Mediterranean
Journal
of
Educational
Studies

M.J.E.S. Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies

CONTENTS   Volume 15 Number 1 2010

GREEK CYPRIOT ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRANTS AND 'ENEMY-OTHERS' IN THE CONTEXT OF AN ETHNIC CONFLICT

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Abstract – *This paper describes and analyses the results of a survey on Greek Cypriot students' attitudes toward immigrants and toward those considered as the 'enemy-others' (in this context, the Turks and Turkish Cypriots). This investigation is important because issues of immigration seem to be further complicated by the ongoing ethnic conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus. Although this study does not examine whether attitudes about immigration change as a result of ethnic conflict (or vice versa), it provides an initial mapping to numerically chart the terrain of Greek Cypriot students' tendencies toward both immigrants and 'enemy-others'. The results show that Greek Cypriot students manifest generally negative attitudes toward immigrants and Turks and Turkish Cypriots (although there is a differentiation in the perception of the latter group). It is also shown that Greek Cypriot students prefer the model of separation rather than that of assimilation or integration in their relations with immigrants. Significant differences are identified between the perceptions of: (i) boys and girls; and (ii) younger and older adolescents. The implications for intercultural education both at the policy level and at the level of classroom practice are discussed. It is also suggested that the intersection of (ethnic or other) conflict and immigration and how it is manifest in the context of education requires attention in future research.*

Introduction

*M*igration for economic, social or political reasons has always been part of human history. The Mediterranean region has recently become the centre of migration movement with countries such as Malta, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Cyprus becoming main entry points into the European Union. Cyprus has traditionally been a country of out-migration throughout the 20th century, especially after the 1974 Turkish invasion that divided Cyprus into its north part (still occupied by Turkey) and its south part (the government controlled area). However, migration of labour to the Republic of Cyprus started in the 1990s as a

result of the relatively quick economic boom that has turned Cyprus into a host country for immigrants (Spyrou, 2009). Although there are no official figures, it is now estimated that migrant workers from different ethnic and racial backgrounds total between 60,000 to 80,000 (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2009)[1]. The issue of growing immigration, however, is further complicated by the unresolved political problem – known as the 'Cyprus Issue' – that raises serious security and other concerns (Trimikliniotis, 2009).

The changing profile of the population in the Republic of Cyprus has clearly affected the social landscape and has altered the fairly homogeneous profile (until the early 1990s) of primary and secondary schools (Zembylas, 2010b). During the scholastic year 1995-1996 the percentage of foreign students was 4.41%, but this percentage rose to 8.6% in the scholastic year 2007-2008 (Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, 2009). There are now approximately 13,000 foreign students in the Republic of Cyprus. In some schools (especially in urban areas of low socioeconomic conditions), immigrant students constitute the large majority of the school population (80%-90%). This increasing diversity and contact between Greek Cypriot and immigrant children could be a source of enriching learning experiences for all, if certain conditions are ensured (e.g., see Psaltis & Hewstone, 2008). However, as some recent studies among children and youth show, this contact is not free of challenges such as the development of stereotypes against immigrants suggesting that 'they take our jobs', 'they threaten our national identity' and 'the immigrants are usually criminals' (e.g., Spyrou, 2009; Zembylas, in press). These stereotypes, it is argued, become even more accentuated in contexts of ethnic conflict, because 'indigenous'[2] students have to negotiate a complex situation: on one hand, they have to deal with the increasing flow of immigrants; on the other hand, they need to negotiate the challenges of co-existing with those they perceive as 'enemies' (Shamai & Ilatov, 2001, 2005; Zembylas, 2008, 2010a). As this research suggests, there might be more intense emotional reactions against immigrants as a result of the development of defence mechanisms against all those who are perceived to be 'different', 'threatening', and 'fearsome'.

The first step in studying such a complex phenomenon is to find out in more detail the attitudes of indigenous students toward immigrants as well as toward those perceived to be 'enemies'. Thus, this paper describes and analyses the results of a survey on Greek Cypriot students' attitudes toward immigrants (migrant workers are included in this category) and toward those perceived to be the 'enemy-others' (i.e., Turks and Turkish Cypriots). This investigation is important because issues of immigration seem to be further complicated by the ongoing ethnic conflict between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Although this study does not aim to examine whether attitudes about immigration change as a result

of ethnic conflict (or vice versa), it provides an initial mapping to numerically chart the terrain of Greek Cypriot students' tendencies toward both immigrants and 'enemy-others'[3]. The present study of Greek Cypriot students' attitudes is valuable because attitudes are believed to be crucial in the formation and maintenance of various (social, ethnic and cultural) conflicts and misunderstandings or their gradual dismantling (Leong & Schneller, 1997). This study, then, has important implications for intercultural education, not only in Cyprus, but also in the wider Mediterranean region in which similar challenges may exist.

The paper is divided into the following five parts. In the first part, we provide an overview of education in the Republic of Cyprus, particularly in relation to ethnic conflict and immigration in schools. Then, we briefly review the previous research conducted on Greek Cypriot students' attitudes toward immigrants and Turks/Turkish Cypriots, followed by the theoretical framework of the research study undertaken here. Next, we describe the research methodology (research questions, research setting, sample and questionnaire) and then present the results. The paper concludes with a discussion of some implications for intercultural education at the levels of educational policy and classroom practice.

Education in the Republic of Cyprus: ethnic conflict and immigration

Cyprus has been a divided society since the violent intercommunal clashes in 1963-1967; in 1974, Turkey invaded after a failed military coup attempt to unify Cyprus and Greece. Before the Turkish invasion, Greek Cypriots constituted approximately 80% and Turkish Cypriots 18% of the island's population. The division of Cyprus, as a result of the Turkish invasion, came with population displacements of around one-third of a total of 600,000 Greek Cypriots to the south and 45,000 Turkish Cypriots to the north. As a result of the lack of contact for many years, the division of the island has been almost complete: geographically, culturally, and politically. Since 2003 there has been a partial lift of restrictions in movement, which has meant that contact has been possible again.

In conflict-ridden societies, such as Cyprus, education is segregated along ethnopolitical lines, resulting in educational systems being often blamed for perpetuating divisions and conflict (Bush & Saltarelli, 2000; Davies, 2004). Existing research addressing education in divided Cyprus (e.g., Kizilyürek, 1999; Bryant, 2004; Spyrou, 2006; Hadjipavlou-Trigeorgis, 2007; Zembylas, 2008) shows indeed that the curricula and educational practices of both Greek Cypriots

and Turkish Cypriots (who are educated separately) have been systematically used to create negative stereotypes and prejudices about the other. This research indicates how primary and secondary school curricula and pedagogies implore students to remember each side's glories, honour the heroes who fought the 'enemy-other', and despise the other group. Also, history textbooks mirror the collective narratives of each side – for example, in the ways that blame is attributed, the silence of the other's trauma, and the delegitimation of the other's historical existence (Papadakis, 2008).

Recently, in the south there has been an increasing number of 'multicultural' schools, that is, schools attended by minority children from various cultures, including those children whose parents are migrant workers or married to someone from another culture. Occasionally, there are a few Turkish-speaking[4] children whose parents stayed in the south after the events of 1974 or moved there recently; thus, the challenge that these schools face becomes more complex, because these children are often treated with hostility in light of their ethnic identity and mother tongue (see Zembylas, 2010a, in press).

Intercultural education as an educational policy is relatively new to Greek Cypriot schools and society. Although policy documents and official curricula include strong statements about humanistic ideas and respect for human rights, justice and peace, in practice non-Greek Cypriot children are seen as deficient and needing to be assimilated (Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou, 2007). The current model of intercultural education being implemented in Cyprus is a mainstreaming programme in which language learners attend classrooms with indigenous Greek-speaking children. Schools which have an increasing number of non-indigenous children become part of a Zone of Educational Priority and receive additional help – such as extra hours for assisting non-indigenous students to learn the language. The primary goal is to provide intensive Greek lessons and specialised assistance to non-indigenous students. Some Greek Cypriot researchers (e.g., see Gregoriou, 2004; Papamichael, 2009; Theodorou, 2008) emphasise that the social and cultural capital of the immigrant and Turkish Cypriot children is ignored and the integration of these children is accompanied by forms of passive exclusion and cultural misrecognition. Gregoriou, in particular, suggests that our investigations should not remain focused only on Greek Cypriot students' xenophobic attitudes toward immigrants, but should also include inquiries on the gradual development of views and practices toward those perceived as 'enemies' in Cyprus.

With this background information in mind, the next section moves on to the review of previous research and the theoretical framework of the present study, drawing on critical multiculturalism and critical sociology of education in particular.

Review of previous research and theoretical framework

Previous research

Although there is an increasing body of work on intercultural education in Cyprus in recent years, there are only a handful of studies that focus their investigations on the attitudes of Greek Cypriot students toward both immigrants and Turkish Cypriots/Turks. These few studies are based primarily on attitude surveys – however, there is also some qualitative research on children's views – documenting a variety of stereotypes and prejudices (Trimikliniotis, 2004a, 2004b; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2009). A brief overview of this research is provided below to show not only what has been done so far, but also the gaps that exist in the present literature.

A research study conducted by Harakis et al. (2005) – entitled *Anti-Social Behaviour of Youths in Cyprus: Racist Trends* – involved a sample of teachers, heads of schools and deputy heads, media persons and youth, and was carried out during 1998-2001. Two special questionnaires were administered to 1,242 youths between the ages of 15-23. Some interesting findings among youth were the following: 10% of the youths said that racism was justified; religion, way of life/ culture and outlook were important criteria to get married to a foreigner; 38% of the youths said that stereotypes were justified or usually justified; Turkish Cypriots living in the government-controlled areas were the less acceptable group among all respondents in the study, followed by workers of Arabic origin, the Roma, Pontians, workers of Asian origin, workers coming from east-central Europe and women working in cabarets; and finally, 50% of all the respondents in the study said that foreigners were usually connected with crime incidents.

The Centre for the Study of Childhood and Adolescence has also published a report based on a survey conducted with fifth and sixth graders in 2004 in 10 different schools of Nicosia (the capital of Cyprus) with a total sample of 288 children (see Spyrou, 2004). The study – entitled *Greek Cypriot Children's Knowledge about, Perceptions of, and Attitudes towards Foreigners in Cyprus* – painted a very negative picture of foreigners by Greek Cypriot students. For example, 75% of children stated that they thought there were too many foreigners living in Cyprus; the overwhelming majority of children stated that either 'some' (46%) or 'all' of foreigners should go back to their countries; only 14.6% stated that it was good that foreigners lived in Cyprus, while 59% thought that foreigners helped increase crime. On the other hand, as Spyrou pointed out, the fact that not all children expressed these negative feelings toward foreigners was encouraging.

The qualitative part of Spyrou's survey study confirmed the findings from the administered questionnaire, highlighting the complexities and ambivalences in the

children's perceptions of Sri Lankan and Filipino women who were employed as domestic workers in Cyprus (Spyrou, 2009). In another study, Panayiotopoulos & Nicolaidou (2007) acknowledge that their semi-structured interviews with students revealed racist incidents against non-indigenous children; non-indigenous children were targeted mostly because of the manner in which they dressed, the financial difficulties of their families and their skin colour. Also, Papamichael (2009) and Theodorou (2008) make references to Greek Cypriot children's negative views of immigrants and the ways in which immigrant students are marginalised. Their analysis shows elements of racism and xenophobia in the majoritised group's understandings and behaviours. In addition, Philippou's (2009) mixed method study shows the prejudiced and stereotyped way in which Greek Cypriot pupils represent a number of national outgroups (including various groups of immigrants and Turks); these groups are hierarchised on the basis of various rules-criteria (the Turks being the least preferred people).

Finally, a recent ethnographic study that lasted for two years also documented numerous racist incidents in which Turkish-speaking students were systematically marginalised by Greek Cypriot students (Zembylas, 2010a, in press). The study explored how practices and discourses at four multicultural schools (three primary schools and one secondary school) shaped or were shaped by the majority group's emotions about 'race' and 'ethnicity'. A major finding was that Greek Cypriot students and teachers' practices and discourses in relation to the complex interplay of race and ethnicity were illustrative of the contingent cultural, political and historical structures that both informed and were reinforced by these practices. This study showed how racialisation and ethnicisation processes were inextricably linked to perceptions, practices, and discourses in Greek Cypriot public schools.

Overall, this brief review of previous research indicates a variety of negative attitudes toward immigrants, Turks and Turkish Cypriots by Greek Cypriot students at various grade levels. These studies – which clearly reflect similar surveys in the wider society of Cyprus (e.g., see Council of Europe: European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance, 2006; the fourth round of the *European Social Survey*, 2008/2009) – do not cover simultaneously a wide range of grade levels from late primary throughout to late secondary school, and do not address gender differences among students. The present study addresses these important limitations of previous research. In addition, this study attempts to address for the first time the attitudes of a wide range of indigenous students' age groups toward *both* immigrants *and* those perceived as the 'enemy-other'. Finally, this study is theoretically grounded in different ideas than those used in the past (see below), and thus the implications for intercultural education take a rather different policy and practical direction.

Theoretical framework

There are three modes of majority-minority interaction that can be used to analyse reactions to immigrants: assimilation, integration and separatism (Shamai, 1987, 1990; Steiner-Khamsi, 2003). *Assimilation* is the elimination of public and private differences between different groups; essentially, the immigrant group adopts the language, culture and norms of the majority (host) group. *Integration* is the elimination of public differences between groups but not necessarily their private (e.g., cultural) differences; in other words, the goal is to create a common unifying citizenship or civic national identity but leaving to individuals to choose their communities of belonging in private domains, enabling them to maintain their cultures. Finally, *separatism* is the preservation of differences between majority and minority groups; the immigrant group members do not adopt the culture of the host society and keep within their own culture. Theorists like Jenkins (2004) and Benhabib (2002) have made attempts to reconcile private and public differences between cultural groups by contending that cultures and identities are not fixed but fluid.

A theoretical framework that combines critical multiculturalism (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) and critical sociology of education (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Giroux, 1993) is adopted in this study. Critical multiculturalism is valuable as a framework to gain a deeper understanding of students' attitudes toward immigrants and 'enemy-others', because it adopts a comprehensive view of diversity and acknowledges the role of power relations in shaping dominant discourses and practices in society and schools (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Mahalingham & McCarthy, 2000; Nieto, 2000). Attention is not focused on superficial differences, but on those differences that are linked to social injustices, contested political issues and unequal socio-political structures (e.g., citizenship rights, societal conflict, contribution to economy etc.). In other words, the critical multicultural perspective offers a different theoretical grounding for the interaction mode with immigrants and other minoritised groups; assimilation, integration and separatism are critiqued from the perspective of power relations and their everyday consequences. Furthermore, critical multicultural theory recognises the role of majoritised students' attitudes and their negative impact on interactions with minoritised students (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). These attitudes are generally acknowledged as powerful markers that are used to legitimate inequality between majoritised and minoritised groups.

With regard to the definition, attitude refers to a favourable or unfavourable assessment of things, people, places, events or ideas. Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) defined the structure of attitudes as being made up of three components: cognitive, emotional and behavioural. Breckler (1984) has elaborated further this theory,

clarifying that: the cognitive component (e.g., stereotypes) is formed by perceptions, beliefs, and expectations; the emotional component (e.g., prejudice) is made up of feelings, moods and emotions; and the behavioural component (e.g., discrimination) is made up of action tendencies and self-reported behaviour.

