market. In reality this involved efforts to develop the technical and vocational education sector (Contogiannopoulos, 1977).

'At the same time, the country had to prepare to face stern competition within the EEC and to ensure that the qualifications of its workers were efficiently correlated to the labor market, as in the case of the workers of the other nine countries. A major purpose of the reform of 1977 was thus to close the gap between education and the labor market. The strategy of development was linked with the quality of manpower, because the economic growth was linked with industrialization (Institute of Economic and Industrial Research, 1979). However, the political parties were not in agreement on that point. The opposition parties of the left (PASOK and KKE) criticized the 'developmental logic' of the government. The most important feature of this school of thought was the link between the

economy and the establishment of vocational and technical education. The socialists and the communists supported that the intent of the policy to divert the majority of students into technical and vocational education was 'to create many skilled workmen to operate a multi national and foreign industry'. (Koutsoheras, 1977, Gontikas, 1977).

Furthermore, the selection at the age of 15 to General Lyceum or to Technical and Vocational Education was, as a member of KKE added: 'to ensure the supply of cheap and specialized labor for employers' (Florakes, 1976).

According to them, the basic intention of reform was not the development of the autonomy economy but the development of a dependence economy. Socialists of PASOK and Communists of KKE believed that there was a relationship between a dependence capitalist economy in Greece and the development of technical and vocational education. These institutions were set up to train manpower for the purpose of the development of foreign countries, because the Greek economy had become 'deformed' and followed asymmetrical development. On the ideological front, apart from the theories of development and of human capital, the most prevalent in Greece in the period 1950-70, another theory, that of dependence, made its appearance in the decades of the 70's and 80's, especially from within the ranks of the Left Political Parties, the socialists (PASOK) and the communists (KKE).

According to this theory, the nature of the Greek State and the nature of the Greek socio-economic structural dimension in the second half of the 20th century was on the periphery of capitalism. The distinction between developed and underdeveloped countries as well as the difference between 'metropolis' and 'periphery' was the basic theoretical overview of Socialist (PASOK) and Communist (KKE) politics. These political parties criticized sharply the reforms of New Democracy and gave rise to much controversy connected with the economic character of education and the theory of 'human capital'. There was much rhetoric about the development value of education, especially of technical and vocational schooling. On the other hand the same reforms in 1964-65, with the same ideology and emphasis on the economic value of education had been accepted by all the political parties. (Kazamias, 1990).

This phenomenon is connected with the character of Greek politics and the deformed character of Greek socio-economic formation in the 70's. The transition from a military regime to democracy created an entirely new situation in political thought. The Government of New Democracy and the prime minister, Karamanlis, had been in active complicity with the restrictive legislation that had marred Greek politics ever since the Civil War. He undoubtedly restored many civil liberties that had been absent since the Civil War and most significantly he ended the proscription of the Communist party. On the other side, after the junta period, in

Greece, revolutionary and radical political ideas were being freely expressed. The belief of opposition parties that the target of N.D. politics and especially education policy was to further the interests of rich countries and that there was a relationship between the economic interests of these countries and the manpower training, set limits to the possibilities of successful education reform. The political party of PASOK and especially the leader of the political movement Andreas Papandreou, described the economic situation of Greece as a consequence of exploitation by the metropolis of the periphery (Amin, 1980). According to this theory, Greece was a country of on the periphery (like Syria or Livanos) and she had an underdeveloped economy. Many Greek socialist authors supported that the Greek economy had, until the late 70's, the classical characteristics of underdevelopment (Fotopoulos, 1985; Evangelinides, 1980, Mouzelis, 1973).

> 'According to these authors, the Greek economy was characterized by a technologically advanced, highly dynamic, foreign-controlled manufacturing sector, enjoying enormous privileges granted to it by the Greek State, and not being organically linked with the rest of the economy so that the beneficial effects of its growth were not sufficiently diffused over the small commodity agricultural and artisan sector but were to a large extent transferred abroad. Greek private capital, following its preference for quick and easy profits, had continued to orient itself towards tourism, shipping, services and others activities. At the same time the industrial production was concentrated in the traditional industrial branches of textiles, food, and so on'. (Fotopoulos, 1985, Mouzelis, 1978)

In the industrial sector the key dynamic industries were controlled by foreign capital, leaving the traditional branches of textiles, tobacco and agro-industries to domestic capital and control (Scorpia-Hoipel, 1979).

During the military regime the policy of International Agencies and World Bank in Greece had emphasized the development of economy but they had little relevance to the problems of the Greek economy (Vergidis, 1982). Consequently, the problems such as low industrial production and the problems of low absorption of the labor market had not been properly examined. The model of 'modernization' which was based on the model of industrial countries linked development in education with development of the economy and didn't argue the international dimension of the labour market, the inequalities in social economy and the political content. In the year 1972-75 the Greek economy was closely dependent on the European Continent as 57,8 per cent of its imports came from Europe. Moreover, 50 per cent of its total exports went to EEC countries. According to Evagelinides (1980), due to the fact that Greece was heavily dependent on capital and intermediate goods from the European core-countries,

its balance of trade deficit was increasing. From $248,7 million in 1958 it rose to $ 2.916,1 million in 1975. The financing of this deficit occurred in 'invisible' items of the balance of payments through the import of capital and aid that took different forms (private capital, emigrant remittances as well as other private entrepreneurial capital, bank loans, government loans, foreign travel. All the above activities, contributed to a national socio-economic structure characterised by a combination of the underdevelopment phenomena while at the same time depriving the country of its most dynamic and productive human resources. (Evangelinides, 1980). According to such authors these features of the Greek economy are characteristic of other countries of the European periphery, such as Spain and Portugal and the countries of Latin America. (Evangelinides, 1980).

Dependency theories

The intellectual context for the emergence of the dependency theory was created by Latin American economists, notably Prebish and his colleagues at the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (Prebisch, 1950) who argued that the region's reliance on the export of primary commodities was not, as was then believed, providing the stimulus for economic growth. Instead of mobilizing capital for development, export prices had stagnated and, faced with the continued importation of manufactured goods from the industrial countries, the trade deficit had increased. This the ECLA economists attributed to the purposeful manipulation of commodity prices by industrialists in the rich countries. Faced with rising labour costs in their own countries, they depressed the cost of raw materials to maintain a comparative advantage (Cardoso, 1972).

These ideas were well received by the great majority of Latin American social scientists, most of whom had been schooled in what O'Brien (1973) described as an anti-imperialist and anti-Marxist intellectual tradition. However, according to Hardiman & Midgley (1988), the central ideas of the ECLA economists were soon reformulated and developed into the now familiar theory of dependency. By the 1960's, many proponents of the new approach believed that the role of foreign capital in the creation of new industries had increased the dependence. Among the leading proponents of the dependency school were Furtado (1963), Sunkel (1969), Cardoso (1972), Dos Santos (1970) and Frank (1967, 1969). These authors succeeded in displacing the modernization school from its position of unrivalled supremacy in academic circles and in drawing attention to the problems of international inequality and unequal trade which subsequently became a major issue in development policy. But as Hardiman & Midgley claimed, not all

dependency theorists have been pleased about the adoption of their ideas in United Nations resolutions and declarations on this subject or by the Word Bank and other agencies, which they regard as instruments of international capitalism (Hardiman & Midgley, 1988).

The supporters of the theory agreed that the analysis of the causes of underdevelopment cannot be undertaken at the national level, on account of its being a product of the unequal relationships between different economies. The meaning of dependency was defined by T. Dos Santos in the following words:

> 'By dependence we mean a situation in which the economy of certain countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy to which the former is subjected. The relation of interdependence between two or more economies and between these and world trade, assumes the form of dependence when some countries (the Dominant ones) can expand and can be self sustaining, while other countries (the dependent ones) can do this only as a reflection of that expansion, which can have either a positive or a negative effect on their immediate development. The productive system in the underdeveloped countries is essentially determined by these international relations. In the first place, the need to conserve the agrarian or mining export structure generates a combination between more advanced economic centers that extract surplus value from the more backward sectors and also between internal 'metropolitan' centers and internal interdependent 'colonial' centers. The unequal and combined character of capitalist development at the international level is reproduced internally in an acute form. In the second place the industrial and technological structure responds more closely to the interests of the multinational corporations than to internal developmental need' (T. Dos Santos, 1970, p. 231).

The conclusion drawn by Hardiman & Midgley is that dependency theorists view underdevelopment not as an original, passive condition but as the result of a historical process which expropriated the wealth of the subjugated satellite countries of what Prebisch had originally called the 'periphery' to provide the resources for the industrialization of the metropolitan countries of the 'centre' (Prebisch, 1950).

Cooperation with the developed countries would not thus constitute a step towards development but, as Frank argued, would be 'the development of underdevelopment' (Frank, 1967). The kind of development was the basic problem of poor countries. Raul Prebisch and Celso Furtado, two veterans of Latin American development economics, argued that although industrialization had been initiated in the more industrialized countries of Latin America, it did not automatically continue by itself and the economic growth had not the same results

as those in developed countries. According to a report of the ECLA on the social situation in Latin America published in the 1960's the picture of development was pessimistic: on the one hand industrialization and growth and on the other unemployment and marginalization (Blomstrom & Hettne, 1984).

In addition, Osvaldo Sunkel argued that: 'Underdevelopment should rather be thought of as part of the global historical process of development. Underdevelopment and development are two sides of the same universal process. …their geographic expression is manifested in two polarizations: first the polarization of the world between the rich industrialized and developed nations on the one hand and the underdeveloped backward, poor, peripheral and dependent nations on the other; secondly, the internal polarization between advanced, modern industries and the so called 'traditional sector' (Blomstrom & Hettne, 1984, p.50).

According to the above, the theory of dependence was the intellectual framework of the left political parties in Greece (PASOK and KKE). They linked development with the benefits of multi-national industries and they believed also that there was a relationship between dependence capitalist economy in Greece and development of technical and vocational education. The idea of an 'autonomy' development and the cooperation with the other countries of the periphery was put forward. We must also add that there were important differences between the traditional Marxist thinking of the KKE and the socialist thinking of PASOK. The traditional Marxist approach focused on the concept of development, according to which the analysis of the development of a society must begin with the process of production and the relations of production. The conflict between the forces and the relations of production is the reason for all historical changes.

According to Marx, the less developed countries would develop a more autonomous kind of capitalism. Marx did not believe in a continued expansion of European imperialism, but in order to reach a state of socialism all societies, including the less developed ones, were required to pass the various stages of capitalist development.

Furthermore, there was no difference between the kind of capitalism developed in the colonies and the kind developed in Europe. The industrially more developed country shows the less developed one merely an image of its own future (Blomstrom & Hettne, 1984).

Another approach to the subject of development of poor countries was Lenin's approach. Lenin argued that in the progression of capitalism in the less developed countries the colonial ties to the mother country would be broken and those countries would also become politically independent (Blomstrom & Hettne, 1984).