Attitudes constitute an important component of the cultural capital possessed by the dominant group and are selectively endorsed and transmitted at an early age by schools (Del Barco et al., 2007). Privileges of the dominant group are generally unrecognised and most members of this group are unaware of the ways in which racist attitudes against minoritised groups affects them (Gillborn, 2008). The concepts of *cultural reproduction* and *cultural hegemony* (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Giroux, 1993) describe how a society – schooling, in particular – reproduces itself through perpetuating existing cultural and social hierarchies. The dominant group attempts to control resources and establish its view as universally accepted. Therefore, the dominant group may be unaware of its racist attitudes or that it has interests in concealing them (Neville et al., 2000). In addition to the presence of racist attitudes, there might also be nationalist attitudes, that is, beliefs that one's own national origin or identity are superior than other national identities; such attitudes are frequently met in conflict-ridden societies (Sen, 2006). It is valuable, then, to examine Greek Cypriot children's attitudes toward immigrants and toward those who may be considered as the 'enemy' in light of the ethnic conflict in Cyprus.

Methodology

The research questions explored in this study were: (i) what are the Greek Cypriot students' attitudes – that is, perceptions, emotions, and self-reported behaviour – toward immigrants and Turks/Turkish Cypriots?; and (ii) which kind of interaction (assimilation, integration and separatism) would Greek Cypriot students like to have with immigrants?

In order to investigate these research questions, a self-reported questionnaire was administered to a random sample of schools (selected from all schools in Cyprus) and primary and secondary students (randomly selected within their schools). More specifically, the sample consisted of students at the upper primary grades (ages 11-12), lower secondary (ages 13-15) and upper secondary (ages 17-18). The questionnaire items (see Appendix) were generated on the basis of the literature on students' attitudes toward immigrants, particularly items developed through the work of Shamai (1987, 1990), Spyrou (2004), Van Peer (2006) and Neville et al. (2000), consultation with experts on racial/ethnic attitudes, and informal individual and group discussions with indigenous and non-indigenous

students, teachers and community groups in Cyprus. Consequently, three groups of questions probed: (i) perceptions; (ii) emotions; and (iii) self-reported behaviours of Greek Cypriot students toward immigrants and Turks/Turkish Cypriots. More specifically, the research instrument was an anonymous structured questionnaire with open and closed type questions. The questionnaire consisted of five parts that are briefly described below.

The first part (constituted by two sub-sections) consisted of 35 statements investigating Greek Cypriot students' perceptions of immigrants. The participants had to select one out of five possible responses, indicating their degree of agreement with the provided statements. The statements on this section of the questionnaire were measured on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from '1 – strong disagreement' to '5 – strong agreement'. The second part also investigated Greek Cypriot students' perceptions, but this time the questions referred to specific national groups. In particular, the students were provided with 14 different national groups (e.g., Indians, Pakistanis, Greeks, Turks, Turkish Cypriots, etc.) present in Cyprus and were asked to indicate on a scale from 1-10 their degree of agreement to four pairs of cultural characteristics (e.g., 'uncivilised-civilised'). The third part consisted of two sub-sections: the first one included 8 statements exploring Greek Cypriot students' emotions about immigrants; the structure of the responses was based on a 5-point Likert scale like before; in the second sub-section, the students were asked to provide a hierarchy of their emotions (among six pleasant and unpleasant ones) about: (i) immigrants in general; and (ii) the possibility that all immigrants will abandon Cyprus tomorrow. The fourth part consisted of 10 items investigating the self-reported behaviours of Greek Cypriot students toward immigrants. The structure of the responses was again a 5-point Likert scale. Finally, the last part asked for the usual demographic information (gender, grade level).

The survey was administered in the spring of 2009. The population of the survey consisted of students from primary (ages 11-12) and secondary (ages 13-15 and 17-18) education enrolled in the public schools of the Greek Cypriot educational system (i.e., 25,450 students). The sample was identified, as mentioned earlier, when schools were randomly selected from the list of all schools in the Greek Cypriot educational system, since the purpose of the study was to identify students' perceptions toward immigrants, irrespective of their area of residence or their prior experiences with immigrants. A random sample from each selected school also identified the specific number of participant students, who received an anonymous questionnaire with an accompanying letter explaining how to fill it out. The administration of questionnaire took place in classes, at a time specifically allocated for their completion. Overall, the questionnaire was sent to 2,023 students, 675 primary and 1,348 secondary

students, a representative sample based on the statistics of the Ministry of Education and Culture (2008). The final sample consisted of 1,333 students of primary and secondary education (a response rate of 66%). More specifically, the sample consisted of 465 students (37.5%) of primary education (11-12 years), 370 students (29.8%) of lower secondary education (13-15 years) and 406 students (32.7%) of upper secondary education (17-18 years). There were 611 (45.4%) males and 698 (52.4%) females; 30 students (2.3%) did not state their gender. One hundred and twelve students who completed the questionnaire (8.5%) defined themselves as immigrants, and therefore they were excluded from the study (after the completion of the questionnaire) since the study focused on Greek Cypriot students. The data were analysed using the statistical package SPSS. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used in order to provide answers to the research questions of the present study.

Findings

Perceptions of immigrants

The analysis of the answers provided by the sample of this study reveals that the majority of Greek Cypriot students held rather negative perceptions of immigrants in Cyprus. Since these negative perceptions were a general finding emerging from the results, it was decided to present in tables all the statements with the highest disagreement (where more than 50% of the sample expressed disagreement or strong disagreement with a statement on a 5-point scale). The results from other statements in the questionnaire, which revealed agreement (more than 50% of the sample expressed their general agreement on a 5-point scale) are presented and discussed independently below.

Table 1 presents the statements with which Greek Cypriot students disagreed to the higher degree.

As illustrated in Table 1, for example, more than half of the students considered immigrants unequal to Cypriots. Moreover, a high percentage of Greek Cypriot students disagreed with the statements that the immigrants 'enrich the cultural life and the tradition of Cyprus', 'make Cyprus better', 'help the economy of Cyprus' and 'help Cypriots see things in a different way'. However, more than half of the students of the sample answered that immigrants 'do not make Cyprus worse', and a large number of Greek Cypriot students considered that 'the national identity of Cypriot people is not threatened by the presence of immigrants'. A high percentage of students stated that 'racial incidents in Cyprus are scarce, occasional events', despite the fact that many students considered racism against immigrants

TABLE 1: Greek Cypriot students' perceptions of immigrants

Statement	Disagreement* f	Disagreement* %
Immigrants enrich the cultural life and the tradition of Cyprus	1043	78.7
Immigrants make Cyprus a better place	1016	76.3
Immigrants should forget their own habits	858	65.0
Racism against immigrants is justifiable	845	63.7
Immigrants help Cypriots see things in a different way	823	62.0
Immigrants help the economy of Cyprus	806	61.5
Racial incidents in Cyprus are scarce, occasional events	792	60.3
The way Cypriots behave towards immigrants is very good	774	58.3
I consider immigrants as equal to Cypriots	721	54.6
The national identity of Cypriot people is threatened by the presence of immigrants	713	53.8
Immigrants make Cyprus a worse place	693	53.0
Immigrants have the same opportunities as Cypriots to succeed in their life	702	52.7
Immigrants have more rights than Cypriots do	671	50.9
Immigrants must return to their origin countries	604	45.6

* Disagreement is a combination of '1 = strong disagreement' and '2 = disagreement' on a 5-point scale

to be unjustifiable. Furthermore, Greek Cypriot students, while disagreeing with the statements that immigrants 'have the same opportunities as Cypriots to succeed in their life' and that they 'have more rights than Cypriots do', stated that 'the way Cypriots behave towards immigrants is not very good'. Moreover, it was found that the majority of Greek Cypriot students disagreed with the statements 'immigrants should forget their own habits' and 'immigrants must return to their origin countries'.

In addition to the results shown in Table 1, the study revealed interesting findings regarding the agreement of Greek Cypriot students to specific statements relating with their perceptions of immigrants, racism and discrimination in Cyprus. Interestingly, it was found that a considerable percentage of Greek Cypriot students agreed with the statement 'racism is a major problem in Cyprus' ($f = 746$, 56.7%) as well as with the statement 'it is important for immigrants to preserve their own culture and values' ($f = 592$, 44.8%).

On the other hand, only a percentage of 38.4% ($f = 510$) of the students agreed with the statement 'there is discrimination against immigrants in Cyprus', while a considerable percentage of students ($f = 494$, 37.3%) stated that 'immigrants are to be blamed for the increase of crime in Cyprus'. Finally, 46.8% ($f = 619$) of the students agreed with the statement that immigrants 'steal jobs from Cypriots', while 41.8% ($f = 553$) admitted that immigrants 'are employed in jobs that Cypriots do not want to do'.

Table 2 presents the expectations of Greek Cypriot students from immigrants.

As indicated in Table 2, quite a high percentage of participants stated that they did not mind that they did not know the immigrants very well. On the other hand, it is interesting that a great percentage of the sample stated that they did not mind the presence of immigrants in Cyprus. Also, a high percentage of them stated that they did not mind when immigrants socialised among themselves and they did not expect immigrants to dress, think and behave like Cypriots.

Other interesting findings of this study (not presented in the Table 2) revealed that a percentage of 57% ($f = 755$) of the sample stated that they did mind 'when immigrants behave as if they have more rights than Cypriots'. However, 38% ($f = 503$) of the sample agreed that 'they like someone no matter what his/her origin is' and a percentage of 44.9% ($f = 598$) agreed that 'they like someone no matter what his/her skin colour is'.

ANOVA tests revealed statistically significant differences among the three age groups in the sample (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary). More specifically, differences were found in the following statements: (i) 'I do mind the presence of immigrants in Cyprus' ($F(2, 1291) = 23.41$, $p < .0005$); (ii) 'I do mind when immigrants speak in their mother tongue' ($F(2, 1289) = 17.12$, $p < .0005$); (iii) 'I do mind when immigrants socialize among themselves' ($F(2, 1280) = 9.32$,

TABLE 2: Greek Cypriot students' expectations from immigrants

Statement	Disagreement*	
	f	%
I do mind when immigrants mix with each other	1104	83.9
I expect immigrants to think like Cypriots	1054	79.7
I expect from immigrants to get dressed like Cypriots	1040	79.0
I expect immigrants to behave like Cypriots	1001	76.0
I do mind the fact that I do not know immigrants very well	905	68.4
I do mind the presence of immigrants in Cyprus	797	60.0
I do mind when immigrants speak in their mother tongue	744	56.1
I do mind when immigrants do not understand the Greek language very well	729	55.2

* Disagreement is a combination of '1 = strong disagreement' and '2 = disagreement' on a 5-point scale

$p < .0005$); (iv) 'I do mind when immigrants behave as if they have more rights than Cypriots' ($F(2, 1290) = 15.29$, $p < .0005$); and (v) 'I like immigrants' ($F(2, 1284) = 23.73$, $p < .0005$). The statistical analysis showed that upper secondary students were more negative toward immigrants than primary students, who were more positive toward immigrants than lower secondary students in all of the above statements. Overall, Greek Cypriot students aged 17-18 years were the most negative toward immigrants.

Perceptions of specific national groups

This part of the study investigated Greek Cypriot students' perceptions of specific national groups. Students were asked to state their perceptions of several ethnic groups on a 1-10 scale, from 'not at all' to 'very much', on given statements that target specific characteristics (civilised, nice, hard working, and clean). The

results generally revealed the presence of hierarchical perceptions of national groups. It is important to clarify here that students were *not* asked to hierarchise groups; hierarchies were drawn up from the responses to statements presented in the questionnaire. Table 3 shows the general perceptions (means and standard deviations on a 10-point scale from the lowest to the highest degree) of the sample toward the various national groups and according to the four aforementioned characteristics.

TABLE 3: Greek Cypriot students' perceptions of specific national groups

Characteristics	Sri Lankan	Russian	Pontian	Indian	Pakistani	Americans	English	Chinese	Philippine	Turks	Greeks	Romanian	Bulgarian	Turkish Cypriots
Civilised														
Mean*	4.43	6.07	4.41	4.84	4.11	6.84	7.58	6.23	5.06	2.77	8.23	5.41	5.73	4.87
St Dev	2.39	2.79	2.83	2.59	2.45	2.93	2.73	2.77	2.68	2.55	2.48	2.73	2.80	2.79
Clean														
Mean	4.26	6.29	4.81	4.52	3.89	7.04	7.65	6.03	4.98	2.87	8.36	5.53	5.74	4.78
St Dev	2.63	2.85	2.92	2.56	2.51	2.85	2.70	2.71	2.66	2.64	2.38	2.73	2.73	2.79
Hard Working														
Mean	6.09	5.93	5.01	5.44	5.03	6.19	6.91	6.47	5.86	3.08	7.58	5.59	5.85	4.99
St Dev	2.92	2.70	2.93	2.56	2.74	2.82	2.66	2.71	2.78	2.69	2.68	2.72	2.71	2.75
Nice														
Mean	5.45	5.58	4.73	5.48	4.90	6.01	6.89	6.20	5.66	2.70	8.05	5.48	5.71	5.09
St Dev	2.68	2.74	2.90	2.61	2.64	2.88	2.77	2.73	2.70	2.56	2.53	2.75	2.77	2.91

* All means are based on the 1-10 scale from 'not at all' to 'very much'

As shown in Table 3, Greek Cypriot students view the Greeks as the most 'civilised', 'hard working' and 'nice' national group, followed by the English. Americans (third group in 'civilized' and 'clean') and Chinese (third group in 'nice' and 'hard working') are the groups which follow in ranking order, after the Greeks and the English. The Bulgarians always come before the Romanians in the ranking. Turkish Cypriots are ranked in the middle, without having a stable ranking position. The last national group (with significant difference from all the others) is always the Turkish one. Also, the Pakistanis are always toward the end of the ranking scale.

Clearly, not all of these groups enjoy the same status in Cyprus, as they are quite different in reasons for migrating, professions exercised, and perceived cultural identities. Thus, Greek Cypriot students evaluate the English as being

'higher' in their perceptions than Eastern Europeans (e.g., Romanian and Bulgarian); at the same time, the Pakistanis and Sri-Lankans are placed even 'lower' than Eastern Europeans in Greek Cypriot students' perceptions. These perceptions indicate how Greek Cypriot students' representations include biases, prejudices, and particular preferences for certain national groups. Without more data (e.g., interviews) to triangulate these findings (e.g., to justify one's choices), it is difficult to interpret why some groups are perceived differently. One can only speculate on these differences based on similar studies in which the positive perceptions of the English may have to do with their 'good culture' as opposed to the Asian cultures about which Greek Cypriot students are not so informed (Philippou, 2009). Not surprisingly, Greek Cypriot children display the greatest negativity toward the Turks who are traditionally represented as the 'arch-enemy' in Greek Cypriot society and schools (Papadakis, 2008). Unlike earlier studies in Cyprus, however, it is interesting to note that Turkish Cypriots are not perceived as negatively as Turks, perhaps because of more recent efforts in the Greek Cypriot society to make this distinction at various educational, social and political levels (Zembylas, 2008).

Emotions

This part investigates the emotions of Greek Cypriot students about immigrants. The results show the *emotional ambivalence* concerning the way Greek Cypriot students feel about immigrants.

Specifically, the majority of Greek Cypriot students, as shown in Table 4, stated that they did not trust immigrants; they did not feel comfortable among immigrants and they did not have friendly relationships with immigrants. On the other hand, a great number of students disagreed with the statement 'I dislike immigrants', stating that they did not disregard (ignore) immigrants and they did not avoid them. Finally, more than half of the students disagreed with the statement 'I feel sorry for immigrants'.