Greek traditional Marxists believe that in the case of underdeveloped countries the reasons for underdevelopment were related to the conditions of production and not to the relations established by trade between the industrial countries and those of the third world. On the other hand the socialists of PASOK argued that the conflict between rich and poor countries would be the reason for underdevelopment and only the cooperation with other poor countries with common benefits would be the solution. Nevertheless, both the political parties supported a more self-rule – 'autonomous' Greek economy.

Conclusion

Although the lack of agreement between the government and the other political parties created obstacles to the possibilities of successful educational reform and especially to the success of the 'developmental logic' in Greece during the period 1976-77, the underdevelopment debate tackled important issues. Firstly, the left political parties of the PASOK and KKE challenged the theory of development stressing the differences between the rich and poor countries. Secondly, they focused on the kind of development and the relations between rich and poor countries and thirdly, they linked the establishment of technical and vocational education with the position of Greece in the international diversion of the labour market. For these reasons the political debate of this period had a great influence on all others posterior educational reforms.

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'HOW APPROPRIATE IS THIS TASK FOR MY CLASS?' EXPLORING TEACHERS' CLASSROOM DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AS THEY WAVER BETWEEN 'PRACTICAL' AND 'IDEAL' POSITIONS

MICHAEL A. BUHAGIAR

Abstract – *This paper is based on a qualitative study that explored the classroom assessment practices of twelve mathematics teachers in a Maltese sixth form college. As part of the data gathering process, these teachers were presented with four tasks (which varied along a continuum from the traditional examination-type to the non-traditional type) and were asked to comment about the appropriateness of using them inside their classroom. The analysis revealed that teachers' task selection largely reflects what they consider 'to work within their context' rather than what they consider as 'ideal'. Three levels of context that influence, both on their own and interactively, the way in which teachers make their classroom decisions were identified. These are the national, school and personal contexts.*

Situating the paper within teacher thinking research

$\mathcal{T}$he term 'teacher thinking', albeit used fairly loosely by educational researchers, 'has come to unite a body of research which, although starting from a variety of different backgrounds and focusing on diverse educational issues, has a common concern with the ways in which knowledge is actively acquired and used by teachers and the circumstances that affect its acquisition and employment' (Calderhead, 1987, pp. 4-5). It is particularly relevant here that the 'teacher thinking movement', which started in the 1970s, has created a view of teachers as conscious 'decision makers' (see Clark, 1986; cited in Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). This encourages us to recognise teachers as active agents in the development of their own practice, as decision-makers using their specialist knowledge to guide their actions in particular situations, and underlines the autonomous and responsible aspects of teachers' work (Calderhead, 1987). The recognition of teacher agency, which 'is based on relationships teachers make between personal meanings, their work and their acquisition of new ways of teaching' (Sawyer, 2001, p. 40), opposes the traditional perception of teaching as the mastery of a series of effective teaching behaviours that can be observed, measured and quantified at will. Teacher thinking research consequently acknowledges the inadequacy of logico-deductive methods (i.e., research that is

mainly based on measuring a predetermined set of variables to test hypotheses through complex statistical techniques) for capturing the spontaneity and complexity of teachers (Cole, 1997), and recognises the need for more qualitative data gathering processes (Day, Pope & Denicolo, 1990). As it is guided by a more integrated notion of teacher thought and action (Cole, 1997), teacher thinking research has shifted the focus from studies on teacher behaviour to studies on teacher thought processes (Fang, 1996).

The findings presented in this paper form part of a more comprehensive study in which I explored the classroom assessment practices of twelve sixth form teachers teaching pure mathematics at Intermediate Level[1] (see Buhagiar, 2005). I will however limit myself here to gaining insights into teachers' decision-making processes during the planning stage as they ponder about the appropriateness for classroom use of different forms of tasks. When I speak of 'decisions at the planning stage', I include both the thought processes that teachers engage in prior to classroom interactions as well as the thought processes or reflections that they engage in after classroom interactions (Fang, 1996). Being mostly concerned with the decision-making phase, I am particularly interested in shedding light on the reasons that motivate teachers to select their classroom tasks rather than in evaluating the effectiveness of these choices. Put differently, I am 'not so much striving for the disclosure of 'the' effective teacher, but for the explanation and understanding of teaching processes as they are' (Halkes & Olson, 1984, p. 1). In line with teacher thinking research, my concern with how teachers cope with the complexities of their teaching-learning situations translates itself in 'trying to understand and interpret ways in which teachers make sense of and adjust to and create the educational environment within their schools and classrooms' (Pope, 1993, p. 22).

Teachers as decision-makers inside classrooms

Each day, teachers make thousands of choices that reflect a constellation of forces and processes (Sawyer, 2001). But whilst the degree of decision-making power held by teachers varies widely, depending on the type of power and activities examined, teachers enjoy the highest levels of autonomy over instruction inside the classroom (Ingersoll, 1996). They are in fact autonomous to take decisions in the classroom based upon their view of what is in the best interest of the student (Day, 1999). Teachers' decision-making power however remains relative as 'Schools are marked by a 'traditional influence pattern' in which decisions are differentiated by locale and position … administrators making strategic decisions outside of classrooms and teachers make operational decisions

inside classrooms' (Conley, 1991, pp. 237-238; cited in Ingersoll, 1996). As teachers make many decisions inside classrooms and do so quickly, often with little time for deliberation (Hargreaves, 1993), it may become hard for them to reflect-in-action (i.e., during instruction). On the other hand, teachers may find more time to reflect-on-action once outside the classroom. However, both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action are necessary conditions for teacher learning, and are vital elements in teachers' professional development (Day, 1993b). At the same time, although we know that teacher reflection is linked with the decision-making process, 'We do not know very much … about how it is that teachers make decisions based upon reflection' (Day, 1993a, p. 137).

As classrooms are busy places in which teachers face complex situations and competing demands, teaching decisions are often a compromise amongst costs and benefits (Calderhead, 1987). Teacher 'practical deliberation' – which Wiggins (1978; cited in Clark & Yinger, 1987) describes as 'a process of searching for an 'adequate specification' of the situation, a constant re-making and re-evaluation of concerns, an evolving conception of the point of acting, and a reciprocal relation between the agent and the world' (p. 100) – is thus an important component of the decision-making process. At issue is the understanding that 'Better decisions tend to be made when the person making the decision considers the consequences of the decision in advance of actually making it' (Anderson, 2003, p. 148). In the process of making practical decisions, teachers formulate alternative problems and solutions – a process that actively involves their curriculum orientations or values (Hannay & Seller, 1990). In particular, teachers' planning and decision-making are governed by what they know about teaching, learning and curriculum, and about the manifestations of these phenomena in classroom events (Carter & Doyle, 1987).

Along similar lines, Wilson, Shulman & Richert (1987) maintain that teachers draw upon many types of 'prior knowledge' when making decisions. In particular, they mention: (i) teacher's *content knowledge* that includes their understanding of the facts or concepts within their subject domain, as well as their grasp of the structures of the subject matter; (ii) teachers' *knowledge of educational aims, goals and purposes*; (iii) teachers' *knowledge of other content*, that is, knowledge that is not directly related to the discipline they are teaching; (iv) teachers' *general pedagogical knowledge*, that is, knowledge of pedagogical principles and techniques that is not bound by topic or subject matter; (v) teachers' *knowledge of learners* that includes knowledge of student characteristics and cognitions, as well as knowledge of motivational and developmental aspects of how students learn; and (vi) teachers' *curricular knowledge*, that is, their understanding of the programmes and materials designed for the teaching of particular topics and subjects at a given level. But then, in certain cases, teachers' classroom decisions

may be driven by the logic of classroom management (e.g., keeping students busy at work) rather than by the logic of content (e.g., presenting students with meaningful experiences) (Carter & Doyle, 1987).

The varied knowledge base upon which teachers base their decisions, apart from pointing towards the complexity of classroom practice, makes it also possible

> '… to recognise, for instance, that the knowledge teachers use in planning is highly specific, relating to particular children, school contexts or curriculum materials; to recognise that planning also involves issues of values and beliefs; to recognise that much of the knowledge that teachers use can only have been abstracted from lengthy experience … .' (Calderhead, 1993, p. 15)

Teachers' decisions are moreover based on a simple yet deeply influential 'sense of practicality' – they have a powerful sense of what works and what doesn't for 'this' teacher in 'this' context (Hargreaves, 1994). This renders their decision-making processes inherently situated. Their 'situational appreciation' – which is characterised by the ability to bring 'to bear upon the situation the greatest number of genuinely pertinent concerns and genuinely relevant considerations commensurate with the importance of the deliberative context' (Wiggins, 1978, pp. 146-147; cited in Clark & Yinger, 1987) – consequently represents one of the keys to teachers' practical deliberation. Likewise, teachers' 'situational understanding' plays a fundamental role during the planning and decision-making processes (see Elliott, 1993). This situational understanding develops as teachers initially discriminate and then synthesise the practically significant elements of a situation into a unified and coherent picture of the whole. By so doing, teachers create from their understanding of concrete and complex practical situations a holistic picture that is meaningful for them. Notwithstanding this, 'Teachers' classroom decisions usually are not 'once and for all'. Rather, they are made incrementally and adjusted on the basis of subsequent information' (Shavelson, Webb & Burstein, 1986, p. 77; cited in Fang, 1996). In other words, as an individual's understanding of his or her situation may change over time, nothing is beyond question or can be taken for granted (Elliott, 1993). It so appears that teachers' decisions and situational understanding are two ongoing and highly interactive processes that inform and influence each other:

> 'In reflecting in action the practitioner is observing the situation as (s)he participates in it. (S)he is gathering evidence, analysing it and synthesizing his/her insights in a form which inform his/her subsequent decisions. These in turn change the situation in ways which reveal previously hidden

dimensions of the situation that are significant for practice. … [Thus] reflection not only informs decision making but decision making informs reflection and is an integral component of an inquiry which aims to develop situational understanding.' (Elliott, 1993, p. 69)

The success of this interactive and reciprocally illuminative coexistence between teachers' situational understanding and decision-making processes clearly depends on the acclaimed notions of reflection and reflective practice by teachers. But even though 'reflective teaching offers promise of an alternative conceptualisation that appropriately recognizes the thoughtful and professional aspect of teachers work' (Calderhead & Gates, 1993; cited in Cole, 1997), schools still do not encourage or support reflective practitioners or reflective practice (Cole, 1997).

Presenting the tasks

The American National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) (1995), which defines 'task' as 'An authoritatively specified or assigned, purposeful, contextualized activity' (p. 91), strongly recommends the use of 'mathematically significant tasks'. 'These activities provide all students with opportunities to formulate problems, reason mathematically, make connections among mathematical ideas, and communicate about mathematics' (NCTM, 1995, p. 11). This is in line with current learning theories that configure the teacher's role as that of helping students find, create and negotiate their meanings by providing them with meaningful and purposeful activities from the students' perspective (Murphy, 1996). Classroom tasks need to be 'authentic' – in the sense that they make explicit links between school learning and out-of-school practices – if they are to facilitate the development of students' understandings into knowledge that can be applied in real-life contexts (Murphy, 1996). Moreover, 'The assessment tasks that a teacher selects will send clear messages to students in the class … about what parts of mathematics are important to learn' (Bryant & Driscoll, 1998, p. 34). All this shows how critical is the choice of task for achieving the learning goals (Black, 1998). The teacher's role as a task selector clearly carries with it great responsibilities that call for a skilled and multi-dimensional foresight on his or her part, including reckoning with constraints of time, of facilities, and of the starting-point of the pupils (Black, 1998).