Student responses were analysed to investigate for statistically significant gender differences. The analysis showed that girls gave a higher score of agreement in the statements 'I respect immigrants' ($t = -4.89$, $df = 1234$, $p < .0005$), and 'I feel sorry for immigrants' ($t = -2.28$, $df = 1284$, $p = .023$), indicating that they respected and felt sorry for immigrants to a higher degree than boys. However, in the statements 'I avoid immigrants' ($t = -2.28$, $df = 1284$, $p = .023$), 'I dislike immigrants' ($t = 5.62$, $df = 1153$, $p < .0005$) and 'I disregard immigrants' ($t = 4.36$, $df = 1185$, $p < .0005$), boys were more positive than girls in stating their disagreement with the statements above.

TABLE 4: Greek Cypriot students' emotions about immigrants

Statement	Disagreement*	
	f	%
I trust immigrants	1029	78.3
I feel comfortable among immigrants	914	70.1
I dislike immigrants	893	68.6
I disregard immigrants	875	66.7
I have friendly relationships with immigrants	793	60.3
I avoid immigrants	746	56.7
I feel sorry for immigrants	704	53.8

* Disagreement is a combination of '1 = strong disagreement' and '2 = disagreement' on a 5-point scale

Moreover, running ANOVA tests, it was shown that there were statistically significant differences among students in the three age groups (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary). More specifically, it was found that primary students were more positive than all the other age groups concerning the statements 'I trust immigrants' ($F(2, 1291) = 27.62$, $p < .0005$), 'I respect immigrants' ($F(2, 1283) = 9.05$, $p < .0005$) and 'I have friendly relationships with immigrants' ($F(2, 1290) = 15.81$, $p < .0005$). Furthermore, primary students disagreed more than the older students with the statements 'I avoid immigrants' ($F(2, 1289) = 6.79$, $p = .001$), 'I dislike immigrants' ($F(2, 1276) = 10.04$, $p < .0005$) and 'I disregard immigrants' ($F(2, 1288) = 20.16$, $p < .0005$).

Finally, when Greek Cypriot students were asked to rank their emotions about immigrants in general, the analysis showed, as indicated in Table 5, that the emotion which was ranked first was 'fear', followed by 'anger' and 'compassion'. The last emotions in ranking were 'aversion', 'disgust' and 'pleasure'.

TABLE 5: A hierarchy of Greek Cypriot students' emotions about immigrants

Emotions	Mean Rank*
When I think of immigrants, I feel:	
Fear	3,13
Anger	3,40
Compassion	3,40
Aversion	3,59
Disgust	3,62
Pleasure	3,85

* (χ^2 = 99,223, p < .0005)

TABLE 6: A hierarchy of Greek Cypriot students' emotions about immigrants

Emotions	Mean Rank*
If immigrants abondon Cyprus tomorrow, I will feel:	
Relief	2,90
Pleasure	3,40
Concern	3,43
Enthusiasm	3,53
Disappointment	3,80
Sadness	3,93

* (χ^2 = 214,998, p < .0005)

Regarding the second statement, 'If immigrants abandon Cyprus tomorrow, I will feel …', the students answered that they would firstly feel 'relief', secondly 'pleasure', then 'concern', followed by the feeling of 'enthusiasm', 'disappointment' and lastly 'sadness' (see Table 6).

Self-reported behaviour

The results showed that the self-reported behaviour of Greek Cypriot students toward immigrants was negative (with percentages of disagreement being over 50%), as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7: Greek Cypriot students' self-reported behaviour toward immigrants

Statement	Disagreement*	
	f	%
Immigrant children invite me to their house	886	70.3
I invite immigrant children to my house	877	70.0
I help immigrant children do their homework	828	66.0
I live in the same neighbourhood with immigrant children	796	63.7
I sit next to immigrant children in class	752	59.6
I play with immigrant children during brake time	729	57.9
I collaborate with immigrant children on school projects	722	57.8
I help immigrant children learn Greek	692	54.6
I have friends who are immigrant children	678	53.7
I help immigrant children at school	669	52.7

* Disagreement is a combination of '1 = strong disagreement' and '2 = disagreement' on a 5-point scale

The majority of Greek Cypriot students reported that they do not help immigrant children at school in their effort to learn Greek or to do their homework, and they do not collaborate with immigrant children on school projects. Moreover, they stated that they do not play with immigrant children during break time and they do not sit next to immigrant children in class. In addition, the results showed that Greek Cypriot students do not live in the same neighbourhood with immigrant children, they do not invite immigrant children to their house (and vice versa), and they do not have friends who are immigrant children.

Our analysis also revealed that there were statistically significant differences between the answers of boys and girls. More specifically, girls were more positive in their answers than boys (even though all the answers were overall negative, as shown above) in the following statements: 'I help immigrant children at school' (t = -3.76, df = 1253, p < .0005), 'I help immigrant children learn Greek' (t = -2.91, df = 1253, p = .004), 'I help immigrant children do their homework' (t = -2.46, df = 1240, p = .014), 'I collaborate with immigrant children on school projects' (t = -4.78, df = 1235, p < .0005) and 'I sit next to immigrant children in class' (t = -2.89, df = 1247, p = .004).

Discussion and implications

In this study we have addressed two main issues: (i) what are the Greek Cypriot students' attitudes toward immigrants and Turks/Turkish Cypriots?; and (ii) which kind of interaction (assimilation, integration and separatism) would Greek Cypriot students like to have with immigrants? The findings of the present study show that Greek Cypriot students manifest generally negative attitudes toward immigrants and Turks/Turkish Cypriots; also, responses to several statements throughout the questionnaire reveal that, overall, Greek Cypriot students seem to prefer separation from immigrants rather than these groups' assimilation or integration. The following discussion summarises the main findings of the study and examines some implications at the levels of educational policy and classroom practice.

First, while Greek Cypriot students believe that immigrants come to Cyprus to do the jobs that Greek Cypriots refuse to do, they also consider that immigrants do not contribute to economic development and cultural life. On the contrary, it is widely believed that these groups are responsible for the increase in crime rates and unemployment. This finding confirms research results on perceptions of immigrants by adolescence in Cyprus (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2007) and in Europe (Van Peer, 2006), especially in Southern Europe, as the fourth round of the *European Social Survey* (2008/2009) shows[5]. One might argue that the negative perceptions of immigrants are not so unexpected, given that there seems to be no meaningful

contact between Greek Cypriot students and the immigrant population. At the same time, however, this negativity shows not only the hegemonic views about immigrants in the Greek Cypriot society, but also the immense pedagogical and social work that will be required to 'undo' such dominant stereotypes and prejudices (e.g., the view that immigrants are responsible for crime).

Second, Greek Cypriot students acknowledge that racism against immigrants is a considerable problem in Cyprus and racist incidents are not isolated, because Greek Cypriots do not behave properly toward immigrants. However, only two in five students agree that there is discrimination against immigrants. It is certainly encouraging (compared to previous studies in Cyprus over the years) that racism against immigrants is acknowledged; yet, it is alarming that such a large percentage of students denies that there is discrimination against immigrants. This fact confirms once again the absence of any meaningful contact with immigrants, as well as the lack of their integration in society (see Del Barco et al., 2007, for similar findings in Spanish schools). In fact, there is a widespread belief that no matter what immigrants do, they will never become 'Cypriots' culturally (i.e., integrated in the Cypriot society); rather, they will always be 'bounded' in their own national or cultural identities.

With regard to emotions, most Greek Cypriot students express apathy and indifference toward immigrants, except when they feel that immigrants somehow threaten them; in the latter case, Greek Cypriot students develop highly negative attitudes. Particularly with reference to specific national groups, Greek Cypriot students show more preference to Westerners, while Asians are lowest in their list (see also Theodorou, 2008; Philippou, 2009). Turkish Cypriots are in the middle, while the least preferred in all measures is the Turkish national group. This finding confirms previous research (e.g., Spyrou, 2004; Makriyianni, 2007) about the dominance of certain ethnic and cultural hierarchies, but there seems to be some improvement concerning the perceptions of Turkish Cypriots over the years. Thus, it is shown that the Greek Cypriot students' perceptions toward Turks and Turkish Cypriots are gradually differentiated, with the Turks being always the lowest in the students' formulated hierarchies. A possible interpretation of this finding might be found in the differential identification of the Turks and Turkish Cypriots in public and educational discourses over the years (Papadakis, 2008). Also, our recent ethnographic research (Zembylas, in press) shows that students are more positive toward Turkish Cypriots than Turks because some cultural similarities are identified with the former group, while the latter group is consistently linked to the Turkish invasion and the increase of illegal immigrants/settlers from Turkey to Cyprus. Although this study has not examined whether there is any correlation between Greek Cypriot students' attitudes toward immigrants and the attitudes toward Turks and Turkish Cypriots, the overall findings suggest the need to

explore this intersection in future research. Especially in parts of the Mediterranean region in which the intersection between immigration and ethnic or other conflict is strongly present (e.g., Israel and Palestine; Morocco and Spain; etc.), educators need to pay further attention to the ways in which it is manifested in students' attitudes and practices. Finally, with regard to the emotions about immigrants, Greek Cypriot students seem to feel discomfort and lack of trust. In particular, feelings of fear and dislike top the list. In the hypothetical scenario that immigrants would abandon Cyprus tomorrow, feelings of relief, pleasure and enthusiasm are the highest on the list.

Lastly, as far as self-reported behaviour is concerned, it is concluded that the Greek-Cypriot students' behaviour towards immigrants is rather negative. Both boys and girls avoid contact with immigrant children, although girls appear more positive. In general, there is a more positive assessment from girls towards immigrants; also, primary school students (ages 11-12) appear more sensitive towards immigrants compared with students between 13-18 years old. With respect to a more positive assessment from girls, it is claimed that perhaps girls show greater sensitivity than boys in social and personal issues (see e.g. Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995). With respect to the issue of age, it might be claimed that children of age 11-12 years old are exposed to the cultural capital that is rather hostile to immigrants for shorter periods of time than later age groups, therefore, the negative impact is not as strong yet.

With respect to the second research question, the present study shows that Greek Cypriot students seem to prefer separation models of coexistence with immigrants rather than assimilation or integration. This conclusion is based on collective evidence from students' responses to several statements indicating that assimilation and/or integration of immigrants is impossible (e.g., it is believed that immigrants will never 'become' Cypriots culturally) or unacceptable (e.g., it is believed that immigrants should leave at some point anyway, so an issue of integration does not exist). These findings confirm that there is a strong monolithic view about 'culture' and 'identity' among Greek Cypriot students that may be further accentuated by the unresolved political problem in Cyprus (Spyrou, 2009; Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2009; Zembylas, in press). The perceptions of ethnic and cultural hierarchies among Greek Cypriot students – particularly in relation to Turkish Cypriots and Turks – provide evidence of a strong national ethos in schools (for a similar argument in the context of Israel see Al-Haj, 2004, 2005). This national ethos – which can also be linked to society and the media, but is certainly mirrored in schools, as Bar-Tal's (1998, 2004) research indicates in the context of Israel – is shown in the Greek Cypriot students' lack of concern that intergroup interaction is missing, as well as in their expression of preference that each group mixes within itself.

This study has implications for educational policy and classroom practice and encourages educational researchers not only in Cyprus but also in the rest of the Mediterranean region to explore the potential consequences of adolescent perceptions of immigrants and other minoritised groups. At the level of policymaking, it is important that educational authorities and schools take responsibility for identifying and challenging adolescent racist and/or nationalist views. As Gillborn (2008) emphasises, school authorities need to set clear procedures for both the monitoring of racist incidents and nationalist behaviours in schools, and commit themselves to challenge racism and ethnic discrimination in all their formations. For example, there are still no monitoring mechanisms of racist incidents in Greek Cypriot schools and no explicit policies addressing how schools should respond in such cases. Often, many racist claims are covered by co-opting national(ist) discourses about the Greek Cypriot struggle to survive from the constant threat by the Turks (Zembylas, 2008). To respond to these challenges, educational policymakers in Cyprus need to develop relevant policies that not only recognise racist/nationalist incidents, but also propose effective strategies to deal with them.

At the level of classroom practice, the findings of the present study suggest that attention needs to be given to intercultural education that helps teachers and students become more sensitive to issues related to racism, prejudice and discrimination (Banks, 2007), along with a deeper understanding of how these issues may cross path with national(ist) claims. As critical multiculturalism teaches us, an important aspect of challenging racist and nationalist views is acknowledging the role of power relations in shaping dominant discourses and practices in society and schools (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Therefore, the investigation of social injustices, contested political issues and unequal socio-political structures need to become an important part of the school curriculum (Nieto, 2000) in Cyprus. The majoritised group's limited understandings of racism, prejudice and discrimination need to be challenged, moving beyond the simplistic acknowledgment of racism to a more nuanced understanding of how racist views are entangled with discrimination practices in everyday life and in what ways they reinforce certain inclusions/exclusions on the basis of one's ethnic, religious or other identity. Children and youth also need to recognise that beliefs and practices about the supposed superiority of one's ethnic origin constitute particular forms of racism and nationalism; thus, naming these beliefs and practices as racist or nationalist is an important first step in developing mechanisms to overcome stereotypes and prejudices (Zembylas, 2008, 2010a).

In conclusion, the need to make sense of the emerging relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous students constitutes a key component of forming

effective educational policies and classroom practices that will balance unity and diversity in any educational system of the increasingly multicultural Mediterranean region. Unity without diversity results in hegemony and oppression; diversity without unity leads to separatism and fragmentation (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997; Banks, 2007). Although set in a different context, Gillborn (2008) makes an argument which is relevant to all Mediterranean societies: the importance of recognising diversity while promoting unity and anti-racism. In countries which suffer from ethnic or other conflict, it seems that there is an additional level of complexity that demands our in-depth attention and analysis, perhaps as a way to overcome these conflicts.

Notes

1. Most of the migrants to the Republic of Cyprus are third country nationals from south east Asia, Arab countries, eastern Europe and some European Union citizens; also, a large number includes the Pontian Greeks, who form a special category because most of them are holders of Greek passports and can settle in Cyprus without too many formalities (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2007; Trimikliniotis, 1999). There has also been some internal movement of Turkish Cypriots (who are Cypriot citizens) from the north to the south of Cyprus, especially after the partial lift of restrictions of movement in 2003.
2. Although the word 'indigenous' has certainly different meanings in different contexts, we use the term 'indigenous' here in reference to how the local population is self-identified as the group that has 'natural rights' over Cyprus (see Trimikliniotis, 2009; Zembylas, 2010b).
3. We are currently finalising a mixed-method study that focuses precisely on examining the links between attitudes toward immigrants and those toward Turks and Turkish Cypriots.
4. The term 'Turkish-speaking' is more inclusive and this is why it is used here in reference to both Turkish Cypriots and Roma (who speak Turkish in Cyprus). It is not always easy to distinguish who is 'ethnically' Turkish Cypriot and who is Roma (Trimikliniotis & Demetriou, 2009). When we want to make a distinction in the text, then the term 'Turkish Cypriots' is used.
5. The findings of this study resonate with research results on the general public perceptions of immigrants in several European countries (e.g., Green, 2007; Masso, 2009; Rustenbach, 2010).

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE:
ATTITUDES OF GREEK-CYPRIOT PUPILS
TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS AND OTHER GROUPS

We would like to ask you to complete *with honesty* the following *anonymous* questionnaire, which is conducted by the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation of the Ministry of Education and Culture, regarding how you think and feel about immigrants and other groups in Cyprus.

DEFINITION

IMMIGRANT: THE PERSON WHO ABONDONS HIS/HER COUNTRY FOR A LONG PERIOD OF TIME OR PERMANENTLY IN ORDER TO GET SETTLED IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.