Black (1998) points out that any task can be specified to students in a variety of ways. For instance, he suggests that the degree to which the task is left open or closed can be varied by defining more or less clearly the nature of its outcome. Whilst closed tasks are linked to standard textbook questions, school-learned

methods and rules (i.e., tasks that encourage the development of procedural knowledge in students), open tasks are linked to practical and investigative work that requires students to make their own decisions, plan their own routes through tasks, chose methods, and apply their mathematical knowledge (i.e., tasks that encourage the development of conceptual knowledge) (Boaler, 1998). Moreover, closed tasks, which typically only have a single correct answer (i.e., close-ended), have a high element of scaffolding (i.e., closed-middle) built in them so that the task structure itself leads students towards a solution through known algorithms and procedures. On the other hand, open tasks, which are typically not tied to one correct answer (open-ended), are either less scaffolded or unscaffolded (open-middle).

Black & Wiliam (1998) refer to a scheme developed by Dumas-Carre & Larcher in 1987 that can be used to produce a comparative and descriptive analysis of tasks:

> 'This scheme distinguished tasks which (a) presented a specific situation identical to the one studied, or (b) presented a 'typical' problem but not one identical to the one studied, requiring identification of the appropriate algorithm and its use, rather than exact replication of an earlier procedure as in (a), and (c) a quite new problem requiring new reasoning and construction of a new approach, deploying established knowledge in a new way.' (pp. 31-32)

Clearly, as one moves from (a) to (c), the level of student thinking involved in working with such tasks evolves from lower level (characterised by mere recall of factual information) to higher level (characterised by the application, analysis and synthesis of factual knowledge in order to solve new problems). It may be that the thinking level demanded by a task is inversely proportional to its classroom use because, as Carter and Doyle (1987) point out, higher order tasks are rarely given in class. And when potentially demanding tasks are set, teachers avoid classroom conflicts by 'redefining or simplifying task demands' (Doyle, 1988). This teacher reluctance to spend time on what are basically nonroutine activities characterised by conceptual understanding, explorations, construction of meanings and invention results from their perception (which is often correct) that these are irrelevant to students' examinations (Goldin, 1992).

To explore what teachers consider to be appropriate tasks for classroom use, I presented the twelve participants in the study with a set of four tasks that I picked (and adapted in one case) from various sources (see Appendix I). Basing myself on deliberative theory, according to which curriculum decisions involve generating alternatives and selecting an alternative based on reasoned judgement (see Reid, 1978; cited in Hannay & Seller, 1990), my idea was to gain insights into

teachers' reasoned judgements or decision-making processes as they 'juggle' with my four pre-selected alternatives or tasks. Moving from Task 1 to Task 4, the nature of the tasks evolves along a continuum from the traditional examination-type to the non-traditional type. In particular, Task 1 and Task 2 may be described as 'routine' or 'traditional examination-type' tasks, with Task 1 being close-ended and highly scaffolded, and Task 2 being similarly close-ended but less highly scaffolded. On the other hand, Task 3 and Task 4 are 'nonroutine' tasks. Whilst both are unscaffolded, Task 3 is close-ended and Task 4 is open-ended. In addition, Task 1 and Task 2 may be categorised as lower order tasks as they only require lower level thinking from students, whilst Task 3 and Task 4 are higher order tasks as they require higher level thinking from students.

Gathering and analysing the evidence

The teachers in the study (which spread over three years of fieldwork) taught the Pure Mathematics at Intermediate level (PMI) option in a Maltese sixth form college. Albeit not all of them had teaching qualifications, all were mathematics content specialists of at least first-degree level, and represented a reasonable good mix with regards to gender, age and teaching experience. A case study methodology was chosen as it offered me 'a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon. Anchored in real-life situations, the case study results in a rich and holistic account of a phenomenon' (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). I worked within a reflexive research framework, viewing the research design as a reflexive process that operates throughout every stage of the project. Within my emergent and integrated research design that draws on ethnographic principles, the data collection, hypotheses construction and theory building were not three separate phases, but were interwoven into one another. Whilst in the field, I utilised the complete set of qualitative data collection methods mentioned by Patton (1990), namely: (i) in-depth, open-ended interviews (I interviewed each PMI teacher individually on three different occasions); (ii) direct observations (I kept a 'research journal' in which I recorded observations, both inside and outside the classrooms, together with my reflections); and (iii) written documents (both official and personal ones).

The evidence reported here is however limited to parts of the semi-structured interview (see Merriam, 1998) in which the participants expressed their views about the appropriateness of the four tasks for classroom use. The interpretations, though, are embedded within and reflect my knowledge and analyses of the wider research data. Seeing the interview as 'a purposeful conversation … between two

people … that is directed by one in order to get information' (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 135), I presented the teachers during the third and final interview with the four tasks, each on a separate size A4 paper. After allowing them ample time to read through all the tasks, to reflect and to ask for any clarifications, I invited the teachers to share with me their thoughts. I was particularly interested to learn whether and how they would consider using these tasks in their classrooms, and to understand the motivations behind their decisions. Typically, the teachers indulged in both singular and comparative analysis of the four tasks, often citing factors within their teaching environment to explain their positions. More importantly, our conversations often served as a catalyst for broader insights, well beyond the specificity of the four tasks themselves, into what PMI teachers consider as appropriate classroom tasks from both 'practical' and 'ideal' perspectives.

Every effort was made in the study to follow the canons of qualitative research. First, I tried as a researcher to act in ways that are ethically acceptable. In particular, I strove for a research relationship with each teacher (all names are pseudonyms) that underlines 'respect for the rights of the individual whose privacy is not invaded and who is not harmed, deceived, betrayed or exploited' (Burgess, 1989, p. 60). Second, I was concerned that the meanings and perceptions of the teachers are allowed to emerge. Thus, once the interviews were recorded and transcribed fully, the participants were encouraged to go over their transcripts and to make any alterations they wished. However, my initial efforts to submit the analysis of the data to the teachers in order to check the interpretations made and to generate further insights (see Broadfoot, 1996) had to be discontinued once I realised that the participants were primarily interested in identifying 'who was saying or doing what'. Finally, although in the field there is no definite point at which data collection stops and analysis begins (Patton, 1990), I started my data analysis proper (i.e., when, after sensing that I had tapped all the available evidence, I felt the need to organise it and to start making sense out of it) by reviewing (through reading in most cases) and reflecting upon the various data sources collected during the study. As I immersed myself within the data, literally months on end, I began coding into what I am calling 'units of meaning'. During this process, I attached my initial isolated meanings and understandings to the interview transcript phrases and sentences, observational notes and the documentary sources. As the units of meaning began to pile up from this cocktail of evidential sources, I gradually started to notice new links and meanings within and amongst the different data sources. As a result, localised meanings began evolving into more general themes. These new and deeper understandings eventually led to my data interpretation proper.

The 'wishes', 'ifs' and 'buts' of teachers' decision-making

In line with Calderhead's (1993) observation that the knowledge that teachers use in planning is highly specific, the analysis of the data suggests that context related factors play a major motivational influence on teachers as they deliberate and decide upon the appropriateness of particular tasks for classroom use. The word 'context' is used here in a wide sense to include the national (e.g., external assessment system) and the school (e.g., contact time with students) contexts, as well as the teachers' personal 'conceptual context' (see Grossman & Stodolsky, 1999). This wide definition permits me to include teachers' values (e.g., the type of tasks they consider worthwhile) and beliefs (e.g., their views about students) as an integral component of the 'context' in which they operate. I have divided the results and interpretations into two sections. In the first section, I analyse the participants' reactions to the four tasks and summarise their subsequent decisions. In the second section, I adopt a more holistic perspective to explore the contextual underpinnings that help explain their 'reasoned' decisions

(i) Teachers' reactions and decisions

Most teachers tended to classify the four tasks under two general categories. That is, those similar to the work they normally set in class, namely Tasks 1 and 2, and those that are different, namely Tasks 3 and 4. By doing so, the teachers pushed the ensuing discussion towards the two far ends of the routine-nonroutine task continuum rather than along its full stretch as I had originally intended when selecting the four tasks. This unforeseen dichotomisation channelled our discussions and my subsequent interpretations strongly within the realities of their work environment. Andrew expressed this 'crude' task division very clearly:

> *Tasks 1 and 2 … (at least the 'usual' parts of Task 2) … are very much related to what we do in class … but this does not apply to Tasks 3 and 4!*

This typical comment indicates the pervasive use within PMI classrooms of closed, routine, examination-type tasks that normally do not require students to go beyond mere factual recall of procedures learned previously in class – a reality that echoes Carter and Doyle's (1987) assertion that higher order tasks are rarely given in class. It thus appears that, according to the scheme developed by Dumas-Carre and Larcher (see Black & Wiliam, 1998), PMI students are being exposed to tasks reminiscent of categories 'a' and 'b', but not 'c'. This practice (which is likely to encourage students to develop procedural, rather than conceptual, mathematical knowledge) goes against the current emphasis on the application of tasks that are

mathematically significant (see NCTM, 1995) and authentic (see Murphy, 1996). These are tasks that facilitate the development of students' mathematical understandings into outside classroom usable knowledge. Basing myself on teachers' task specific comments (which I have summarised hereunder), particularly with regards to their usability inside classrooms, I tend to think that this situation is very unlikely to change in the foreseeable future unless the 'context' in which teachers operate evolves into a 'more permitting' one.

TASK 1: Describing the task as 'typical', 'normal', 'standard', 'traditional', and even 'classic', the teachers unanimously commented that it is appropriate for various classroom functions, be it classwork, homework or class tests. Their positive reception was invariably linked to the notion that this task 'fits the system'. They argued that Task 1 is a worthwhile classroom activity as it:

- is the method type (i.e., once students identify the correct method, the solution follows without difficulty) and is well structured (i.e., the task structure itself guides students towards the solution);
- serves good practice (being so typical of textbook and examination questions) to prepare for the examination ;
- integrates two mathematics topics (i.e., Partial Fractions & Integration) – something that they value highly.

Although all the teachers spoke in favour of using Task 1, I could notice however that their favourable comments still sounded exceedingly 'dry'. Not only did they speak very briefly about Task 1, at least when compared to the other tasks, but also without much 'enthusiasm'. Above all, I sensed nothing more than 'routine acceptance' on their part. This is how Ray transmitted this feeling:

> *There's really nothing much I could say about it … it's quite simple and fair … there are no tricks involved … I think it's OK.*

TASK 2: The teachers generally agreed that this task could be used with PMI classes, especially if some of its parts are either adapted or eliminated. Their suggestions as to how it can be made more appropriate for classroom use included:

- not to replicate information, as this may confuse students (i.e., to give the volume either as 'half a litre' or '500 cm^3', not both);
- make the task more 'direct' by asking students to 'minimise the surface area';
- removal of diagram (considered too childish with 16+ students);

- not to require students to state their 'assumptions' and to discuss the 'shape of the can' (things that could however be discussed informally in class).

To justify their proposed changes, the teachers argued that their students would have difficulty understanding long descriptive tasks written in English. They also pointed out that examination questions are usually very direct and do not require students either to state assumptions or to analyse particular shapes. For certain, their suggestions presented a strategy to make Task 2 'fit the system' by rendering it more traditional or routine. Mario helped me to understand this point:

> *If you had to remove the complications of the 'assumptions' and the 'shape discussion' bit, Task 2 would become a normal, run of the mill problem … then you could even use it in a class test.*

A few teachers did appreciate however that the task, as presented, encourages students also to think as opposed to merely recalling and using 'past' information. But these teachers, even though they saw this as a desirable outcome, still expressed fear that the original task would be 'too much' for their students. Indeed, they concurred with their colleagues that, to render the task more appropriate, it should be stripped of its 'thinking' parts before it is presented to students.

TASK 3: This activity was highly acclaimed by most teachers. For instance, Andrew argued that Task 3 not only informs the teacher about how students think, but also helps students to develop their mathematical thinking. But some teachers again expressed doubts about their students' ability to tackle such descriptive tasks in English. As the teachers read through the task and started considering ways in which it can be tackled, it became invariably apparent that this task presented a 'real' challenge to both their students and themselves. Carmel elaborated on this feeling:

> *I sincerely think that if I had to give my students something like this, I would first have to think quite a lot myself before even I could work it out!*

The need for teachers to actually 'think' before proceeding with the solution places this task apart from the routine ones that they normally present to their students. Indeed, routine tasks need hardly stretch the students themselves more than the barest minimum before they establish and follow some well-known 'solution procedure'. In other words, typical classroom tasks hardly require any real thinking from students, let alone teachers. Ironically, in spite of its many recognised merits, the teachers seemed unwilling to use it extensively in their classrooms. They claimed to consider using similar tasks very occasionally at

best, and only as basis for teacher-led classroom discussions. Unlike Task 2, not only does Task 3 not fit within the system, but the teachers also appeared unable to come up with any suggestions of how to make it fit. This 'failure' to adapt Task 3 to fit the system may well explain why most of them claimed to prefer excluding similar tasks from their practice.

TASK 4: Most teachers described Task 4 as interesting and challenging, and also acknowledged that this task would stimulate students to think mathematically. Notwithstanding this, only a few of them said that they would consider using similar tasks, even if only occasionally, with their PMI classes. There was also a general consensus amongst these few that should such a task be used in class, it would have to be during a teacher-led classroom discussion. A couple of teachers remarked that there was 'something missing' in the task, namely that no measurements had been provided. These teachers argued that measurements should be added, as students would otherwise have problems in dealing with it. Renzo had this to say:

> *I find Task 4 a little ambiguous! Even if you've told them that the tent must be big enough for two adults to sleep in, what can students do without any measurements?*

As with Tasks 2 and 3, the suggestion to add 'measurements' appears to be an attempt on teachers' part to rewrite the task in a more traditional 'teacher-and-student-friendly' form. The intention here was probably to downsize the 'uncertainty' of this unscaffolded and open-ended activity (i.e., all reasonable answers are judged to be correct) by turning it into a close-ended one (i.e., only one specific answer is correct).

(ii) Understanding teachers' decisions from a contextual perspective

The reactions and decisions reported above show a clear teacher preference for the application of the more traditional tasks inside classrooms. In particular, it appears that the further a task moves away from the traditional end of the routine-nonroutine continuum, the lesser is the likelihood that teachers would want to use it. It was further noted that teachers, whenever possible, tend to 'reformulate' tasks through small alterations – their way of 'saving what is saveable' in an effort to render tasks less nonroutine and thus more acceptable for classroom use. Teachers' efforts in this direction cannot however be taken as an indication of what they consider to be the 'ideal' task Indeed, with so many contexts influencing the choices that teachers make in relation to practice (Sawyer, 2001), their decisions

are often characterised by compromises (Calderhead, 1987). More than anything else, it seems that teachers tend to decide and act in a very context conscious manner. The present analysis has identified in fact three levels of context that influence, both on their own and interactively, the way in which teachers make their classroom decisions. These are the national, school and personal contexts.

The National Context: The study data suggests that teachers' selection of classroom tasks is influenced by outside school factors (which in Malta, given its size and still essentially centralised educational system[2], are frequently national ones). The single most pressing influence amongst them is external assessment that, in the case of the PMI option, consists of a summative examination characterised by routine questions. Such questions – which are usually scaffolded and certainly close-ended – tend to be easily identifiable either within a specific syllabus topic or a number of topics with 'well-established' links. This structure generally directs students towards a 'known' solution procedure from a range of class-taught ones. This is how Rita crystallised this widespread link between external assessment (read 'examination') and teachers' perception of task appropriateness for classroom use:

> *I would use Tasks 1 and 2 as they are examination-type questions … using them would serve as good practice for the examination … The fact that I have never seen questions in an examination paper like Tasks 3 and 4 holds me back from using them in class.*

One teacher even declared a 'resistance' to dealing with tasks that are not directly linked to the examination. Angelo said:

> *I only make use of MATSEC examination-type questions in class … when students ask me about questions that are not this type, I tell them to forget all about them. There's no point in working them!*

With most teachers, a task (just like Tasks 3 and 4) that fails to satisfy the canons of traditional examination questions gets automatically excluded from the classroom. This exclusion is better understood once one appreciates that in Malta, where 'a failure in exams is almost always judged as a failure of the family' (Calleja, 1988, p. 32), examination success is considered crucial. Suffices to say that although all the participants spoke very appreciatively of the benefits of higher order thinking tasks, many of them remain unwilling to use them. That is, at least until external assessment (or the 'system', as Matthew put it) starts reflecting such levels of thinking. Renzo, like some others, admitted to using nonroutine tasks only just then:

> *Once examinations start including similar questions, we would then include them in class, as there are many positive things that we can get out of them.*

But it still does not appear that things would 'really' change by simply introducing higher level thinking questions in external examinations. The externally set PMI syllabus was in fact identified by a number of teachers as a limiting factor on their task selection. Claiming that the syllabus is 'vast' and 'time consuming', these teachers argued that the use of nonroutine tasks, however mathematically worthwhile, would take too much of their limited classroom time and would risk syllabus coverage. Matthew spoke firmly against this possibility:

> *Task 3 would take up a whole lesson … that's just not possible! We must keep in mind that there's a syllabus to be covered … with such investigative questions, however much they stimulate students to think, we would end up covering only half of it.*

Some teachers also referred to their 'disaffection' with the Ordinary Level mathematics syllabus to explain their classroom exclusion of nonroutine tasks. A rather common view held amongst the participants was that the secondary mathematics syllabus does not equip students well enough to face the higher intellectual demands of the more open tasks. Secondary school mathematics is seen to fail students both with regards to the manner in which it accustoms them to do mathematics and the inadequacy of its content knowledge. Andrew elucidated the effects of the first point:

> *Students are accustomed to work things out by using some formula or recipe … this is something that they bring over with them from the secondary school … How can I use Tasks 3 and 4 with them if they are not accustomed to think?*

Matthew spoke of the restrictions that 'inadequate content knowledge' imposes on task selection:

> *Do you realise that the teacher would have to go back and teach students geometrical constructions if they are to be given Task 3? Personally, I wouldn't do it! … Today's students are very poor in this regard! Things are not what they used to be!*

Matthew's reluctance (and that of many others) to revisit at sixth form level what has traditionally been regarded as secondary level material, even if only for the sake of presenting students with stimulating and rewarding activities, echoes the pervasive teacher practice to discard tasks, regardless of their worth, that do

not fit within the present system. The teachers in fact appeared unwilling to 'make up' for the 'perceived shortcomings' of a system that, as Hargreaves (1994) points out, fails to consult them and practically excludes them from the decision-making process. Mario spoke out most strongly about this:

> *These basics should have been taught at secondary school, not here! We should have been consulted before people started messing things up at the lower level! There's nothing we can do now …*

Mario's final comment reflects the prevalent attitude amongst the participants that, as students are largely capable of only doing routine, method-type questions, teachers have to accept the inevitable and be practical about it. It is a defeatist attitude that offers no redemption.

The School Context: The students emerged as key factor (which is only second to external examinations) that teachers take into consideration when they weigh the pros and cons of using particular tasks. According to my data, most teachers view PMI students as 'largely unmotivated', 'not really interested in mathematics', 'lacking mathematical knowledge', 'unable or unwilling to think mathematically', 'not accustomed with non-traditional questions', and 'more than happy with a simple pass mark in their external examination'. Some of the teachers presented this student characterisation as an explanation for their reliance on traditional tasks. Drawing on their knowledge of learners when making decisions (see Wilson et al., 1987), these teachers argued that method-based, lower thinking level tasks are more suitable for their students. This is how Renzo mapped out the suitability of such activities and the unsuitability of higher level thinking activities:

> *I find Task 1 excellent … students can work it out without too much trouble … they just have to establish the method and work through … [But] most students won't get Task 3 correct … not because it is difficult … it just requires that little extra amount of thinking, but they are not accustomed to that!*

The teachers' belief that students are not accustomed to think (and consequently being largely incapable of working on their own) explains why routine activities such as Task 1 and, to a certain extent, Task 2 are so pervasively used inside classrooms. The teachers see in such tasks – which are repeatedly legitimised by their use in external examinations – perfectly acceptable activities that 'respect' the students' way of doing mathematics. These 'system fitting' tasks tend to be very straightforward and keep descriptions to a bare minimum. Their

'basic' structure appears to be another reason why the participants favour their use over nonroutine tasks that tend to be rather descriptive. In fact, a quite common concern amongst the teachers was that their students' mathematical performance suffers because many of them lack mastery of the English language. Kathleen expressed these widespread preoccupations:

> *Even though all our students have at least an Ordinary Level pass in English, I find their English particularly weak … when they approach me with some difficulty or other, sometimes I realise that they wouldn't even have understood the question in the first place.*

In turn, these teacher fears have direct repercussions on the type of tasks to which students are being exposed in class. Indeed, many teachers judged Tasks 3 and 4, and to a certain extent also Task 2, as inappropriate for classrooms use also because of their descriptive nature. Such evidence – which collaborates Carter and Doyle's (1987) observation that teachers' classroom decisions at times follow the logic of classroom management rather than the logic of content – suggests that one problem is leading to another. It appears that students' mathematical understanding and progress is being stifled by their linguistic deficiencies that, in turn, discourage teachers from presenting them with the kind of activities that would stimulate just that.