PART Ia

Note to what extent you agree with each of the following statements, by putting in circle the appropriate number from the scale on the right:	Not at all	A little bit	Sufficiently	Very much	A lot
1. Immigrants make Cyprus a better place	1	2	3	4	5
2. Immigrants enrich the cultural life and the tradition of Cyprus	1	2	3	4	5
3. Immigrants steal jobs from Cypriots	1	2	3	4	5
4. Immigrants help the economy of Cyprus	1	2	3	4	5
5. Immigrants make Cyprus a worse place	1	2	3	4	5
6. Immigrants are employed in jobs that Cypriots do not want to do	1	2	3	4	5
7. Immigrants are to be blamed for the increase of crime in Cyprus	1	2	3	4	5
8. Immigrants should forget their own habits	1	2	3	4	5
9. Immigrants help Cypriots to see things in a different way	1	2	3	4	5
10. Immigrants must return to their origin countries	1	2	3	4	5
11. The way Cypriots behave towards immigrants is very good	1	2	3	4	5

12. Immigrants have the same opportunities as Cypriots to succeed in their life	1	2	3	4	5
13. The number of the immigrants in Cyprus is too high	1	2	3	4	5
14. Racism against immigrants is justifiable	1	2	3	4	5
15. There is discrimination against immigrants in Cyprus	1	2	3	4	5
16. No matter what the immigrants do, they will never become Cypriots	1	2	3	4	5
17. Immigrants have more rights than Cypriots do	1	2	3	4	5
18. Immigrants should be obliged to learn Greek	1	2	3	4	5
19. Racial incidents in Cyprus are scarce, occasional events	1	2	3	4	5
20. Racism is a big problem in Cyprus	1	2	3	4	5
21. I consider immigrants as equal to Cypriots	1	2	3	4	5
22. It is important for immigrants to preserve their own culture and their own values in life	1	2	3	4	5
23. The national identity of Cypriot people is threatened by the presence of immigrants	1	2	3	4	5

PART Ib

Note to what extent you agree with each of the following statements, by putting in circle the appropriate number from the scale on the right:	Not at all	A little bit	Sufficiently	Very much	A lot
1. I do mind the presence of immigrants in Cyprus	1	2	3	4	5
2. I do mind when immigrants speak in their mother tongue	1	2	3	4	5
3. I do mind when immigrants socialize among themselves	1	2	3	4	5
4. I do mind when immigrants do not understand the Greek language very well	1	2	3	4	5
5. I do mind when immigrants behave as if they have more rights than Cypriots	1	2	3	4	5
6. I do mind the fact that I don't know immigrants very well	1	2	3	4	5

7. I expect from immigrants to get dressed like Cypriots	1	2	3	4	5
8. I expect from immigrants to think like Cypriots	1	2	3	4	5
9. I expect from immigrants to behave like Cypriots	1	2	3	4	5
10. I like immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
11. I like somebody no matter what his/her origin is	1	2	3	4	5
12. I like somebody no matter what his/her skin colour is	1	2	3	4	5

PART II

Complete what your belief is about each of the following groups by putting in circle the appropriate number from a scale 1-10 (for each pair of characteristics separately).

Sri Lankans

Characteristics											
Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Russians

Characteristics											
Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Pontians

Characteristics											
Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Indians

Characteristics											
Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Pakistanis	Characteristics										
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Americans	Characteristics										
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

English	Characteristics										
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Chinese	Characteristics										
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Philippinos	Characteristics										
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Turkish	Characteristics										
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Greeks	Characteristics											
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Romanians	Characteristics											
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Bulgarians	Characteristics											
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

Turkish Cypriots	Characteristics											
	Uncivilized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Civilized
	Dirty	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Clean
	Lazy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Hard working
	Bad	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Nice

PART IIIa

Note to what extent you agree with each of the following statements, by putting in circle the appropriate number from the scale on the right:	Not at all	A little bit	Sufficiently	Very much	A lot
1. I trust immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
2. I respect immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
3. I dislike immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
4. I disregard immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
5. I feel sorry for immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
6. I feel comfortable among immigrants	1	2	3	4	5
7. Immigrants keep me neutral	1	2	3	4	5
8. I have friendly relationships with immigrants	1	2	3	4	5

PART IIIb

Use numbers from 1-6 to put in order the six emotions of each statement, starting from the strongest one (e.g., write number 1 for the emotion which you feel to be the strongest of all, number 2 for the strongest emotion after number 1 etc.)

When I think of the immigrants I feel:	
EMOTIONS	Anger
	Pleasure
	Disgust
	Fear
	Compassion
	Aversion

If immigrants abandon Cyprus tomorrow, I will feel:	
EMOTIONS	Relief
	Pleasure
	Disappointment
	Concern
	Sadness
	Enthusiasm

COMPLETE PART IV ONLY IF YOU HAVE IMMIGRANT CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASSROOM/SCHOOL

PART IV

Note to what extent you agree with each of the following statements, by putting in circle the appropriate number from the scale on the right:	Not at all	A little bit	Sufficiently	Very much	A lot
1. I help immigrant children at school	1	2	3	4	5
2. I help immigrant children learn Greek	1	2	3	4	5
3. I help immigrant children do their homework	1	2	3	4	5
4. I collaborate with immigrant children on school projects	1	2	3	4	5
5. I sit next to immigrant children in class	1	2	3	4	5
6. I play with immigrant children during break time	1	2	3	4	5
7. I live in the same neighbourhood with immigrant children	1	2	3	4	5
8. I invite immigrant children to my house	1	2	3	4	5
9. Immigrant children invite me to their house	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have friends who are immigrant children	1	2	3	4	5

PART V

Put a √ or complete:

1. Gender: boy ☐   girl ☐

2. Class: A ☐   B ☐   C ☐   D ☐   E ☐   F ☐

3. Primary School ☐   High School ☐   Lyceum ☐

4. Did you have the opportunity to meet immigrant children?   Yes ☐   No ☐

    If YES how many?…………

5. Do you have immigrant children in your class?   Yes ☐   No ☐

    If YES how many?…………

6. Are you an immigrant child?   Yes ☐   No ☐

TEACHER PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN PORTUGAL: THE (IM)POSSIBILITIES OF A CONTESTED MODEL

MARIA ASSUNÇÃO FLORES

Abstract – *This paper analyses the process of implementation of a new policy on teacher performance appraisal in Portugal. It addresses issues related to its purposes and underpinning assumptions, and the ways in which it has been put into place in schools. Data are drawn from a review of existing literature on the topic both nationally and internationally, from official documents and from current research in which the author is involved. By and large, the system is rather summative and bureaucratic which can be seen in the amount of regulations, grids, and documents and the ways in which the outcomes of the appraisal system are to be achieved and used. Among the most critical issues are the existence of a quota system, the lack of recognition of the appraisers, existing bureaucracy, which represents a burden for most schools and teachers, etc. The paper concludes with some recommendations and ways of looking forward.*

Introduction

*I*n many countries, concerns about student achievement in national and international assessments and the need to raise the standards of teaching and to improve the quality of pupil learning have led the governments to a number of reforms. These have focused in many cases on standard-based models and on increased accountability and surveillance of teachers' work, among which is teacher performance management and appraisal (Middlewood & Cardno, 2001; Avalos, 2004; Avalos & Assael, 2006; Assael & Pavez, 2008). Portugal is no exception. In 2007, a new Teacher Career Statute (Decree-Law number 15/2007) was issued stipulating the existence of two categories of teachers and the principles of differentiation and hierarchy in the teaching career along with new teacher appraisal mechanisms.

Thus, it is important not only to analyse the assumptions and principles underpinning the new policy on teacher performance appraisal, but it is also crucial to look at the ways in which teachers and school leaders perceive it and the ways in which they make sense of it. This paper addresses the following questions: (i) what are the main features (and the assumptions underpinning them) of the new policy on teacher performance appraisal in the Portuguese context?; and (ii) given the general acceptance of the need for a new policy on teacher performance

appraisal, what are the arguments behind resistance and controversy in regard to the new policy issued in 2007? This analysis is based upon a review of existing literature on the topic both nationally and internationally, from official documents and from current research in which the author is involved.

Teacher performance management and appraisal: what does the literature tell us?

In general, existing literature identified the tensions between formative (oriented toward professional development) and summative purposes (linked to accountability and managerial decisions) (Chow et al., 2002; Avalos & Assael, 2006; Stronge, 2006a). Whereas some authors argue for the incompatibility of these two purposes, others advocate the possibility and the need to incorporate them into the same system of teacher appraisal (see, for instance, Simões, 2000; Chow et al., 2002; Avalos & Assael, 2006; Stronge, 2010). This needs to be related to views of teaching and teacher professionalism (Darling-Hammond, Wise & Pease, 1983; Sachs, 2003; Flores, 2005; Day, Flores & Viana, 2007) and the ways in which given concepts of teaching are translated into evaluation criteria and standards (Avalos & Assael, 2006).

In a recent review, Vaillant (2008) draws attention to the diversity of the teacher appraisal systems worldwide and of the mechanisms for certifying and assessing teachers. She has also identified the political, conceptual and operational factors which facilitate and hinder teacher appraisal process, drawing attention to the need to take into account the contextual variables in the implementation of a teacher appraisal system as well as the adequacy of the instruments for the appraisal process, the need of the appraisers to be recognised and the importance of feedback.

Existing literature discusses teacher appraisal systems within an accountability era through dominant forms that threaten teachers' traditional autonomy (e.g., school inspection and performance management in England), but it also recognises the key importance of self-assessment and of critical reflection to teacher professional development and improvement through, for instance, reflection in, on and about practice; action research; and teacher learning academies (Day, 2010). As Stronge & Tucker (1999) arguably suggest, 'Evaluation can be an important tool for supporting and improving the quality of teaching. Unfortunately, teacher evaluation too frequently has been viewed not as vehicle for growth and improvement, but rather as a formality that must be endured' (p. 356). And they go on to say: 'When evaluators approach evaluation as a mechanical, bureaucratic exercise and teachers view it as an event that must

be endured, evaluation becomes little more than a time-consuming ritual' (p. 356). In other words, what is of crucial importance in teacher appraisal systems is its link to professional development and improvement. This is to be related to issues of quality of teaching, learning and achievement. In this regard, Darling-Hammond (2010) draws a distinction between teacher quality and teaching quality. The former is associated with 'the bundle of personal traits, skills, and understandings an individual brings to teaching, including dispositions to behave in certain ways' (p. 200); the latter has to do with 'strong instruction that enables a wide range of students to learn' (p. 201) in order to meet the demands of the discipline, the goals of instruction, and the needs of students in a particular context. Thus, as the author suggests, 'Teaching quality is in part a function of teacher quality – teachers' knowledge, skills, and dispositions – but it is also strongly influenced by the context of instruction' (p. 201).

Thus, teacher appraisal systems are about documenting the quality of teacher performance, helping them improve and holding them accountable for their work (Stronge, 2006b). Discussing the essential components for a quality teacher appraisal system, Stronge (2010) draws attention to the three Cs – that is, Communication, Commitment and Collaboration – in order to create 'the synergy that can elevate evaluation to a meaningful dialogue about quality instruction for students' (p. 31). This means that for quality teacher appraisal, it is important to look at the ways in which both appraisers and appraisees see the appraisal process and the relationship between them (Chow et al., 2002), the ways in which schools and head teachers put a given policy into practice as well as the nature and the purposes of the appraisal system. Added to this is the level of information and training of various stakeholders involved in the process, particularly the appraisers and the teachers. As Nevo (1994) noted, 'teachers who understand how teaching is being evaluated could not only improve their self-evaluation; they could also benefit in preparing themselves for being evaluated by others or demonstrating the quality of their skills and performance to designated audiences' (pp. 109-110).

Existing literature on teacher appraisal has highlighted its complexity as far as its purposes, processes and effects are concerned. It has drawn attention to the importance of teachers' perceptions and the complexity of the social dimension in the implementation process (Fullan, 2001; Van der Vegt, Smyth & Vandenberghe, 2001; Flores, 2005; Tuytens & Devos, 2008). In this respect, both the content of the evaluation system and the context in which the system will be used have to be taken into account if it is to be effective and successful (Peterson & Comeaux, 1990). Research has demonstrated the need to pay attention to the meaning (and sense-making) of the actors involved in the implementation of a given policy, their values and emotions as well as the social interactions and the contexts in which such change is going to be implemented (Timperley & Robinson, 1997; Van der

Berg, Vandenberghe & Sleegers, 1999; Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002). A recent study by Tuytens & Devos (2008) has shown the influence of the principal on teachers' perceptions of a new policy on teacher evaluation, lending support to previous empirical work (Retallick & Fink, 2002; Kertsen & Israel, 2005).

Fullan (2001) draws attention to the dynamics of the factors of change and he states that 'intrinsic dilemmas in the change process, coupled with the intractability of some factors and the uniqueness of individual settings, make successful change a highly complex and subtle process' (p. 71). Van der Berg, Vandenberghe & Sleegers (1999), for instance, stress that teachers construct their own systems of knowledge, skills and attitudes regarding their job and these will inform the personal meaning with which they shape their professional behaviour and the ways in which they deal with change. Others suggest that 'teachers' prior beliefs and practices can pose challenges not only because teachers are unwilling to change in the direction of the policy but also because their extant understandings may interfere with their ability to interpret and implement the reform in ways consistent with the designers' intent' (Spillane, Reiser & Reimer, 2002, p. 393). This is even more complex when what is at stake is a new policy on teacher performance appraisal.

Teacher performance appraisal in Portugal: context and content

In Portugal, the centralisation of the decision-making process and bureaucracy are two key elements in the education system (Lima, 2006; Ferreira, 2008). These are very much prevalent in the structures and cultures of the system itself and of the schools, despite the rhetoric of decentralisation and autonomy. This situation leads in many cases to the mismatch between the discourse and the reality, between the legal norms and the real practice. In other words, on the one hand, there is the legal framework – the national policy level – which entails, for instance, the principles of decentralisation and de-bureaucratisation along with the discourse of flexibility and autonomy. On the other hand, there is the level of practice (schools and teachers at the local level) in which opportunities, challenges and constraints emerge in a context marked by highly centralised and bureaucratic tradition (Ferreira, 2008). Thus, the policies and reforms of de-centralisation and de-bureaucratisation and their emphasis on assessment and outcomes co-exist with centralised practices prevailing in the structures and cultures which value the formal procedures (Flores & Ferreira, 2007). This tradition of centralisation and bureaucracy is visible in the amount of legal texts and decree-laws issued by the Ministry of Education, an example of which is the new policy on teacher performance appraisal as it will be illustrated later in this paper. In this section,

a brief overview of the new policy is presented. After a summary of the main features of the legal framework for teacher performance appraisal prior to the publication of the new policy in 2007, the main dimensions of the system currently underway will be discussed in the light of existing literature on this topic.

The situation before 2007: teacher career and teacher appraisal

Up until recently, the career of teachers was regulated by legislation issued in 1990 (Decree-Law number 139-A/1990). This regulation stipulated the Teacher Career Statute which was based upon the principle of a 'single career'. All teachers would follow the same path in order to progress to the top of their career. Ten different steps comprised the teaching career. In general, progression was understood as a 'matter of time' in so far as it was dependent upon years of experience, a number of credits obtained for attending in-service education courses[1] and the writing-up of a critical reflection on one's own practice. Teachers had to write-up a report (self-assessment report) in which they stated the activities they had undertaken, the teaching they had done over a given period of time (depending on the stage of the career in which they were, usually for 4 or 5 years, except for the one-year contract teachers who had to do it annually). The report was to be assessed by the leadership team (the Executive Council) of the school in which they worked. It was an administrative and bureaucratic model for progression in the teaching career within a teacher appraisal system which 'did not evaluate' as literature in this topic has highlighted (e.g., Pacheco & Flores, 1999; Silva & Conboy, 2004).