Insufficient time allocation inside classrooms is another school factor that further 'pushes' teachers to decide against the use of nonroutine time-consuming tasks and in favour of the relatively time-efficient routine tasks. In spite of adding an extra teaching hour each week[3], most teachers still maintained not to have the necessary time on their hands that permits them to use activities similar to Tasks 3 and 4. Revealing an awareness of the limiting effects that this decision has on students' mathematical experiences, some teachers expressed regret at 'having to reach it'. For instance, Matthew lamented:

> *By not doing work similar to Task 3 in class, we're missing out on important aspects of mathematics!*

Such suffered decisions reveal how teacher practices can be better understood within the very complex context in which they are taken and for which they are intended (see Lowyck, 1984).

The Personal Context: The present study corroborates O'Hanlon's (1993) conclusion that professional decisions are greatly influenced by personal factors. It indeed appears that teachers' values, beliefs, and experiences influence and guide their task selection. For instance, there are strong suggestions that teachers

are more likely to use tasks with which they are better acquainted and feel more comfortable. It may thus be that teachers are still reproducing in class those same experiences or activities that had positively impressed them as students. Stephen elucidated this cyclic nature of classroom practices with reference to tasks:

> *Personally, I am more accustomed with tasks similar to 1 and 2 … that's my background ever since I was a student. And I think the same applies to our students. Since we only accustom them with tasks like 1 and 2, they're bound to feel lost when faced with tasks like 3 and 4.*

This phenomenon appears to be rooted within the teachers' personal and collective histories. For it appears necessary to go further back than what Calderhead (1988) calls 'teachers' practical knowledge' (i.e., the knowledge formed as a consequence of their actions inside the classroom) to explain their task choices. Indeed, whilst teachers' decisions are certainly influenced by their 'experiential learning' as they move from 'novice' to 'expert' (see Elliott, 1993), one also has to recognise the impact of their own student days.

Teachers may possibly include or exclude a task according to the 'mental images' it elicits. One particular entry in my field journal highlights this point:

> *I immediately felt that the teacher became uneasy when asked to comment on Task 3. It was as if the professional security, which had previously characterised comments about Tasks 1 and 2, had suddenly disappeared … only after the teacher admitted to having no idea of how to deal with the task, and I offered some explanations, could our discussion proceed.*

This incident shows how a particular task can foster in the teacher a self-image of professional insufficiency that lashes out at his or her 'sense of control' over the classroom situation (see Borko, Livingston, McCaleb & Mauro, 1988). Apparently, the 'newness' of this authentic activity had momentarily deskilled the participant. For when the formality of mathematics was 'inserted' into the picture, the teacher's uneasiness and hesitation were soon overcome. But, even now, I cannot help wondering the extent to which the initial 'feelings of insecurity' had to do with the teacher's eventual decision to judge Task 3 as inappropriate.

The insistence of many teachers not to use nonroutine tasks, which they invariably linked to long time frames, for fear of not covering the syllabus brought to the fore the security aspect of decision-making. Their predominant mentality of 'security first and foremost' appears to originate from some of their views on the national and school contexts. Faced with what they see as a vast syllabus and inadequate time provisions inside classrooms, the teachers tend to choose 'safe' traditional tasks. Not only do these tasks mirror examination-type questions, but

they also permit teachers to play what Ellis (2001) calls the 'coverage game' – a concentrated effort on their part to make sure that all the course content is covered irrespective of the depth that is often lacking. Fears of 'persecutory guilt', which arise from accountability demands and bureaucratic controls outside one's classroom, lead 'many teachers to concentrate on covering the required content, rather than ignoring it or subverting it to develop more interesting materials and approaches of their own' (Hargreaves, 1994, p. 143).

The mental images that a task elicits need not necessarily give rise to insecurity in order for it to be excluded from the classroom. In fact, Jackie partly justified her decision not to include Task 4 as a classroom activity by her 'repulsion' as a student for a closely related mathematics topic. On his part, Angelo admitted to exclude *a priori* Tasks 3 and 4 because of the unorthodox and 'non-mathematical' manner in which they are written:

> *My students may accept them, but I don't … I'm not accustomed to such things! Give me rather something like 'solve the equation' or 'form an equation' … not these trivialities!*

By thus minimising the value of these two nonroutine tasks, Angelo emerges as one of the few 'privileged' teachers in the study who are actually working with tasks that reflect their view of mathematics – namely, as a highly formal and theoretical subject. Some others, albeit acknowledging the educational benefits of nonroutine activities, explained their practice of only using traditional tasks by the 'nature' of the mathematics option they teach. In their eyes, teaching 'pure' as opposed to 'applied' mathematics makes all the difference. This is how Andrew put it:

> *Our syllabus is based on theory, not practical ideas … Tasks 3 and 4 are more 'applied' than 'pure' …After all, we mustn't forget that we're teaching pure mathematics, not applied!*

The practice of discarding tasks that seek applications of theory in practical situations however defeats the purposes of authentic assessment (see Murphy, 1996). The participants' comments suggested strongly that teachers of pure mathematics are more interested in their students' ability to demonstrate competence at theoretical level than in how they can apply this knowledge in real life situations. But even though the teachers generally showed, for some reason or other, very little consideration for the integration of theory and application in their tasks, they seemed rather positive about tasks that integrate the various branches of mathematical knowledge (e.g., Task 1, which they regarded highly in this respect). Teachers thus appear to prize and select tasks according to how much

these activities can integrate mathematics from within rather than with out-of-school practices.

The 'practicality' of teachers' decision-making

The results presented here seem to herald the unchallenged continuation of the long established practice of presenting students with traditional activities that many teachers, by their own admission, do not even think too highly of. The participants' insistence on traditional tasks is arguably in line with Black's (1998) claim that teachers keep in mind their students' starting-point when choosing classroom activities, but shows at the same time very little of what Black calls 'multi-dimensional foresight'. For instead of forward-looking, their task selection is almost exclusively concerned with and driven by the immediate present as conditioned by the past. Faced with a highly context-dependent situation (I had invited teachers to discuss the appropriateness of 'specific' tasks within 'specific' classrooms), the participants offered an equally highly context-dependent form of argumentation. Indeed, they could ably explain their classroom decisions by referring to the, at times obscure, mechanisms of their teaching environment. This awareness suggests that teachers' decisions (and the processes that lead to them) need to be understood and interpreted within the specific contexts in which they are produced.

Teachers emerge from this study as persons who, however much they waver cognitively between 'ideal' (read 'best, but unattainable') and 'practical' (read 'not necessarily the best, but attainable') positions, end up almost invariably choosing the 'practical' rather than the 'ideal' when making decisions. Stephen succinctly exposed this reality:

> *It's useless to theorise about things! Theories and ideals – no matter how good and interesting – won't get us anywhere! … One has to be practical! … As long as MATSEC keeps dishing out examination questions like Tasks 1 and 2, that's what I'll be doing in class … what I think about them, doesn't really have to matter!*

This means that in a 'wish-if-but' situation, teachers are likely to postpone gratifying their 'wishes' until the 'ifs' are satisfied, and to continue following in the meantime practices that fully respect the 'buts'. This study presents little evidence of teacher compromise amongst the costs and benefits that, according to Calderhead (1987), often characterises teaching decisions. The teachers studied seemed instead rather determined and unbending about the overall direction of their teaching decisions. As a matter of fact, albeit the participants were generally

very appreciative of the educational benefits attached to using Tasks 3 and 4, they made it equally clear that these tasks represent only an ideal form of practice that they are not ready to follow until their work environment changes in ways that makes this possible. Instead, the same teachers welcome tasks (e.g., Tasks 1 and 2) inside their classrooms that may hold, even in their view, 'dubious' educational value beyond the strict 'teaching-for-examination' context, but which nevertheless 'work' within the system. Teachers' 'sense of practicality' (see Hargreaves, 1994) appears to channel them towards classroom activities (read 'traditional type questions') that do not take too much of their time, students can perform on their own without too much trouble, and serve as important practice for the traditional high stake external examination that awaits students at the end of the PMI course. All of which is strong evidence of the interactive coexistence between teachers' decisions and their situational understanding (see Elliott, 1993).

I suspect that when teachers, as some of the participants suggested, claim to be ready to do all that is necessary for their students, this does not include 'fighting against the system'. My understanding is that teachers not only want to live inside the system, but also to win. And if winning, which in most cases is taken to mean success in external examinations, means putting 'ideals' aside, they are ready to do it. Their 'sense of practicality' has even led some teachers to comment about the futility of trying to fight the system inside the classroom. This is how Andrew put it:

> *If you had to ask me, 'Do you see Tasks 3 and 4 as a waste of time?' I'll say 'Yes'. Although these two tasks undoubtedly help to broaden students' ideas, in the present circumstances we can't afford to go through with such ideas.*

I find that this philosophy of 'practicality before ideals' betrays a sense of 'helplessness' on teachers' part. Realising what little control they have over their work (Cole, 1997), teachers try to accommodate the system instead of fighting it. Rather than teachers being practical in an effort not to 'miss the wood for the trees', their practicality appears to be a strategy aimed largely at survival that, according to Cole (1997), is the upper most thing on teachers' minds. It is a 'neutral' form of practicality that neither challenges nor tries to improve the system that many of them readily acknowledge as in need of reform. Indeed, the teachers emerge as primarily interested in working as best they can within the present circumstances. But by so doing, teachers may be further contributing to position themselves as mere pawns delivering a curriculum over which they have little or no control. Whilst their resigned acceptance may be, at least in part, an effort to appease their 'persecutory guilt', this stance definitely distances them

from the image of autonomous professionals trusted to exercise the power and expertise of discretionary judgement in the classrooms they understand best (see Hargreaves, 1994).

This raises the issue of the extent to which teachers are autonomous decision-makers inside their classrooms. The tendency of the participants to favour the practical over the ideal suggests that even though teachers retain a measure of decision-making power inside classrooms, this is greatly curtailed by a seemingly *a la carte* menu selection imposed upon them by other forces from both inside and outside schools. In a scenario in which teacher choices are essentially 'closed', their classroom decisions appear to follow a reactive damage-containing stance, rather than a proactive one. This reality, which does not however challenge the image of the teacher as an autonomous decision-maker using his or her specialist knowledge to guide classroom practice (Calderhead, 1987), somewhat qualifies how teachers process their prior knowledge when making decisions. In particular, the present study suggests that teachers filter the various types of knowledge they bring to the decision-making situation (see Wilson et al., 1987) through their situational understanding (see Elliott, 1993). It follows that teachers' decisions and practices do not readily reflect their ideals, but are instead governed to a large extent by the way they experience and interpret the various contexts in which they operate. A clear indication, I find, of the situatedness of teachers' decision-making processes.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] The Matriculation Certificate (of the Matriculation and Secondary Certificate Examinations Board [MATSEC] of the University of Malta) requires Maltese sixth form students to study two subjects at Advanced Level and four subjects at Intermediate Level (loosely defined as one-third of an Advanced Level).

[2] Maltese schools, in spite of political and legal efforts aimed at decentralisation, still find it hard to practise autonomy within an educational system that remains burdened with the vestiges of centralisation (Fenech, 1994).

[3] PMI classes now have three one-hour lessons per week instead of the original two hours allocation.

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APPENDIX I

The Four Tasks

TASK 1

Express $\dfrac{2x - 8}{(x^2 + 4)(x + 1)}$ in partial fractions and hence or otherwise evaluate

$$\int_0^1 \frac{2x - 8}{(x^2 + 4)(x + 1)}dx$$

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TASK 2

A cylindrical can, able to contain half a litre of drink, is to be manufactured from aluminium. The volume of the can must therefore be 500cm³.

* Find the radius and height of the can which will use the least aluminium, and therefore be the cheapest to manufacture. (i.e. find out how to minimise the surface area of the can).

  State clearly any assumptions you make.

* What shape is your can? Do you know of any cans that are made with this shape? Can you think of any practical reasons why more cans are not this shape?

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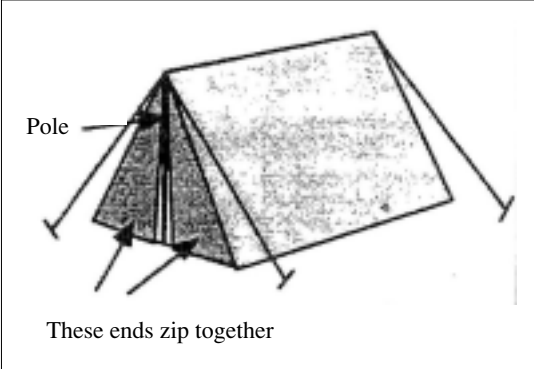
The circular glass top of your neighbor's coffee table breaks. Your neighbor is very upset and would like to replace the glass top but does not know exactly how big it was. He brings you a piece of broken glass that contains part of the boundary of the original top. Describe exactly what you would do in order to figure out the exact size of the original glass tabletop.

TASK 3

Your task is to design a tent like the one in the picture

It must be big enough for two adults to sleep in

Pole

These ends zip together

Show how you will cut the material to make the tent. Show all the measurements clearly

THE MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION

GIOVANNI PAMPANINI

Introduction: an overview

1 f one views the current scenario of comparative Education Societies around the world (of which there are about thirty), it can be easily noted that there is no one specific Society of Scholars devoted to the study of Mediterranean issues. This is even more astonishing if we think that nowadays anything 'Mediterranean' has become almost a trend (from diets to cruises). Sadly, however, it is also famous for the high number of illegal immigrants who die in their attempts to cross the sea and reach the rich 'Fortress Europe'. Naturally, a scientific society needs some specific criteria in order to exist, beginning with its own objective. What exactly should a Society of this kind compare? The first obvious answer is: the school systems of the Mediterranean countries. But here we come up against the first problem: would it be possible to compare—and if so to what extent—school systems with such different traditions as those of the Mediterranean countries? To answer these questions means to enter *in medias res* of this problem, something that this article will specifically try to do.

Let us start from a very general overview of the Mediterranean situation from a historical, political and educational point of view. The north coast of the Mediterranean is formed by Southern Europe, countries, therefore, having Latin and Greek-Orthodox traditions, with the addition of Turkey. There are few problems on the western side of the north coast: Spain, Portugal, France and Italy. Passing over to the eastern side the problems increase, not so much in Greece (although the old problem of the relationship with Turkey still persists) as along the Adriatic coast. Even here, the northern part (Slovenia and Croatia) is not so problematic as the south: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, the Macedonian Republic and Albania. In these areas problems of historical and political identity are strictly connected to those of Education, beginning, in particular, from History and Religious Education textbooks.

Another problem in this area, that cannot be ignored, is that of the island of Cyprus, a new member of the European Union since May 2004 but still effectively divided between the Greek and Turkish parts.

If we now pass to the east coast we find ourselves in the Middle East, an area full of current international, political tensions due both to the proximity of Iraq and

Iran and also because of the complex 'game' carried out since the end of the Second World War by the Syrian government and the expansionistic aims of the USA. Beirut is the city that, more than any other in the area, has paid the biggest tribute to the conflict and still bears the visible signs. There follows Israel which, depending on whether the government in office was right or left wing, has practised policies of aggression or instituted peace talks with its Palestinian and Jordanian counterparts. Undoubtedly the assassination of the Labour party leader Rabin, in November 1995 constituted a loss that has yet to be filled.

The African coast presents a diversified front, even though the present situation of financial crisis in this part of the Arab world is objectively functioning in favour of Islamic fundamentalism (see the case of Algeria in the last decade). Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco remain alert to what happens in the Mediterranean area (while it would seem that the same is not true for the present Libyan leadership which is looking towards Central Africa), being open to eventual proposals of economic, cultural and religious exchanges and advantages.

What do they have in common?

All this, clearly, is a minimal response to the question: is it possible to compare the school systems of the Mediterranean coastal countries? My first counter-objection when faced with this question is that the general picture traced above already indicates a certain interest in adventuring in this direction. If, strictly speaking, the GNPs of all the Mediterranean countries make it difficult to consider a direct comparison between educational policies (how is it possible to compare educational supplies and school buildings of countries with very different national wealth?) it should be remembered that agreements already exist for the creation of a free trade area in the Mediterranean by 2010. This is, of course, only an economic agreement and not a cultural one but it is something in common. It also means that some common areas of discussion are being created, not only at the leadership level of these countries, but also among their 'public opinions'. Certainly, there is still a long way to go before the creation of a common, Mediterranean 'public opinion' but clearly some shared problems are creating a common agenda and all Mediterranean citizens are in some way called upon to express their opinions, if not to organise their own specific activities with the aim of creating well-being and mutual understanding.

As regards the field of education, the first most visible problem is that of reciprocal recognition of school qualifications, especially high school qualifications. This is an area of economic interest due to the investment that families make in education and the choices that students make for their futures.

However, an even more important and relevant problem is the creation of a common or comparable curriculum and textbooks.

If we look at the first levels of the educational system, considering both the curriculum and didactic methods, a number of common traits appear that link all the Mediterranean countries. Beyond the differences—some of them notable—that we find in the 'phenomenologies' of the different school systems we can easily recognise some common and very fundamental cultural bases transmitted by schools (and also by the non-formal educational institutions). A comparative survey of a general and preliminary nature could highlight these common cultural bases (in Religion, Philosophy, Literature, Law and the Arts) and the common status symbols overtly or covertly transmitted by schools (and socially) in all the Mediterranean countries.

This consideration leaves room for critical reflections of the following kind: in Southern Europe it is permissible (and people effectively do) to criticise the cultural models promoted by the educational systems; but to what extent is it possible to exercise the same criticism in North Africa or the Middle East where the political systems are democratic, but also authoritarian? However, if we look more closely into this idea again a common trait appears linking the Mediterranean countries. It is true that it is not the same thing to pass criticism, if only in an educational sense and not politically, in regimes having diverse degrees of freedom as regards the expression of dissent. However, it is also true that some 'democratic' countries exist where the most diffuse mass media (both private and public) are the property of the same body that holds political power (as is the case in Italy). It other words, objectively very difficult conditions can exist, preventing a free expression of cultural criticism both in regimes that are not fully democratic (like those of North Africa or the Middle East), and also in those that proclaim themselves to be open and democratic, but which substantially offer little room for real criticism (as is the case for most of those Southern European countries presently having centre-right coalition governments).

What is the 'mission' of a Mediterranean Society of Comparative Education?

This said, the questions regarding the 'legitimacy' of a Mediterranean Society of Comparative Education seem to boomerang back: everything depends on what we mean by 'promoting comparative studies'. In addition, and more particularly, it depends on if we intend to compare only the 'present' or if we want to promote policies favouring the idea of school as giving all children and adults a critical awareness of their own cultural roots. The 'present', in fact, has a clear

configuration and is there for all to see: the liberal, educational policies followed by governments in Southern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, which all answer to the logic of the 'Human Capital Theory'. This theory is technocratic and highly subject to economic power and is imposing a precise direction on schools, especially higher education. The liberal school excludes (or moves onto a different track) all those disadvantaged sectors of the population who are unable to keep up with the ever increasing acquisition of technical knowledge required by the school, or those who simply do not agree with the non-critical adoption of the social-climbing models implicitly transmitted by the educational system.

In that case, if we wanted to compare the 'present' school systems in order to assess which Mediterranean country has a school system that is closest to its government's current policies, maybe the 'sceptical party' would be right: it is very hard to compare countries which have very different GNPs (how could Tunisia or even Egypt ever 'exceed' Italy or France?). If, instead, we would like to promote *critical* studies, then there is really a lot of space for a Mediterranean Society—and its scientific usefulness would be enormous. We would, in fact, open up a whole arena for the creation of a humanistic curriculum, based on common values, to combat racism and xenophobia in the Mediterranean basin (following the *desiderata* of UNESCO and UNICEF). Along with the IEA researches on literacy and basic skills in science, we would have another area in which to consider the common Mathematical and Logical roots of the Mediterranean basin, of which our educational public should become conscious. Furthermore, both at this initial level, and at advanced levels of education, we educators, along with our publics, should become aware of the non-Mediterranean people present in our region: Sub-Saharans, Indians, Chinese, and Latin-Americans. These populations are, nowadays, a statistically perceptible, social reality and really representative of non-Mediterranean cultures and civilizations, that is to say, non-monotheistic (in Religion), non-Aristotelian (in Philosophy) and with some traditions in Literature and Law that do not come from the Greek, Latin or Islamic pillars of Mediterranean culture (on the possibilities and limitations of a Mediterranean Hermeneutic Cycle see Pampanini, in the press). The comparison that we should critically and democratically make between 'our common Mediterranean culture' and that of the *others*—would lead us to results, in terms of educational policies, which vary greatly from typical and easily understandable forms. In addition, if we move towards the field of 'vocational training', the 'mission' of such a Mediterranean Society of Comparative Education would be even more evident. Imagine what it would mean to provide an intercultural and Mediterranean 'vocational training', especially if open to non-Mediterranean cultures, for doctors in Medicine, psychologists or lawyers, and so on, not to mention teachers.

The steps towards the constitution of the Mediterranean Society of Comparative Education

We have spoken about the 'ratio' and the 'mission' of such a Society, from a critical perspective. We must now consider the strategy to follow in order to create *de facto* and *de jure* this Society. As Scholars of Comparative Education of the Mediterranean area, we already have a brief history (about which I spoke extensively on the occasion of the XXI Comparative Education Society in Europe (CESE) Conference, held in London in July, 2002) beginning in the early 90's, since which time we have met several times in Sicily and on the occasions of the CESE Conferences. This is useful to us, because it has been a history of understanding, co-operation, friendship and reciprocal help. Let me briefly recall the main events.