In 2006, the government started the implementation of a process of change to this model. The principles of differentiation and hierarchy (contrasting with the *flat* career existing up until then) were introduced along with evaluation mechanisms based upon the fact that '[existing] teacher performance appraisal, with very few exceptions, has become a mere bureaucratic procedure without no content at all' (quote from the preamble of the Decree-Law number 15/2007 which has introduced the new policy on teacher performance appraisal).

The Teacher Career Statute (2007) and its main features

The new Teacher Career Statute was issued in 2007 (Decree-Law number 15/2007) and was justified by the government with the need to 'promote the cooperation amongst teachers' and to 'reinforce coordination roles' at school which require a new structure for the teaching career based upon the principles of differentiation. It was also related to the need to introduce a 'more demanding system for teacher performance appraisal with effects on the development of teachers' career' making it possible to 'identify, promote and reward the merit and

to value the teaching activity' (see preamble of Decree-Law 15/2007). The new Teacher Career Statute stipulates the existence of two teacher categories (senior teachers, i.e., *professores titulares* and classroom teachers, i.e., *professores*) – the former, apart from teaching, are responsible for coordinating roles at school and supervision and evaluation of other teachers. The criteria used to apply to senior teachers include years of experience and post-graduate qualification and performance appraisal outcomes[2]. Those who may access the category of *professor titular* (senior teacher) must have a permanent post at school, 18 years of experience, at least 'good' as a classification in terms of performance appraisal and must be approved in a public examination which focuses upon the teacher's professional activity developed over a certain period of time in order to demonstrate the abilities necessary to become senior teacher and undertaking the roles inherent to this post (article 38, Decree-Law number 15/2007). However, access to the top of the career is limited to a third of the number of posts available in any given school. A recent Decree-Law (number 270/2009) establishes new rules for teacher career statute, namely in terms of years of service in each stage; the introduction of another stage for teachers in the category of *professores* (i.e., classroom teachers) and new rules for accessing to the category of *professores titulares* (i.e., senior teachers), namely in terms of years of service to apply for public examination in order to access the senior teacher category.

Another initiative relates to the conditions for accessing the teaching career. From now on, an 'examination' on 'knowledge and competencies' is required for all those entering the teaching profession in order to 'demonstrate the mastery of knowledge and competencies required to teach' in a given area/field of knowledge (article 22, Decree-Law number 15/2007). A 'probationary year' (in order to verify the abilities of the new teacher regarding the requirements of the profession) was also introduced during which the new entrant is accompanied by a senior teacher with specialised training in educational organisation and curriculum development, pedagogical supervision and teacher training (see article 31, Decree-Law number 15/2007). This new initiative is in place for the first time during the academic year 2009/2010 (cf. Despacho number 21666/2009).

The teacher performance appraisal system

With the new legislation, new mechanisms for teacher performance appraisal were also introduced. It is argued that teacher performance appraisal has become more demanding and complex, having effects upon the progression in the teaching career in order to 'identify, promote and recognise merit'. The main goals of the teacher performance appraisal are to 'improve student achievement and the quality of student learning' and to 'provide guidelines for personal and professional

development within a framework of a system recognising merit and excellence' (see article 40, Decree-Law number 15/2007). Teacher performance appraisal also aims at: (i) contributing to improve teaching practice; (ii) contributing to improve teacher development and growth; (iii) identifying teachers' training needs; (iv) identifying the factors which influence teachers' achievements; (v) differentiating and recognising the best professionals; (vi) identifying indicators for managerial decisions; (vii) promoting cooperation among teachers in order to enhance student achievement; and (viii) promoting excellence and quality of the services to the community (see also article 40, Decree-Law number 15/2007). Teacher performance appraisal is applied according to the duties and roles of teachers (stated in the same Decree-Law number 15/2007) in the light of the four main dimensions which are considered to be the key elements in the depiction of the professional profile of teachers (see Decree-Law number 240/2001)[3]: (i) professional and ethical dimension; (ii) development of teaching and learning; (iii) participation in school activities and relationship with the community; and (iv) training and professional development within a lifelong perspective. The Scientific Council for Teacher Appraisal (2008b), the national body which is responsible for giving recommendations and monitoring the implementation of the appraisal process at a national level, suggests the need to define national standards for teacher appraisal beyond 2009/2010 based upon practice carried out in the first cycle of evaluation. Teacher performance appraisal is to be carried out every two years; the end of the first cycle of the evaluation process is to be completed by December 2009. In January 2008, the Decree number 2/2008 was issued specifying the procedures to be put into practice within the new teacher performance appraisal system.

The Decree number 2/2008 stipulates that teachers are entitled to have their performance appraised, the aim of which is to contribute to their professional development. Teachers, it is also stated, are granted the 'necessary means and conditions for their performance in accordance with the targets set up'. Teachers are also required to do 'their own self-assessment in order to guarantee their active involvement and hold them responsible for the appraisal process' and to 'improve their performance based upon the information collected during the appraisal process'. Teachers are knowledgeable of 'the objectives, assumptions, content and functioning of teacher performance appraisal system' and they have the right to appeal. Teachers fill in a form with their own self-assessment, the aim of which is to 'involve the appraisee in the appraisal process in order to identify opportunities for professional development' and 'meeting the targets set up' including those related to the improvement of student achievement (see article 16, Decree number 2/2008). Self-assessment is compulsory for all teachers. Table 1 summarises the main characteristics of the existing teacher performance appraisal system.

TABLE 1: Main characteristics of the teacher performance appraisal system (see also Flores, 2009a)

Frequency	Every two years
Main effects	Progression in the teaching career (mainly summative purpose)
Appraisers	Coordinator/head of department (who may delegate this task to other senior teachers) Head teacher (who may delegate this task to other members of the Executive Council)
Issues to be evaluated	The head of department assesses the scientific and pedagogical involvement and quality of the teacher based upon: (i) preparation and organisation of teaching; (ii) teaching itself; (iii) pedagogical relationship with the students; and (iv) process of assessing student learning. At least three lessons (in different modules or topics) are to be observed each school year for each teacher. The head teacher assesses the following aspects: (i) level of attendance (number of lessons taught); (ii) level of accomplishment of the duties required of the teacher; (iii) progress in student achievement and reduction of dropout rates taking into account the socio-educational context of the school; (iv) participation at school which includes the participation of the teacher in activities planned for the school year and quality and relevance of teacher participation for meeting the targets; (v) in-service training undertaken, namely courses related to the content of the teacher's subject and those related to the needs of the school; (vi) roles undertaken at school; and (vii) development of research and innovative projects at school.
Procedures and instruments	Instruments are to be approved by the Pedagogical Council[4] of each school in the light of the recommendations of the Scientific Council for Teacher Appraisal. It includes the setting up of individual targets for each teacher (agreed between appraisers and appraisee; in case of disagreement, the appraisers' perspective is prevalent). Individual targets are set up based upon: (i) improvement of student achievement; (ii) reduction of dropout rates; (iii) support given to student learning including those with learning difficulties;

| | (iv) participation in the educational and management structures at school; (v) relationship with the community; (vi) in-service activities relevant for the individual professional development plan; and (vii) participation and development of projects or activities included in the Annual Activity Plan of the school and other extra-curricular projects and activities.

The appraisal process encompasses the following steps: filling in the self-assessment form by the teacher to be appraised; filling in the assessment forms by the appraisers; checking and validating of the evaluations of 'excellent', 'very good' and 'unsatisfactory' by the Committee for coordinating teacher performance appraisal at school level; individual interview between appraisers and appraisee; final meeting among appraisers in order to reach the final appraisal decision. |
|---|---|
| **Final/outcome rating scale** | Excellent
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Unsatisfactory

A quota system does exist in each school for 'excellent' and 'very good' evaluations (to be fixed in accordance with external evaluation of the school)[5]. |
| **Coordination of the person** | In each school, a Committee for coordinating teacher performance appraisal is created. A national council – the Scientific Council for Teacher Appraisal – was also created in order to monitor the process of implementation of teacher performance appraisal (see Decree number 4/2008). |

The main characteristics of teacher performance appraisal system in Portugal were presented very briefly in this section. However, a number of adjustments have been made over the last two years in the process of its implementation leading to the publication of more legal texts in order to overcome the resistance (from the part of teachers and teachers' unions) and turbulence in schools. This was associated with an increase in workload and bureaucracy, thus, making it difficult for schools to manage and implement the system of teacher performance

appraisal which was considered to be a burden for schools and teachers. This has led to two processes of 'simplification' of the model which will be dealt with in the next section.

The process of implementation of the new policy: resistance and drawbacks

By and large, the key features of the new system for teacher performance appraisal include a diversity of appraisers and instruments, the consideration of a number of dimensions in the teacher performance appraisal process (including classroom observation), the setting up of targets regarding a number of issues including student achievement, the existence of a quota system (one of the most critical issues), along with hierarchy and differentiation in the teaching career introduced by the Decree-Law number 15/2007. These changes were not without controversy, especially from the part of the teachers' unions and the teachers themselves who have organised independent movements in order to fight against the new policy. Teachers went on strike twice during 2008/2009 and two large demonstrations were also organised (May and November) in the streets in Lisbon with over 100,000 teachers protesting against the new policy. While the existence of 'a single career' for all teachers was an important win acquired by teachers' unions in the Teacher Career Statute in 1990, teachers also saw it positively in terms of job security, fairness and collegiality, even if many teachers wanted differentiation in teaching. Claims that the model is too bureaucratic due to the amount of meetings, grids and other paperwork teachers have to comply with, preventing them from focusing on teaching and learning, were at the forefront of the protests. Teachers were also critical of the lack of training and specific skills required of appraisers and of the hierarchy and differentiation introduced in the teaching career[6].

Recent years have, therefore, been marked by turbulence and resistance with implications for schools and teachers' work. A number of tensions and a climate of anxiety and pressure in schools, along with ongoing protests about the new policy, became part of the day-to-day lives of schools and teachers (which was very much visible in the media). In order to respond to protests and resistance, especially about the claim that there were no conditions to implement the new policy under the current circumstances in schools, the government has introduced two processes of 'simplification'.

The first one concerned the appraisal of teachers (especially those with one-year contracts and those who needed the outcome of the appraisal process in order to progress in their career) during 2007/2008 (see Decree number 11/2008). This simplified version included the following: (i) self-assessment form; and (ii) assessment form from the Executive Council according to the following items

– (a) level of attendance; (b) accomplishment of the service attributed to the teacher; and (c) attendance at in-service training courses. The second process of 'simplification' took place recently (see Decree number 1-A/2009) after a number of protests on the part of the teachers and teachers' unions, namely two strikes and demonstrations. Three main areas of concern were then identified: (i) the existence of appraisers from different areas of knowledge of those to be assessed; (ii) bureaucracy; and (iii) the heavy workload inherent to the process of teacher performance appraisal. Thus, the government has introduced a simplified version to be put into place in schools in the first cycle of the appraisal process (which ends in December 2009). It can be described as follows:

(i)   to guarantee that appraisers are from the same field of knowledge of those to be assessed;
(ii)   to exclude from the appraisal process the criteria regarding student achievement and dropout rates (taking into consideration the difficulties of these issues identified by the national Scientific Council for Teacher Appraisal);
(iii)   in the case of tacit agreement, meetings between appraisers and appraises are not necessary;
(iv)   the process of appraisal carried out by the heads of department is to occur only when appraisees require so (including classroom observation), but it is a necessary condition to get the final evaluation of 'excellent' and 'very good';
(v)   to reduce to two (instead of three) the number of lessons to be observed, although the appraisees may require a third classroom observation;
(vi)   teachers who may retire until 2010/2011 (or those who want to apply for early retirement) are excused from the appraisal process;
(vii)   to excuse teachers teaching professional and vocational areas from the appraisal process unless they want to do so;
(viii) to simplify the appraisal process of the appraisers and to compensate for their workload (they are only assessed by the Executive Council of the school).

Overall, these changes and adjustments to the process of appraisal resulted from the lack of conditions to put into practice such a complex and bureaucratic system and they represent, to some extent, a drawback in some of the key elements of the new policy. One of the main critical issues is classroom observation – a key element in teacher appraisal – which has become not compulsory over the last two years (i.e., 2007/2008 and 2008/2009). Other areas of concern relate to the lack of recognition and training of appraisers and the excessive bureaucracy which this

model has brought to schools, along with difficulties in terms of time to perform all the tasks and roles required of the schools and teachers within the framework of the new policy. This became visible in teachers' resistance to the model, especially because they saw it as something 'against them' and 'imposed on them'. This is also to be related to the ways in which the government has dealt with the introduction of the new policy and the ways in which it has been put into practice, particularly the timing and the conditions for its implementation. The introduction of this policy was regarded as a fact rather than a process to be understood and tried out within a context of adequate information, training and discussion. All this, associated with the fact that there was no experimentation before generalisation and the inexistence of a culture of evaluation, has led to a rather complicated situation which may undermine the need and relevance (and effects) of a policy of teacher performance appraisal aiming at improving the quality of teaching, teacher and school development.

In a recent empirical study, carried out during the implementation of the new policy, Ribeiro (2008) found that teachers' expectations about the effects of the new system were rather low. A negative view was prevalent which was associated with issues of inequality, competition among teachers, negative impact upon teachers' working relationships, bureaucracy and the lack of possibility to progress in the teaching career due to the quota system. Some teachers were sceptical, pointing to the ambiguity and doubt as far as the effects of the new system were concerned. They were concerned about the purposes and the process of the implementation of the new policy and its impact upon practice. There were doubts and concerns about the ways in which the new system would promote teachers' professional development and the quality of teaching. Only a minority revealed a positive perspective about the new system which they related to the combination between teachers' professional development and accountability purposes that they saw as one of the positive features of the new system. Overall, concerns about the profile of the appraisers, the nature of communication between appraiser and appraisee, and the need for adequate and reliable assessment instruments were also identified by the teachers. The scepticism concerning the effects of the new policy and the lack of social recognition of the teaching profession were also said to be two of the critical issues (Ribeiro & Flores, 2008).

Some of the issues illustrated above have also been highlighted by head teachers and school teachers within the context of ongoing research (see Flores, 2009b, 2009c). By and large, findings point to a rather negative picture of the situation in schools. Feelings of unhappiness, lack of motivation and sense of job satisfaction, along with, in some cases, conflict and tension emerge from the data. These are mainly associated with issues of purpose of the policy and process of its implementation (which many teachers see as too summative and unfair), lack

of recognition of the appraisers, lack of information and training about the teacher performance appraisal system, bureaucracy, and the existence of a quota system. Teachers were also sceptical concerning the effects of the new policy on their continuing professional development and on school improvement.

Conclusion and discussion: looking forward

By and large, the implementation of the new policy has been marked by resistance and controversy, although there is general agreement about the need to change the former system which was considered to be ineffective (based on a self-assessment report). Avalos & Assael (2006, p. 265), drawing upon the Chilean experience, have identified a number of suggestions and recommendations for the implementation of teacher performance appraisal systems: (i) 'wide participation of all stakeholders, especially teachers'; (ii) formulation of 'criteria in a participatory way' to be based upon existing knowledge on competent teaching; (iii) trying out of a 'variety of procedures and instruments'; (iv) connecting teacher performance appraisal to other teacher policies (e.g., professional development opportunities); and (v) 'resisting the temptation to hurry the design and implementation process. Rather, provide time for both, as well as for monitoring especially in the first years of implementation and remain willing to make any needed adjustments'.

If we take these into account and relate them to the Portuguese context, it can be argued that most of them, if not all, were overlooked. Indeed, as described above, there was a generalisation of the system without previous experimentation. The time between design and implementation (and generalisation) was too short for an adequate dissemination of the information and for relevant training to occur[7]. As a consequence, the level of participation was not that adequate either. Teacher participation and a sense of ownership are crucial if teacher performance appraisal is to be effective and successful (Nevo, 1994; Avalos & Assael, 2006). Two of the factors hindering this process were the ways in which the new system was implemented and the timing of its implementation (including all the regulations and increased amount of work that schools and teachers had to handle). By and large, the existing system is rather summative and bureaucratic which can be seen in the amount of regulations, grids, and documents and the ways in which the outcomes of the appraisal system are to be achieved and used. Among the most critical issues are the quota system, the lack of recognition of the appraisers, the necessary time and conditions to undertake such a complex and bureaucratic system, the follow-up and support in terms of opportunities for teacher professional development, bureaucracy, etc.

If there is agreement upon the need to introduce a new system for teacher performance appraisal, which would focus on the key element of teachers' practice – the classroom practice – and which would 'recognise and promote merit', along with the participation of different appraisers, the truth is that the ways in which the new policy has been implemented has led to even more resistance and controversy. An analysis of the new policy, the process of its implementation and the current situation in schools identifies a number of risks. Apart from the problems described above, the ways in which senior teachers were selected (in the first phase), and the timing and the ways in which the process was implemented has led to a climate of tensions, turbulence and anxiety in schools leading to early retirements (in some cases with significant reductions in terms of salary). The risk is that this policy will lead to no real effect in terms of teacher professional development, quality of teaching and school improvement. Rather, superficial changes might occur with no impact upon changing or challenging existing teacher professional cultures (and teacher socialisation), with issues such as individualism and competition undermining the creation and development of communities of practice in schools. This was indeed one of the critical issues identified by the Scientific Council for Teacher Appraisal (2008a, p. 1) recognising 'the risk of teacher appraisal to become an irrelevant act in terms of teacher professional development' due to the 'excessive bureaucracy, the emergence or reinforcement of unnecessary conflicts' and 'moving away from the formative and regulatory goals' that a teacher appraisal model should include. These are also felt as real concerns for teachers in recent research (Flores, 2009b; 2009c) in so far as they were rather negative and sceptical in regard to the ways in which they see the development of this policy, especially in regard to working relationships in the workplace.

Recent reports by OECD (see Santiago et al., 2009) and the national Scientific Council for Teacher Appraisal (CCAP, 2009) point to the existence of a number of features to be improved in the Portuguese teacher performance appraisal system. A recent study (CCAP, 2009) of the process of monitoring of the implementation of the teacher performance appraisal, involving 30 schools, reports that problems were felt at three levels:

- at a macro-level – in which policies related to the teaching career, namely with differentiation, accountability, and quota system, etc., were at the forefront of the resistance and lack of motivation;
- at a meso or school level – changes in school organisation namely in regard to departments and existing cultures and practice. These relate to the lack of classroom observation and the hierarchy and role differentiation which, according to teachers, undermine collaboration;

- at a micro-level – within the teaching profession and at the level of practice in so far as the system has changed the culture of peers (lack of differentiation) and individual autonomy. This gave rise to lack of motivation, conflicts and changes in professional relationships among teachers.

In general data point to the inadequate timing in terms of the implementation of the system; the too early and normative production of tools for teacher appraisal; the normative view prevailing at schools; the mediatisation of the process and its impact upon the profession and upon the society in general; the lack of adequate training mainly for appraisers, etc.

As for the OECD report, although it recognises the need and relevance of the existing model as a foundation for further development, it also suggests a number of adjustments and recommendations for a more robust model, among which are: strengthen teacher evaluation for improvement purposes; providing links between developmental evaluation and career-progression evaluation; ensuring the articulation between school and teacher evaluation; re-examining profession-wide standards and a sharing understanding of what counts as accomplished teacher; differentiating criteria according to stage of the career and type of education; targeting instruments to assess key aspects of teaching; relying on three core instruments: classroom observation, self-evaluation and teacher portfolio; redesigning and further developing training for evaluation skills; accrediting external evaluators for career-progression evaluation; ensuring teacher engagement and motivation for successful reform, etc.

The question is: where do we go from here? It is hard to say at this moment because there is ongoing debate and discussion about the 'new' model for teacher performance appraisal involving the new Minister of Education, teachers' unions and political parties. Recent debates seem to point to changes in the status quo. However, at this moment, it is possible to highlight a number of issues to be considered in the change process: the key importance of teachers' participation, motivation, morale and commitment (which has been affected over the last years); the need for a climate of trust and reliability in the appraisal process (which was related, among other factors, to the lack of recognition of appraisers and validity of instruments); the need to focus on the key aspects of teaching, namely through classroom observation; the creation and clarification of the criteria for the appraisal process; the simplification of procedures and instruments, which were too bureaucratic and summative; the need to build upon school and teachers' experiences on appraisal developed over the last years. More importantly, a sense of ownership and a climate of trust is essential if teacher performance appraisal is to be effective and successful. For this to happen and for positive impact in terms of teacher development and improvement of student learning and achievement,

teacher performance appraisal needs to be reliable and valid. Issues such as the nature of communication (a key element for effective and successful teacher appraisal), the quality of feedback, the relationship between appraisers and appraisees, the existence of relevant support and follow-up opportunities for the continuing professional development of teachers, etc. are some of the critical areas for further concern and research.

Notes

1. In 1992, In-Service Education and Training of teachers (INSET) became institutionalised and compulsory for all teachers for teacher career progress (1 credit per year = 25 hours of training). The new Decree-Law, issued in 2007, also stipulates new regulations for INSET in order to 'guarantee that not only does not INSET hinder teaching activities, but it also effectively contributes to the acquisition and development of scientific and pedagogical competencies relevant to teachers' work and particularly to their teaching' (see preamble of Decree-Law number 15/2007).
2. One of the major criticisms from the part of the teachers and teachers' unions relates to the existence of two categories of teachers. This was one of the critical issues for the teachers in so far as the first recruitment process to apply for the category of senior teacher (which was understood as a transition phase into the new structure of the teaching career) was based upon criteria in which, in general, the roles and tasks performed by the teacher out of the classroom – such as, head of department, president of the Executive Council, member of the Executive Council, etc. – outweigh the dimensions related to teaching itself. One of the criteria was the level of attendance. Also, only the work done between 1999/2000 and 2005/2006 (7 years in total) was to be taken into account in terms of assessment for this first recruitment phase to apply for a senior teacher position (Decree-Law number 200/2007), even if teachers had many years of experience in teaching.
3. The Decree-Law number 241/2001 refers to the specific profiles of professional performance of pre-school and primary school teachers.
4. The Pedagogical Council is responsible for the educational coordination and guidance of the school in pedagogical and didactical terms, monitoring and accompanying of students and also as far as teaching and non-teaching staff is concerned. In this governing body, there are representatives of the educational orientation structures at the school (departments, coordinators of the year, cycle or course), of the educational support services, of the parents' association, of students (in secondary schools), and of the non-teaching staff.
5. According to the legal document (Despacho number 20131/2008), the maximum percentage for 'excellent' and 'very good' are 5% and 20%, respectively. However, these may be higher. This is dependent upon external evaluation of the schools. For instance, if a school gets 'very good' (the highest rating scale) in the five domains under evaluation for external evaluation purposes – that is: (i) outcomes; (ii) quality of the education service; (iii) school organisation and management; (iv) leadership; and (v) capacity for self-regulation and school improvement – the percentages become 10% for 'excellent' and 25% for 'very good'. For the schools which had not yet gone through an external evaluation, the 5% and 20% for 'excellent' and 'very good' are applicable respectively.
6. Despite these legal changes, teacher recruitment remains a centralised and bureaucratic system (at the Ministry of Education) which does not promote the development of a sense of belonging and commitment within the school as a workplace. However, in order to avoid the high rate of teacher mobility, and consequent turnover and instability, the Ministry of Education has decided to recruit teachers for a 3-year period, from 2006/2007 onward, instead of the annual national search for

teaching posts which was in place before. From 2009 onward, the recruitment of teachers will be done every four years.
7. This was also a critical issue identified by the Scientific Council for Teacher Appraisal (2008a) which was associated with the adoption or imposition of appraisal instruments without relevant information and a participatory process.

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OLDER ADULT LEARNING IN MALTA: TOWARD A POLICY AGENDA

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Abstract – *Late-life learning is no longer an exotic terrain within the field of adult education. Older adults are not only participating in lifelong learning avenues in increasing numbers, but recent decades also witnessed the emergence of learning opportunities targeting specifically older cohorts. In Malta, the government not only communicates its support to late-life learning, but also put forward age-friendly policies that facilitate the inclusion of older adults in learning programmes. This paper conducts a critical overview of the Maltese experience in older adult learning, analysing both its guiding rationale and participation rates. It notes that late-life learning in Malta occurs in the absence of a national policy framework that directs and supports the efforts of formal and non-formal bodies in providing learning opportunities for older persons. The paper also proposes an agenda for the late-life learning based on the values of social justice, social levelling and social cohesion.*

Introduction

T he provision of learning opportunities for older adults now holds centre stage in intergovernmental and national policies on lifelong learning[1]. The Republic of Malta, as signatory to the United Nations' *Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing* (United Nations [UN], 2002) and member state of the European Union (EU) which targets to become the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world (European Commission [EC], 1995), frequently communicates its support to the inclusion of older adults in learning programmes[2]. To this effect, the higher education sector includes a maturity clause which exempts older adults from presenting the necessary qualifications. The University of Malta, which is funded mainly by the Maltese government, coordinates the local network of the University of the Third Age, and pays for the rent of the premises and lecturing/coordinating fees. Community day-centres run by the state also organise elder-learning sessions on a variety of social and health issues. In this sense, the present and future prospects for late-life learning in Malta are bright and encouraging. However, research in older adult learning needs to go beyond a superficial descriptive analysis, and instead must judge the extent that ongoing policies are 'no more than seductive rhetoric disguising a utopian view of how active ageing might, in theory, be interpreted and operationalized' (Withnall, 2009, p. 13).

Embracing such a vision, this paper conducts a critical overview of the Maltese experience in lifelong learning in later life, analysing both its guiding rationale and participation rates. The first part focuses upon that interface between later life and learning as it arises in the Maltese setting. At this point, the paper forwards a methodology section which informs the readers of the research design and methods of inquiry followed in this study. The third part surveys the policy directions propelling late-life learning in Malta, following which the paper presents the plethora of local learning opportunities for, and participation in, late-life learning. The fifth section conducts a critical discussion of the opportunities for late-life learning in Malta, noting how the field ignores the structural issues that affect older persons' ability to participate in learning activities. Finally, the paper will propose an agenda for the late-life learning based on the values of social justice, social levelling and social cohesion.

Older persons and learning in Malta

The last century witnessed unprecedented demographic changes to the extent that it has been termed as the 'age of ageing'. As a result of declining fertility and mortality levels, all countries throughout the world registered an improvement of life expectancy at birth, and subsequently, a growth in the number of older persons. Malta was no exception and has evolved out of a traditional pyramidal shape to an even-shaped block distribution of equal numbers at each age cohort except at the top (see Table 1). Whilst in 1985 the 60+ and 75+ cohorts measured 14.3% and 3.8%, in 2008 these figures reached 21.4% and 6.1% respectively (Central Office of Statistics, 1987; NSO, 2009a). This occurred as the birth rate declined to 1.3 per family, while the expectation of life at birth for men/women increased from 70.8/76.0 years in 1985 to 77.7/81.4 years in 2005 (NSO, 2007). Population projections estimate that in the year 2025 the percentage of older persons aged 60 and over will rise to 26.5% (NSO, 2009a). Similar to international statistics, women are over-represented in older cohorts, with the masculinity ratio for age cohorts in the 80-84, 85-89 and 90+ age brackets reaching 63.0, 57.1, and 48.0 respectively. Hence, single families headed by older females (especially widows) predominate, with older women being more frequent users than older men of health and social care services (Formosa, 2009a).

In 2007, households comprising two adults aged 60 or over with no resident children held an average disposable income of €14,051, compared to a national average of €16,085 and €21,745 for households without and with dependent children respectively (NSO, 2009b). However, 20% of the 60+ cohort are currently situated below the 'at-risk-of-poverty' line (NSO, 2009c). The number of employed older persons is relatively low as only 10% and 1% of the 55-64 and 65+ cohorts were gainfully occupied in 2009 (respectively) (NSO, 2010).

TABLE 1: Maltese population by sex (2008)

Age	Men	Women	Total	% of Population
Total	196,280	199,192	395,482	100
0-19	46,548	44,213	90,761	22.9
20-59	112,055	107,885	219,950	55.7
60+	37,677	47,094	84,771	21.4
60-74	28,359	31,784	60,143	15.2
75+	9,318	15,310	24,628	6.1
60-64	14,083	14,711	28,794	7.3
65-69	7,344	8,470	15,814	4.0
70-74	6,932	8,603	15,535	3.9
75-79	4,602	7,042	11,644	2.9
80-84	2,917	4,736	7,653	1.9
85-89	1,390	2,520	3,910	1.0
90+	409	1,102	1,421	0.4

Source: NSO (2009a)

The last Census reported a negative correlation between age and educational status (NSO, 2007) (see Table 2). As much as 65% of persons in the 60+ cohort has a primary level of education or less, with 80% holding no educational qualifications. Some 17% of persons aged 60+ are illiterate (NSO, 2007). Although Census data is not broken down by gender, research has found older women to hold a worse educational status compared to men (Formosa, 2000, 2005). However, as a result of the implementation of educational policies earlier this century – especially the Compulsory Education Ordinance in 1946 which raised compulsory school to the age of fourteen – older cohorts boast a better educational record than the preceding ones (Formosa, forthcoming). This means that in the coming two decades the educational disparity between older and younger cohorts will be more equitable.

TABLE 2: Total Maltese population by age and educational status (2005)

Educational Attainment	60-79	80+	Percentage of 60+
No schooling	4,587	2,294	8.9
Pre-primary (Kindergarten)	740	515	1.6
Primary	36,755	6,076	55.3
Secondary	16,195	2,275	23.9
Post-secondary	3,260	378	4.7
Tertiary	3,905	454	5.6
Total	**65,442**	**11,992**	**100**

Educational Qualification	60-79	80+	Percentage of 60+
No qualifications	51,780	10,374	80.3
Ordinary levels	4,801	505	6.7
Intermediate levels	362	76	0.6
Advanced levels	909	147	1.4
Non-university Certificate/Diploma	3,685	436	5.3
University Diploma	550	66	0.8
First degree	628	69	0.9
Professional qualification	1,471	171	2.1
Degree & Professional qualification	453	53	0.7
Postgraduate diploma/certificate	291	27	0.4
Masters	276	21	0.4
Doctorate	236	47	0.4
Total	**65,442**	**11,992**	**100**

Source: NSO (2007)

Methodology

The research directing this paper included two key objectives – namely, the analysis of the policies on late-life learning in Malta, and secondly, the uncovering and examination of participation rates and patterns of older adult learning. I attempted to achieve such objectives through the 'case study' research design. Definitions of case studies vary but, in essence, all promote the notion that the researcher aims at knowing a single entity or phenomenon – that is, the case – through the collection of data through various procedures (Stake, 1995). As the case study is an autonomous research strategy that can actually accommodate different paradigms and methods (Burton, 2000), this research followed the critical paradigm as that 'process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves' (Neuman, 2002, p. 76).

Research methodology included three phases. First, an exploratory phase visiting lifelong learning venues and settings in which older persons participate – such as day-care centres, residential settings, village squares, etc. – as well as meeting 'experts' in lifelong learning and social gerontology to attain a tentative impression of late-life learning patterns. Secondly, an extensive research phase during which European and local policy guidelines on lifelong learning were analysed, and coordinators of adult and continuing education centres contacted to request information on local participation rates and patterns of older adult learning. The final phase consisted in the analysis of data and writing of the article. Data was analysed following Glaser & Strauss's (1967) grounded-theory approach which advises to assign codes, annotations, and memos to data arising from observations, conversations, and interviews.