Following on from the Peace agreements for the Middle East signed in Madrid in October, 1991, I myself, with the help of other Scholars, such as Prof. Aldo Visalberghi (Professor Emeritus of Education, 'La Sapienza' University in Rome), Prof. Hamadi Ben Jaballah (Tunis University), the National Commission of UNESCO in Morocco, Devorah Kalekin Fishman, Sociologist of Education at Haifa University, Prof. Charles Farrugia, Malta University, Prof. Jerzy Smolicz, University of Adelaide (Australia), Profs. Turgut from the University of Izmir, and Guçluol, at that time Rector of the University of Bolu (Turkey), Prof. Pieter Batelaan, co-ordinator of the International Association of Intercultural Education, and others, organised the first Euro-Arab Seminar on Intercultural Education, held in September 1992 in S. Croce Camerina, in the province of Ragusa (partly sponsored by Ragusa Province, and with the scientific patronage of the University of Messina) (Pampanini, 1993).

After this Seminar, following on from a suggestion made by the late lamented Prof. Ricardo Marin Ibanez, Professor Emeritus of Education at the National University of Madrid, the *Centro Mediterraneo di Educazione* (Mediterranean Centre for Education—CEME) was established in 1993, serving as a friendly network of Scholars of the Mediterranean and of educators from other regions of the world. Thanks to this network, the number of Scholars involved in the new field of 'Mediterranean Education' is larger than before, and scholars who were once far removed from this discussion arena, such as Prof. Lê Thành Khôi or Prof. Juergen Schriewer, have come closer to it, opening up new areas of scientific co-operation. As a consequence of this activity, 1996 saw the publication, in Italian translation, of the books edited by them, respectively: *Education. Cultures et Sociétés*, and *Theories and Methods in Comparative Education* (see *Bibliography*).

Also in 1996, thanks to a financial contribution from the Catania Town Council, and under the scientific patronage of Catania University and the

President of the Italian Republic, I organised the National Conference on Adult Education which focused on the Mediterranean dimension (see Pampanini, 1997), with the participation of an Italian Co-ordinator of the Italian Society of Adult Education (Paolo Federighi, Florence University), Prof. Guçluol (Rector, Private University Cankaya, Ankara, Turkey), Prof. Kalekin Fishman (Haifa University), and Prof. Sultana (Malta University). Prof. Sultana, thanks to a really numerous network of contacts which he had established over the years, not only with myself and other Mediterranean educators, but also with American Comparative Educators, set up, in the same year, the editorial board of the Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies (co-sponsored by Malta University and other organizations), with a high scientific status.

In 1999, thanks to the initiative of the Catania Town Council, I organised a new Mediterranean Conference under the scientific patronage of Catania University and the President of the Italian Republic. On this occasion there were contributions from the following Professors: Lê Thành Khôi, Robert Cowen, Ahmed Mo'atassime, Ettore Gelpi, Kemal Guçluol and Aicha Maherzi, among others. In the Proceedings I inserted the original contributions of the late lamented Prof. Mauro Laeng, Professor Emeritus of Education at Rome III University (Tor Vergata) (see Pampanini, 2000).

The Sicilian (and Mediterranean) agenda has run in parallel to CESE activities, one of the most prestigious Societies in our field. In October 1996, along with Ronald Sultana, we held a special session on 'Mediterranean Education' (Athens, October 1996); again, I held another Mediterranean special session along with Kemal Guçluol on the occasion of the 1998 CESE Conference, organized in Groningen (The Netherlands); finally, in 2000 at the CESE Conference, in Bologna, I held the Mediterranean special session along with Ettore Gelpi. This activity has extended the discussion regarding the proposal for a 'Mediterranean Education' to really international levels (that is, going beyond the Mediterranean).

That has been all, up to the present time. Prof. Mark Bray, present General Secretary of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (and Dean of the Faculty of Education at Hong Kong University), greatly encouraged both Ronald Sultana and myself to work towards the organisation of a specific Mediterranean Society of Comparative Education. Ronald had to decline the invitation due to his many university engagements and his work with the Mediterranean Journal. On my side, with only the responsibility of my jobs as Head of the Adolescent Centre of the National Mental Health Service in Catania, and Lecturer at Catania University in Intercultural Education, I accepted the invitation. The undertaking was titanic—I know; but the satisfaction coming from the awareness of making a serious contribution to reciprocal understanding and

peace in the Mediterranean area is enough. From the beginning of 2003 up to the present day, self-sponsored, I have conducted a series of 'tours' for consultations with educators in the Mediterranean Countries. I have collected hopes, perplexities, and also suggestions from these Mediterranean colleagues. Here, I would like to thank all of them: Prof. Antonio Novoa (Vice-Rector of Lisbon University) and Dr. Ana Isabel Madeira (of the same University); Profs. H. Ben Jaballah (Scholar in Education), T. Ayadi (Scholar in History), and M. Kerrou (Sociologist) of Tunis University; M. Masmoudi (ex-director-general of the Lifelong Education Programme of the Ministry of Education, Tunisia); Prof. M. Habibi (director of the Education Sector of the Alecso, Tunis); Prof. M. Zabach (director, Education Sector of the Isesco, Rabat); M. Z'gor, Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences, University of Rabat, along with Prof. M. Souali (of the same University); Dr. Linda Herrera (at that time sociologist at the American University of Cairo); Dr. A. Youssuf and Dr. F. Adly (Scholars in Adult Education), Dr. K. Mougheeth (Scholar in History), and L. Zikri (Psychologist), all of the National Centre for Educational Research of Cairo University; the late lamented Prof. Abu Zahra, secretary of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and Professor of Aesthetics at the University of Alexandria; Prof. K. Naguib (Scholar in Comparative Education at the same University); Prof. Muna Darwish (Scholar in History, Baccalureat, Amman); Prof. A. Kreso (Scholar in Comparative Education at the University of Sarajevo); Prof. M. Djudja (director of the Centre of Rehabilitation in Neuropsychiatry 'V. Nazor', Sarajevo); Prof. Fatma Goek (Department of International Studies in Education at the Bosphorus University, Istanbul) and Prof. Rifat Okçabol (of the same University, Scholar in Adult Education); Profs. K. Guçluol, H. Simsek and A. Yildirim (comparative educators of the Middle East Technical University, Ankara); Dr. A. Balci (educator at the University of Ankara); Profs. P. Xochellis (University of Thessaloniki) and A. Gotovos (scholar in Education at the University of Ioannina); Dr. Maha Siad (Head of Education at the UNDP, Damascus); Prof. K. Bourjaili (Scholar in Sociology of Education, ILDES, NGO in Beirut); Dr. Elena Phtiaka (Special Education, Nicosia University, Cyprus); Profs. Peter Mayo and Ronald Sultana (Sociologists of Education, University of Malta); Prof. Miguel Pereyra (Scholar in Comparative Education, University of Granada); Prof. W. Mitter (Professor Emeritus, Goethe University, Frankfurt am Mein and Past President of the World Council of Comparative Education societies); Dr. K. Amos (of the same University); and Prof. A. Carry (University La Sorbonne, Paris-IV, and President of the Association Francophone d'Education Comparée). Let me express special thanks to Prof. Lê Thành Khôi, Professor Emeritus, University La Sorbonne, Paris-V, of whom I am a disciple.

Could 'cohabitation problems' exist within the Mediterranean Society of Comparative Education (ME.S.C.E.)?

Obviously the answer is 'yes'. If we look again at the Mediterranean basin as a whole, it is clear that there are areas of, by now, traditional tensions that have been waiting for an answer—above all political, for a long, perhaps too long, time. It is enough to think of the Greek-Turkish area and the problem of Cyprus, or the Israeli/Palestinian area. Could those problems be an obstacle to a sincere co-operation within the new scientific Society? Certainly, elements of concern and of reciprocal suspicion exist and at times they can even become very strong. Naturally, even the scientific arena, as much as we can presume it to be 'neutral', is made up of men and women, who although they are academics, educators or in any case 'disinterested' in the political aspects of their work cannot be indifferent to what happens to their peoples, above all if this depends on a neighbouring, hostile population..

The following Comparative Education Societies exist in the Mediterranean region:

SICESE, Italian Section of the Comparative Education Society in Europe;
CESE, Comparative Education Society in Europe;
AFEC, Association Francophone d'Education Comparée;
Spanish Society of Comparative Education;
Greek Society of Comparative Education;
Israeli Society of Comparative Education.

There are no Arabic Societies (there was, and now is again, a Comparative Education Group in Egypt).

Of course, as Mark Bray once observed, there is nothing to stop anyone being a member of more than one Society for example a member of the Italian Society and the new Mediterranean Society.

My wish is that the themes for discussion proposed by the new Society will be such as to encourage a peaceful and sincere exchange of opinions. At the moment we can preview the constitution of some permanent working groups, devoted to:

– International Relations;
– History, Philosophy, and Theology;
– Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Education;
– Sociology, Politics, and the Economics of Education.

The official languages of the MESCE Conferences are Arabic, French, and English. Given that the Constitution is registered under Italian Law, all the official papers must be translated into Italian.

The inaugural Conference was held in Catania from 4th to 6th March 2004, under the patronage of the University and the Province of Catania. Apart from myself (I have been nominated President for the first period 2004-2006) the following Colleagues took part: Adila Kreso, University of Sarajevo (Vice-President), Murad Jurdak, American University of Beirut, and Fatma Goek, Bosphorus University, Istanbul.

The calendar of the MESCE produced by the Conference foresees the following meetings:

– 2006: Alexandria, Egypt, in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina;
– 2007: Sarajevo, hosting the World Congress of Comparative Education;
– 2008: Tunis.

We have decided to apply to be a Member Society of the World Council (already affirmed) and to candidate Sarajevo as the venue of the next World Congress of Comparative Education. As President, I officially promoted the candidature, that was discussed and approved at the Havana World Congress, held in October 2004.

Defining the goals of the new Mediterranean society of Comparative Education

On summarising the 'price' of such a civil, pedagogical and scientific undertaking, we could list the general objectives of the new Society as follows:

– to develop the perception of a Mediterranean framework for Education;
– to increase dialogue and mutual knowledge among Scholars of Education and teachers and the educators from all the Mediterranean countries;
– to promote the setting up of programs of research, co-operation and intellectual exchanges in Education among Scholars from all the Mediterranean countries;
– to explore the possibilities of greater co-operation among Scholars in Education and Scholars in other disciplines, both humanistic and scientific, at a Mediterranean level;
– to implement studies in Comparative Education at a Mediterranean level;
– to reinforce educational policies aimed at guaranteeing all children and adult citizens the right to education in the widest sense possible;
– to avoid, via education, the dangers of ignorance, intolerance, miscomprehension, and racial hate;

- to guarantee all the citizens of the Mediterranean area the right to discuss their participation in, and make an informed choice regarding, the different development models and the ways of civil cohabitation in multicultural societies all around the Mediterranean Basin where they live;
- to open the way, by means of education, to cultural studies and discussion between the Mediterranean cultures (European and Arabic) and the others (Chinese, Indian and sub-Saharan) which are present in the Mediterranean area, as a means of preventing further misunderstandings.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Ettore Gelpi, *Lavoro Futuro. La Formazione come progetto politico*, Monograph 20 in the series 'Processi Formativi e Scienze dell'educazione' edited by Piero Bertolini, Luisa Santelli Beccegato and Duccio Demetrio, Milan, Edizioni Angelo Guerini e Associati SpA, ISBN 88-8335-372-2, 173 pp., 2002. Recently published in Spanish translation as Ettore Gelpi, *Trabajo futuro, la formación como proyecto politico*, Valencia, CREC, ISBN 84933402-7-8, 166pp., 2004.