Policy and older adult learning

The Maltese government has published no national policy on lifelong learning, and adult education is covered in a limited manner by the Education Act. In 2002, the Ministry of Education set up a steering committee to prepare a policy document on lifelong learning but to-date this objective has remained unfulfilled. However, as signatory to the United Nations' *Madrid International Plan of Action in Ageing* (MIPAA) (UN, 2002), Malta has vouched to implement strategies that catalyse the inclusion of older adults in lifelong learning. The MIPAA advocated an equality of opportunity throughout life with respect to continuing education and vocational guidance/training. It called on governments to:

- 'encourage and promote literacy, numeracy and technological skills training for older persons and the ageing workforce...
- implement policies that promote access to training and retraining for older workers...
- develop and disseminate user-friendly information to assist older persons to respond effectively to the technological demands of everyday life...
- encourage further research to better determine the relationship between training and productivity...and education of older persons...' (UN, 2002, p. 16)

Malta is a member state of the European Union (EU) and is hence obliged to adhere to the conclusions reached at the European Council held in Lisbon and the European Commissions' Communications on lifelong learning (EC, 2000, 2006). The EU defines lifelong learning as 'all learning activity throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competencies within a personal, civic, social, and/or employment-related perspective' (EC, 2001, p. 9). As far as late-life learning is concerned, the first policy document to mention 'senior citizens' and 'ageing' was published in 2006. Under the subheading of 'active ageing', the EU advocated its Member States to ensure:

- 'a longer working life, there is a need for up-skilling and increasing lifelong learning opportunities for older workers...in order to keep older workers employable, investment is needed throughout the life cycle and should be supported by government, professional bodies and sectors. Special attention should be given to those entering their mid career...
- an expansion of learning provision for retired people...Learning should be an integral part of this new phase in their lives...the Commission invite[s] universities to be more open to providing courses for students at a later stage of their life...' (EC, 2006, pp. 8-9)

While it is positive to note the emphasis on the need to provide learning opportunities for older cohorts, regretfully both the above policy documents are more driven to espousing the 'human capital' and 'vocational' values of late-life learning than its 'humanist' potential. The UN and EU visions for older adult learning are unashamedly neo-liberal and economic in their foundation, where the solution to the problem of ageing becomes finding a way for older people to be economically useful. It is assumed that older adults find social value only by becoming part of the pool of surplus labour when, in actual fact, there is little evidence to support the usefulness of a strong human capital theory for older persons (Cole, 2000). An 'economistic' rationale dominates so that late-life learning is not promoted for its possible 'empowering' and 'transcendental' potential, but only as a means to render the post-industrial societies 'competitive in the face of the

transitional and multinational corporations' ability to reap the advantages of economies of scale through the expansion of international capital mobility' (Borg & Mayo, 2006, p. 18). Taking in consideration that productive policies are biased in favour of persons with dominant types and extensive volumes of cultural capital, what the UN and EU offer to late-life learning is a 'model of knowledge economy for some' as opposed to 'a model of a knowledge society for all' (Healy & Slowey, 2006). Despite references to social inclusion and active citizenship, the EU's concern that 'current uncertain economic climate places renewed emphasis and importance on lifelong learning' takes utmost priority (EC, 2001, p. 30). Such a stance mirrors that taken by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which defined lifelong learning as 'a policy strategy directed towards integrating older persons to a contemporary labour market, to give them necessary education level and adapt the educational system in order to meet the changing economic, social and demographic conditions' (ILO, 2000, p. 15). It is also problematic that the drive to improve the skills of older workers is not concerned with the various abilities needed by the wide range of productive and service sectors, but focuses specifically on those competencies required by the ICT industry.

In sum, EU and UN visions of active ageing is premised on a 'new utopian vision' with no 'humane centre' (Williamson, 1998). This is because the need to help older people stay in paid work is only one priority among others in late-life learning. Other priorities include recognising the diversity of older persons, challenging stereotypes of ageing, maximising participation, maintaining personal independence, and retaining a sense of purpose and meaning. In later life, people reach a stage in personality development where the struggle for money and status is superseded by a search for 'ego integrity' (Erikson, 1963). This refers to a meta-perspective shift as the source of life satisfaction, from a material and rational vision to a cosmic and transcendent one. If older adults are to be educated for new roles and activities, this must be based on an acceptance of the limitations of existentiality and include taking responsibility for the well-being of future generations (Moody, 1990).

Opportunities for older adult learning in Malta

The international context

To-date, there exists limited national analysis of participation rates of older adult learning since most educational statistics, including those by Eurostat, take the age of 65 as a cut-off point. However, the limited available research on participation rates leads to two key inferences. First, that there is a negative correlation between age and levels of participation in most forms of adult

education. One key 'break' point is around the age of 18, after which it is estimated that one-third of people do not engage in any forms of structured learning. However, it is the age of 55 that represents the strongest breaking point in adult and continuing education. In the case of the United Kingdom (UK), for example, only 14% of adults aged 55-64, 10% of adults aged 65-74, and as few as 8% of those aged over 75 in 2009 participated in learning activities in 2010 (Aldridge & Tucket, 2010). In Italy, only 1.4% of adults taking part in adult educational opportunities were above the age of 65 in the year 2008 (Principi & Lamura, 2009). On the other side of the Atlantic, Hamil-Luker & Uhlenberg (2002) found that despite the much heralded dawning of a 'lifelong learning society' only one fifth of Americans aged in the 66-74 age bracket had any educational experience in 1999. Secondly, statistics point out that the steepest rises in elder-learning were recorded amongst the 66-74 age category, and in non-formal and informal avenues. In the United States, the year 1990 saw 8.4% of the 60-74 age group participate in at least one adult education class but by 1999 this number had increased to 19.9% (Hamil-Luker & Uhlenberg, 2002). Moreover, while participation in formal learning increased from 5.5% in 1991 to 8.6% 1999, the rise of community-provided education was from 4.6% to 11.6% (Hamil-Luker & Uhlenberg, 2002). As regard the UK, while less than 1% of people aged 60+ in 2008 engaged in higher education, some 19% and 11% of persons aged 65-74 and 75+ (respectively) participated in adult learning (Phillipson & Ogg, 2010). The predominance of young-old learners is also the case in programmes catering exclusively to older adults with, for instance, the University of the Third Age in Italy containing only 32.5% of members above the age of 65 (Principi & Lamura, 2009). As the following sub-sections attest, participation rates and patterns of older adult learning in Malta reflect such international blueprints.

Formal learning

Formal leaning avenues are highly structured and hierarchical. Courses are designed by expert-teachers to meet explicit requirements of accrediting bodies. Whilst higher education is responsible for the issuing of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, the further education sector provides curricula that generally lead to vocational skills and diplomas. In Malta, formal learning avenues open to adults above the age of 16 include the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS), the Directorate for Lifelong Learning within the Ministry of Education (DFL), the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), and University of Malta. Table 3 records the number of older adult learners in higher education in Malta.

The presence of older adults in Maltese formal education is to an extent a vibrant one. Older learners approach their learning objectives with extraordinary passion, and although there is a distinct preference for subjects in the arts and humanities, the range of subjects followed is remarkable. The upward trend in participation is impressive when considering that just half a decade ago no ITS students were over 60, and that the older student body at Directorate for Lifelong Learning and University of Malta consisted of just 119 and 18 students respectively (NSO, 2005). Yet, at the same time, the situation is highly inadequate. Only 2% of Maltese older adults aged 60 and over participate in formal learning avenues. It is also disquieting that older learners in these formal institutions constitute very low percentages of the total student population: University of Malta (0.6%), MCAST (0.8%), and ITS (0.8%). One relative exception is the Directorate for Lifelong Learning where students aged 60+ constitute 22% of the total student body. The Directorate for Lifelong Learning has been organising day and evening courses for learners from the age of 16 upward for a considerable number of years. It offers over a hundred different courses, mostly in the evening, that cover academic, technical, craft, leisure, information technology, and aesthetic subjects.

The reasons for the low participation of older adults in formal education are various. Many retirees left school at a relatively early age largely due to socio-economic imperatives, lack of opportunity to pursue education beyond the basic levels, and especially in the case of women, cultural mores that envisioned the role of women as one of domesticity. Such experience is unlikely to engender an avid desire to pursue further formal study later in life, and many even developed a phobia toward learning:

> *I applied with immense trepidation. My parents thought that school was a waste of time for girls, and when my parents were reluctant to buy me some books I needed, my teacher advised them to keep me at home. I was ten years old...I am very apprehensive of the whole learning experience. I needed, and still need, a lot of encouragement to attend classes. I love listening to lectures, reading books, and even writing essays, but remembering that I will be assessed gives me the jitters.* (Undergraduate theology student, 67 years old*)*

Another barrier is that higher and further education institutions are not passionate about late-life learning and opening their doors to older learners. Older adult learning does not bring in grants or offer much career training paths in vocational centres. It tends to be ignored and not be given any priority in marketing exercises. Educational and gerontological institutions alike are quick to accept uncritically the 'failure' and 'medicalized' models of lifelong development where older adults are casted as passive

TABLE 3: Older adults (60+) in higher and further learning in Malta (academic year 2009/2010)

University of Malta			
Course	**Students**	**Course**	**Students**
Centre for Labour Studies	2	Faculty of Theology	16
European Documentation and Research Centre	1	Institute of Agriculture	1
Faculty of Arts	30	Institute of Maltese Studies	1
Faculty of Economics, Management & Accountancy	1	International Institute for Baroque Studies	1
Faculty of Education	2	Mediterranean Institute	3
Faculty of Laws	4	**Sub-total**	**62**
Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology			
Institute of Agribusiness	6	Institute of Mechanical Engineering	3
Institute of Art and Design	21	Maritime Institute	5
Institute of Business and Commerce	1	Non-certified courses	38
Institute of ICT	4	**Sub-total**	**78**
Institute of Tourism Studies			
Food hygiene course	2	Kitchen and larder basic theory and practice	2
Basic German for the hospitality industry	2	Pastry and baking basic theory and practice	1
Pastry and baking intermediate theory and practice	2	**Sub-total**	**9**
Directorate for Lifelong Learning (Ministry for Education, Culture and Youth)			
School of Art (Gozo)	284	Basic English	54
Sequence and line dancing	181	Bavarian monastery	51
Lace making	179	Computer awareness	50
Ballroom dancing	116	ECDL core	49
Computer awareness	105	Italian at lifelong learning centre	49
Thread filigree	100	Italian	36
Keep-fit females	76	German at lifelong learning centre	31
Monastery work	55	Other courses	552
		Sub-total	**1968**
		Total	**2117**

Source: Personal communication with respective authorities

'clients' and 'patients' rather than learners. The result is a lack of serious interest in older adult learning in favour of research enterprises that seek to legitimise higher education norms as solely as a career-training enterprise linked to social and health welfare reforms. However, one success story is found within the course 'Teaching older adults' as part of the course leading to a Masters in Adult Education (University of Malta) which was opened to the public. Four older adults read the course with other students, and in each session were key players to the contribution and sharing of knowledge relating to the field of educational gerontology. It is hoped that more opportunities are provided to older adults to participate in higher and further education. The founding of a Senior Studies Programme, as is found in other universities abroad, is surely a step in the right direction.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning consists of structured events organised by local authorities and the voluntary sector that offer learning programmes ranging from creative to educational to informational. Programmes organised by local authorities are popular with older adults who do not want the pressure of credit courses but who still value the expert-teacher as a source of knowledge. The voluntary sector is the essence of learning by doing, as well as seeking and providing educational opportunities through their particular ethos. In Malta, local authorities involved in the provision of adult learning opportunities include the local councils, and the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC).

Late-life learning ranks low on the agenda of local councils. Out of a total of 68 local councils, only two localities – Mqabba and Mgarr – claimed to provide learning courses in which adults above the age of 60 participated in. While in the former locality five participants took part in Basic English and Maltese language courses, the latter provided lessons to 11 participants in 'punishment dolls', 'knitted beaded dolls', and 'dimensia [*sic*] talk'. The remaining local councils replied that either they do not keep a record of the ages of learning participants, or that they do not coordinate any lifelong learning events, or that no participants aged 60+ had ever participated in learning events. This demonstrates that there is little or no coordination of informational, advice, and educational guidance targeted toward older adults at a community level. Few efforts are conducted on behalf of local councils to facilitate self-help groups of older people, in learning, civic and caring roles. This is highly surprising considering that some localities include a high percentage of adults aged 60+ (e.g., Valletta, 30%; Sliema, 34%, Cospicua, 23%; Floriana, 34%) (NSO, 2007). It is also disquieting that the majority of local councils declined to reply to my request for information on organised learning courses and older learners in their respective region. Following

up on these non-responses, it resulted that the human resources employed by the local councils are stretched to the limit on matters relating to structural and building related matters which, ultimately, constitute the core of objective and subjective impact assessments. Accordingly, local councils do not have the staff and skills to tackle the learning needs of older people strategically. When learning organisations are organised priority is awarded to the needs of children, teenagers, and young families. One thus finds various collaborative initiatives between local councils and other governmental or voluntary institutions that result in learning opportunities ranging from parental skills to literacy and numeracy courses but rarely any initiative that targets the learning needs and interests of older adults. One augurs that in the foreseeable future the Local Council Act empowers communities to take on some responsibility for the delivery of social care services where late-life learning is posited as a key priority area.

The responsibility of the ECT is to provide and ensure equitable access to training programmes and employment services that contribute toward the social and economic development of the Maltese community. Regrettably, statistics issued by the ETC group all participants aged 55+ in one group so that data on the 60+ age band is not available. The ETC's annual report for 2009 claimed the number of persons above the age of 55 to participate in educational courses were as follows: 'employment aid programmes' (15 – 4% of total students), 'bridging the gap scheme' (1 – 1% of total), 'work trial scheme' (2 – 2% of total), and 'mainstream courses' (662 – 10% of total). As the case in formal education, the ETC orientates its training toward the needs of young and middle-aged adults, and fails to provide 'third age' career guidance and upskilling courses that target specifically the needs of older workers:

> *The factory I worked at closed down. We were advised to contact the ETC. I did so but it was for nothing. I was 59 years old at that time and was told in certain terms that it was best if I waited a few more months when I would be eligible for the state pension. They did not understand that I wanted to work well beyond my retirement age. I found all doors closed and feel to this very day that I was not taken seriously. My feeling is that they perceived me as a nuisance rather than an unemployed worker.* (Older student at DLF, 60 years old)

The voluntary sector in Malta, as is the case everywhere, consists of a large plethora of unrelated and unconnected bodies. It thus proved impossible to arrive at the total number of older participants and types of learning opportunities present. Nevertheless, it is within the voluntary sector where the largest majority of older learners is situated and which holds most benefits for participants. Many older adults provided vivid testimonies of the benefits that learning brings as they

emphasised their appreciation of learning for its own sake, their satisfaction of creativity, and the sociable enjoyment of group activities:

> *I discovered abilities that I never knew I had. I now feel fulfilled. When learning I feel alive...I suffer from arthritis and bad back pain. Attending the University of the Third Age helps me to overcome my pain, mentally at least. The joys of learning helps me to forget my physical ailments...When my husband died I needed a new lease of life. Learning how to sew and knit gave me what I needed...Learning gave me confidence and more self-esteem. I no longer feel the old man on the block.* (Various participants)

Voluntary bodies have limited income and depend for survival on volunteers, so that those contacted claimed that it was not possible for them to keep up a database of information on either the activities and or age of participants. Although the different organisations in the voluntary sector invest much energy in the promotion of activities that promote their respective ethos, a lack of human and financial resources, as well as knowledgeable staff on adult and late-life learning, means that few specific opportunities for older learners are organised. On the positive side, older adults tend to form the majority of a good number of available learning courses such as, for example, 'Culture' which includes seven informative outings (organised twice yearly by the Academy for the Development of Democratic Environment) and 'EduCafe' (organised monthly by the Fundazzjoni Reggie Miller) in which various professionals from the social, legal, and medical fields conduct informative sessions in a popular cafeteria. The University of the Third Age (UTA) in Malta is the only local voluntary institution that caters solely to the learning interests of older adults and which keeps a meticulous record of its membership. This is possible because, as already accentuated to, the Government of Malta pays the rent of its premises as well as for the fees of lectures and a full-time coordinator. Membership can be easily acquired by those who have passed their 60th birthday and willing to pay a nominal fee of ¤12. During the academic years 2007/2008, 2008/20099, and 2009/2010 members numbered 626 (164 men, 472 women), 523 (148 men, 375 women), and 643 (198 men, 445 women) respectively (NSO, 2009c).