Ettore Gelpi is a leading figure with respect to critical approaches to the study of education. Author of several essays and books about education and the world of work, the late Ettore Gelpi has also been the subject of a number of studies, including Timothy Ireland's monograph regarding Gelpi's view of Lifelong Education (Ireland, 1978). Gelpi is undoubtedly a key figure in that movement of writers and practitioners, connected with Unesco, who promoted the concept of lifelong education in the seventies and early eighties. In my view, he represents, together with Bogdan Suchodolski and arguably Paul Lengrand, the radical version of the concept. His was a left wing humanistic version of the concept, a point stressed by Kenneth Wain in his recent book, *The Learning Society in a Postmodern World. The Education Crisis* (Wain, 2004, p.17). Wain considers Gelpi as the major figure in the second wave of writers post-Faure. Reference is here being made to the so-called Faure report, *Learning to Be*, produced by UNESCO (Faure et al., 1972). Wain includes Gelpi among those who favour a pragmatist approach to lifelong education: a historical and comparative approach with the emphasis being placed less on this concept's future possibilities and more on the actual present day reality of lifelong education (Wain, 2004, p. 19).

One can argue that Gelpi continues to adopt this approach in the book under consideration. Gelpi underlines the need for a comparative approach to research in the area of adult education in the context of work and human development. He does not limit himself to simply making such recommendations in this book but also provides the monograph with an international and comparative dimension; he discusses the theme of 'education and work' in its broader contexts. This entails a discussion on not only such general concepts as globalisation and neo-liberalism but also on the manner in which these phenomena are experienced in various regions and continents throughout the world. Gelpi in fact dedicates chapters and entire sections of chapters to Europe, the Northern and Southern shores of the

Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. He broaches such relevant themes as emigration, the growth of the informal economy as a response to mass unemployment and casual or part-time work, North-South relations and the non-equitable access to information technology.

All this serves to provide a comparative dimension to the discussion concerning the education-work nexus. Comparisons and contrasts are available throughout this work. For example, Gelpi highlights the contrast that exists between educational priorities in the Northern and Southern shores of the Mediterranean: lifelong learning in Southern Europe (one can detect the EU's influence here) and the specific form of permanent education present in the southern part of the Mediterranean. This specific form of permanent education has strong links with the Muslim culture (p.88). The pragmatist approach sheds light on indigenous or distinctly communitarian and regional traditions that can possibly provide an alternative to the hegemonic concepts of learning promoted by external forces such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. One can also mention, in this regard, the World Trade Organisation (Rikowski, 2000).

As indicated by Wain (2004, pp.16-17), Gelpi and other writers on lifelong education were concerned with the existence of an educational system that reproduced the social injustices brought about by the Capitalist system. This book by Gelpi is not any different in the sense that it contains trenchant criticisms of the neo-liberal ideology, an ideology that places the emphasis on the market, the curtailing of the role of the state, and privatisation. It provides a reductionist view of the human being who is conceived of solely as producer and consumer. Throughout this book, Gelpi provides an attack on the general tendency to commodify education and the equally global tendency, promoted by the OECD and arguably also the EU, to reduce the one time concept of lifelong education to simply a concept of learning that places emphasis on vocational preparation to the detriment of the other dimensions in the process of human and social development.

I vividly recall a discussion I had with Ettore Gelpi in Catania in the autumn of 1999 during which he expressed his anger and indignation for what he saw as the adulteration of the one time concept of lifelong education which, in its hegemonic contemporary version, reflected a concern with developing the so-called 'human resources'—a travesty of the concept as originally propounded by the movement of writers to which he belonged. The same applies to the education of adults, so dear to Gelpi's heart. He regrets that the dominant form of adult education nowadays is also reductionist; the emphasis is placed on vocational preparation and competitive individualism. He points out, in this respect, that we seem to be overlooking the existence of another version of adult education, one that enjoys a

strong tradition and that highlights the collective dimension of learning and critical consciousness (p.160). Gelpi argues that the dominant form of adult education today is very much subservient to capitalism's needs and is born out of an ideology that leads to mass unemployment and a clear inability to satisfy social needs. He cites Lunghini in declaring that mass unemployment and the amount of social needs that remain unsatisfied constitute two strong indictments of the ideology of the marketplace (p. 44).

Gelpi discovers in the tradition of a critical approach to adult education the resources of hope to recuperate educational values that can contribute to the development of a democratic environment in which one does not discover the contemporary 'apartheid' that distinguishes the 'new Athenian philosophers' from the 'new slaves' both of whom are considered by Gelpi to be more numerous these days than in the past (p.43). These ideas recall John Dewey, Paulo Freire and a host of other educationists who have contributed to the critical tradition of thinking with regard to education and society in general. I would refer readers, here, to the presentation by Bruno Schettini which is also included in this volume (p.20). This brings to mind the hopes that many progressive people pin on social movements nowadays. As one would expect of someone who has been consistent in adopting a radical stance and who was also very active in the Italian Radical Party, Gelpi expresses his faith in these social movements. He devotes space to the Latin American social movements, including the Brazilian Movement of Landless Peasants (MST: *Movimento Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*). He draws inspiration, as far as a transformative approach to education is concerned, from the Latin American Popular Education tradition. This probably explains his interest in these Latin American movements. He regrets that social movements in Europe are not as much involved in adult education as their counterparts in Latin America. Gelpi regards the 150 hrs in Italy, carried out by a trade union movement, as an example of a positive involvement by a European social movement in adult education.

He, however, advises caution with regard to the widespread optimism regarding the role of the so-called 'civil society' in generating a transformative politics. 'Civil Society' is often romanticised. Gelpi's conception of civil society seems to be different from that propagated in much of the literature nowadays. His conception seems to be closer to that provided by one of his most illustrious compatriots, Antonio Gramsci. Like Gramsci, Gelpi does not romanticise civil society. Gramsci indicates, in the *Quaderni* and other writings, how hegemony is developed and cemented through civil society that can be conceived of as a terrain of struggle through which spaces emerge in which this very same hegemony can be contested. Gelpi posits that capitalist forces avail themselves of civil society to consolidate their process of domination. It is common nowadays to see NGO's being involved in the social sector in lieu of the State.

Quoting Waterman, Gelpi reminds us that civil society in the West comprises racist movements and parties besides numerous groups that apply violent pressure for motives that are egotistic and limited in scope (p.170). Gelpi goes as far as to declare that, through the myth of civil society, educational systems, which worked well in Third World countries and in the countries that provided examples of 'actually existing socialism', were dismantled (p.170).

This notwithstanding, Ettore Gelpi remains optimistic that progressive movements can develop processes of learning and education in general, as well as concepts of work, that can serve as a means of resistance with regard to types of learning and work that are imposed from above and that are under-girded by the Neo-liberal ideology. Gelpi declares that unions and workers, associations of the unemployed, producer cooperatives, artisans' associations, salaried peasants and agricultural entrepreneurs remain steadfast in their efforts to defend their mode of production (p.172). It can be argued, echoing Gelpi, that trade unions have an important role to play in the development of a programme of workers' education that is broader and more comprehensive in scope than the kind of education for work favoured by industry and which falls under the rubric of 'Human Resource Development (HRD)' Gelpi advocates a more general education that targets all the dimensions of the human personality. It ought to be an education that can contribute to the consolidation of a democratic environment and the fostering of greater solidarity. In addition he advocates an education that contributes to the collective dimension of learning, social action and organisation of work.

To this end, Gelpi argues that one must strive to ensure the presence of a cadre of well-prepared adult educators. Programmes intended to contribute to the development of adult educators should allow opportunities during which the participants are given a broad and comprehensive picture of society and the global economic framework. In addition, it is imperative that such programmes provide critical perspectives on these areas and related issues. Adult educators should be concerned, according to the author, not only with the technical aspects of learning but also with the politics of learning and work. It is important for Gelpi that adult educators develop a good knowledge of political economy and of the anthropological dimension of learning. He argues that there is a need for comparative research regarding adult education covering various parts of the world and that progressive social movements, of the kind mentioned earlier on, exert pressure on public institutions (e.g. Higher education institutions) so that these institutions carry out or sponsor research that extends beyond the narrow economic interests of the ruling class. Furthermore, Gelpi argues that one should refuse to endorse research that serves the purpose of manipulation and that does not address the population's needs (p. 173).

The State has, according to the author, an important role to play in this regard. It has to make its presence felt to ensure quality, equity and social justice as well as to project the view that education, including adult education, is a *public* good and not a *consumer* good characterised by privatisation and commodification (p.44).

It would not be amiss to consider this essay by Ettore Gelpi a manifesto for a radically democratic process of education and learning and an equally radically democratic approach to the organisation of work. It is a manifesto that contributes to the development of an alternative left wing perspective on education and work that confronts the Neo-liberal ideology underlying much of the contemporary discourse in these areas. The latter perspective, as indicated by Gelpi, places the emphasis on employability but not employment and on competitive individualism rather than on social solidarity and ecological sensitivity. In short, it is an ideological perspective that brings about a great degree of social exclusion. Gelpi provides a critical perspective that falls in line with the often-repressed tradition of critical perspectives concerning education, especially those provided by the exponents of critical pedagogy in North America and by exponents of left wing perspectives on education in Europe, including the members of the Institute for Education Policy Studies at Brighton, England (The Hillcole Group, 1997). Perhaps the most pleasing feature of this monograph is that the author avoids the type of rhetoric that can easily mar a work of this nature and provides an international and comparative dimension to the discussion around the subject, thus rendering the study solid and convincing.

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The manuscript can be submitted as an e-mail attachment, to be sent to: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt Alternatively, **three** complete copies of the manuscript can be submitted, typed double-spaced on one side of the paper. A diskette version of the article (preferably formatted on Word for Windows) should be included with the manuscript.

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The *MJES* is a biannual refereed international journal with a regional focus. It features educational research carried out in Mediterranean countries, as well as educational studies related to the diaspora of Mediterranean people world-wide. The journal offers a forum for theoretical debate, historical and comparative studies, research and project reports, thus facilitating dialogue in a region which has strong and varied educational traditions. There is a strong international dimension to this dialogue, given the profile of the Mediterranean in the configuration of the new world order, and the presence of Mediterranean peoples in Europe, North America and elsewhere. The *MJES* is of interest to scholars, researchers and practitioners in the following fields: comparative education, foundation disciplines in education, education policy analysis, Mediterranean studies, cultural and post-colonial studies, Southern European and area studies, intercultural education, peace education, and migrant studies.