As discussed elsewhere (Formosa, 2000, 2007, forthcoming), despite its positive functions, the local UTA is far from an example of democratic learning as its practice is highly biased in favour of the needs of middle-class urban older persons. Only one member among the 2005/2006 student body listed her past work as an elementary occupation, with a significant number of members – 209 or 29% – having held professional roles (NSO, 2006a). More recent statistics preclude the past occupational status of members but one finds that a majority of members lived in the Northern and Southern Harbour Regions (51% and 15% respectively) where the UTA

premises are located (NSO, 2009c). A final concern related to non-formal learning in later life is the relative absence of pre-retirement planning. Pre-retirement education is the exception rather than the rule, and where it occurs, participants also complain of the didactic and authoritarian style of most presentations which imbued them with some level of concern and anxiety rather than a positive view of retirement as a catalyst for successful ageing (Formosa, forthcoming).

Informal learning

Informal learning refers to day-to-day incidental learning where people are not necessary aware of the ongoing learning processes. Informal learning occurs in a wide range of locations ranging from libraries to dance clubs, generally through self-directed strategies where learning typically begins with a question, a problem, a need to know, or a curiosity. The sparse literature on older adult learning in Malta places emphasis on non-formal learning experiences, and to-date, there has been no discussion of the informal practices. The fact that national statistics on cultural activities (ranging from dance classes, membership in band clubs, participation in local council activities) put adults aged 25 and above in one age bracket (NSO, 2006b) – and that no data is available on the frequency of older persons in visiting museums, theatres, cinemas, exhibitions, and art galleries, or who follow television and radio programmes for learning purposes – precludes an age-relevant insight on informal learning. Learning within the family, church and workplace, as well as intergenerational learning, constitute other lacunae in local research. Yet, a number of secondary sources do throw light on some aspects of informal learning in later life. One key avenue is travel, a practice that has become more popular with older persons in recent years. The National Statistics Office reported that in 2007, 35.7% and 15.2% of persons aged in the 55-64 and 65+ age brackets respectively spent at least one night on a holiday abroad (NSO, 2009c). The average number of nights spent when holidaying abroad by these age groups were 8 and 9.5 nights respectively (NSO, 2009c). The connections between travel and learning are widely recognised by older adults, and study/travel trips will surely become lucrative business in the nearby future:

> *Our hobby is travelling. But 'hobby' is not the best word to describe it because we do not travel for sun and sea escapes. We indulge in 'travel' because it opens one's mind, you learn so many things. Last summer we went to Italy. It was my third trip to Florence but you always discover something new in museums. The same can be said of the Louvre. I visited it two times and wish to visit again...Every country can stimulate your mental faculties, not just Italy and England, but even countries such as Slovakia, Tunisia, and Cyprus.* (Older adult, 80 years old)

Volunteerism is another important course of informal learning, with national statistics reporting that the number of volunteers aged 65+ in non-governmental offices increased from 17,411 to 34,341 in the 2006-2007 period. The potential of hobbies as a source of informal learning is not be underestimated (NSO, 2009c). In the same period, popular pastimes amongst the 65+ included reading, gardening, sewing/knitting, travel, home decoration, crafts/collectibles, arts/crafts, singing/acting/dancing, internet, playing a musical instrument, model-building, and photography – in that respective order (NSO, 2009c). As far as book-reading is concerned, it is disappointing that the National Public Library holds no data on the age of members and operates within an absence of official guidelines focusing on age-friendly strategies for increasing library use among older persons. Finally, although persons aged 55+ are the least users of computer and internet technology, the rate at which they are achieving computer literacy and connecting to the internet surpasses that by middle-aged cohorts (NSO, 2005). This implies that informal learning through online surfing is becoming increasingly prevalent among older adults.

Discussion

As Malta lacks a national policy for lifelong learning, late-life learning arises as the responsibility of various state ministries which provide a range of opportunities for older learners that are anything but well-coordinated. The result is that the range of available opportunities for late-life learning are neither easily accessible nor clearly formulated. The manner in which older adult learning is planned and implemented fails in providing attention to learning as a means to strengthen communities and aid citizens maintain a sense of purpose. Rather than emphasising the ways in which learning helps older people explore and develop interests and skills, improve their understanding of themselves, and create social networks that provide meaning and support, the government's approach includes a skewing toward learning for employment purposes. The lack of a national framework for late-life learning also increases the risk of duplication of effort, inconsistent approaches as regard quality and access, and an excess emphasis on productive ageing and health literacy. A framework for late-life learning is a pre-requisite to good practice as it has the potential to admit to needs of older persons, such as loneliness and reading difficulties, which learning can help with (McNair, 2009). Moreover, older adults may not perceive or fully understand their learning needs, while governments have objectives like improving cohesion, or health, which people can be persuaded to follow, but will not ask for (McNair, 2009).

The lack of seriousness by local councils toward adult and late-life learning is another issue. In general, the contributions of local councils were found to be heavily concentrated on the upkeep and maintenance of structural amenities, collection of waste and road cleaning, and assisting citizens by providing information relating to consumer affairs, transport, tax, and social services. However, local councils also have a responsibility toward public attitudes concerning social cohesion, civic engagement, volunteerism, satisfaction with home and neighbourhood, independent living, and biopsychosocial well-being. Although lifelong learning can help with all of these, local councils have yet to formulate proper strategies on ageing and late-life learning. Admittedly, the decision of central government to concentrate resources on vocational courses leading to increasing productivity in the labour market means that funding for 'humanistic' kinds of learning is limited. Local councils are generally devoid of advisors that help them address the needs of their senior citizens. Community day-care centres are coordinated with staff which lack training on the transcendental interests of older members, with daily activities rarely extending beyond popular bingo sessions and health-related messages by paramedical officers. As a result, local councils are failing to secure a broad range of community learning initiatives that may range from age-friendly library services (such as large-print books on subjects that interest older adults, distribution of reading aids, and mobile delivery of books), to matching young volunteers with housebound older persons for the exchanging of ICT skills and local history accounts, to providing financial literacy courses focusing on the handling of money, insurance and mortgages, and managing a budget.

Another problematic issue is the fact that the available provision of learning opportunities has failed in meeting the key priorities of social levelling, social cohesion and social justice. First, confirming other local and international research (e.g., Swindell, 1990; Formosa, 2000), there lies a positive correlation between middle-class background and participation. It is true that most learning opportunities are either free or demand only a nominal fee, and require no academic qualifications. Yet, the way most provision for late-life learning is organised – especially with respect to subject content and teaching styles – typifies a strong middle-class bias. The emphasis on liberal arts subjects, delivered by experts, means that (well-educated) middle-class elders perceive late-life learning as an opportunity to go back to an arena in which they feel confident and self-assured of its outcome and development. The working-class community, on the other hand, generally has limited schooling experience and a life history characterised by poverty and social exclusion, so that it enters later life permeated with a habitus of 'necessity' (Bourdieu, 1984). The University of the Third Age is a clear case in point, with many working-class persons feeling highly

apprehensive and reluctant to join an organisation with such a heavy 'class' baggage in its title. Perceiving the theatrics of high-brow learning as alien to their identity formation and lifelong interests, most working-class elders prefer to pass their retirement in other leisure pursuits which demand a 'practical' rather than a 'scholarly' kind of knowledge.

As such, the provision of late-life learning runs the risk of functioning as an essential political activity, forming part of a large macrocosm of symbolic institutions that reproduce existing power relations. Secondly, many an adult educational vision has been criticised for its in-built gender bias (e.g., Jackson, 2003; Daniels, 2010). Late-life learning in Malta is no exception. Programme planners – who tend to be men – treat older learners as a homogenous population, and overlook how older women have limited schooling experience and workplace training, rarely enjoy an occupational pension, and form part of the army of informal carers who support sick and disabled relatives. Late-life learning in Malta remains oblivious to the unique learning needs of older women (e.g., financial literacy and informal care) and to the inimitable 'situational' barriers (e.g., domestic and caring responsibilities, not holding a driving license) precluding them from participation in learning activities. One also notices a 'masculinist' attitude as the available courses generally worked to embed older women learners in traditional gender roles and expectations rather than working toward increased general social levelling among the sexes. However, even older men were also found to be somewhat left out in the cold. One key issue in older adult learning is the low percentage of male participants, with many assuming that older men are not interested or motivated to join. Available provision viewed older men as a homogenous group of confident individuals with promising educational and occupation experiences when, in reality, older men are categorised by a diversity of beliefs, values, and resources. For instance, no space is given to learning activities focusing on environmental issues, mathematics, and do-it-yourself work, which are generally of utmost interest to older men.

Other lacunae concern pre-retirement education, intergenerational learning, and informal care. Although at the end of the 1990s the government pledged to increase its funding toward preparing older workers for the third age, there remains a lack of attention on this issue, and there is yet no consensus on which body is responsible to plan and finance pre-retirement education. Presently, pre-retirement education is short and available only to a small proportion of people who work mainly for the public sector or large corporations. Full-time housewives or in part-time employment, the self-employed, and workers in small industries are expected to prepare for their transition to retirement on their own initiative. Available pre-retirement planning emphasise the need for retirees to have 'varied interests' and 'keeping mentally active' – rather than focusing on the emotional

issues of retirement that range from personal (e.g., self-awareness and self-regulation) to the social (e.g., empathy and networking) – an approach that was criticised by Phillipson & Strang (1983) for its moral undertones. Intergenerational learning is another neglected area, as provision is devoid of a serious attempt to link third and fourth agers with children, teenagers, and adults. The benefits of intergenerational education are well-known. While elders can mentor individuals from the younger generation, they can also learn from the younger generation. Intergenerational contact creates an opportunity for reciprocal learning, as well as improving the everyday memory function of older learners. It is disappointing that older adults have limited opportunities to attend and contribute toward primary, secondary and continuing levels of education. Most attempts in intergenerational learning consisting in school children visiting residential and nursing homes, an event that – especially on its own – may actually function to reinforce the stereotype of older adults as helpless and frail. Sectors responsible for late-life learning must think outside the box and coordinate activities such as book clubs, community work, film screenings, and linking Maltese elders with younger immigrants. Finally, Malta is characterised by a 'southern model of welfare' (Matsaganis et al., 2003). This refers to a situation where state provision for community welfare remains marginal so that persons are highly dependent on their families (especially female relatives) to provide them with the care they need (Darmanin, 2006). With respect to later life, this means that a significant percentage of older adults succeed in remaining living in their homes only as a result of extensive informal care-work on behalf of daughters and nieces. It is lamentable that the local provision of late-life learning overlooks the learning needs of this growing sector. There are no learning initiatives that aids relatives to provide better health and social care standards, become more aware of their own role in the community, and empowering them with finding a united voice to ensure that policies address and support their needs. Learning initiatives would help in determining the problems faced by informal carers, evaluating existing services tailored toward the needs of frail older persons, and work toward the establishment of a National Day and Charter for Informal Carers that would strengthen both family resources and the motivation to continue caring for older persons.

An agenda for the future

Malta must work toward ensuring that access to learning throughout the life course is perceived as a human right, while strongly guaranteeing adequate learning opportunities in later life becomes a central objective in government policy. There is no doubt that as the time that people in a relatively healthy and

independent later life increases, we need a public policy which looks at late-life learning beyond just a resource for employment and extending working life. The following broad priorities emerge from the results and discussion reviewed in this paper:

- *National policy framework*. There is a need for a national policy framework on lifelong learning that includes a sound emphasis on later life. This framework must be guided by a rational that reinstates lifelong learning in the (pre-Third Way) values of social levelling, social cohesion, and social justice (Faure,1972). Only so will it become possible for late-life learning to prioritise the '*democratic*-citizen' over the 'future *worker*-citizen' as the prime asset of post-industrial societies (Lister, 2003). The framework must also describe what kinds of learning opportunities any older adult can reasonably expect in Malta, while setting and monitoring targets for participation.

- *Local authorities*. In meeting their responsibility toward the welfare and well-being of their communities, local councils must lobby the central government to be awarded an explicit role and responsibility in the planning, coordination and financing of age-related services including adult and late-life learning. In partnership with third sector agencies and formal education providers, local councils must take the role of learning hubs that bring all the 'providers (public, private, and voluntary together) together, to coordinate resources, consult older people (current and potential learners), and promote learning among older people' (McNair, 2009, p. 17).

- *Widening participation*. Responding to older adults that remain educationally and socially disadvantaged necessitates a 'widening participation' agenda. Providers must think out of the box so that late-life learning initiatives attract older adults with working class backgrounds, older men, elders in living in rural regions, and housebound elders. There must be serious attempts in outreach work to facilitate learning opportunities outside formal settings with older adults who could or would not usually participate in traditional formally organised provision. Without doubt, the teaching of ICT and elearning strategies comprise a central priority on a 'widening participation' agenda.

- *Higher education*. There is a need for the higher education sector to play a key role in encouraging new types of adult learning through all phases of the life course. In addition to employment-related programmes that support older people moving from full-time employment to various forms of work, higher education must also provide 'personal development' programmes which

identify new types of courses and markets among a diverse and segmented post-50s market, and 'health and social care' programmes orientated to professionals working with older people that vary from foundation degrees through to modules for continuing professional development (Phillipson & Ogg, 2010).

- *Informal learning*. Learning also takes place outside classrooms through self-directed learning, sometimes in isolation, and at other times with family members and friends through voluntary and social activities. A framework on lifelong learning must advocate those learning aids that facilitate and even initiate informal learning. There is a need for a structure within which older adults gain insight into themselves as learners. Older adults must be aided to learn how they learn, examine multiple ways to learn, and look for ways to plan their future learning more effectively. In practice, this necessitates elder clubs in libraries, and age-friendly functional literacy and elearning support.

- *Productive ageing*. There is a need for learning initiatives for employment, both for those still in or seeking paid work, while latching upon EU-funded programmes whose goal is to get older people back to work. Emphasis must go beyond simply the provision of courses leading to formal qualification, and also include initiatives that update skills and knowledge, and adopt previous experience to new contexts (McNair, 2009). Programmes must be sensitive to the differences between women and men toward remaining in or finding work, as well as respect the choice of those who may still want to embrace a 'culture of retirement' even if it means a 'trade-off' with a lower standard of living.

- *Pre-retirement education*. The educational system that spends some 18 years, and substantial financial capital, to prepare citizens for the world of work, but simply a couple of afternoons (if lucky) to leave it, is clearly biased against older persons. Society has an obligation toward its citizens to provide them with learning initiative that help them plan for their third and fourth ages. It is noteworthy that a really democratic pre-retirement education is not simply instruction about the formalities surrounding pensions, the drawing of wills, and health. It is one which also includes a discussion of psychological and social strategies that lead older adults to improve their quality of life.

- *Informal care*. Since learning is a human process that covers every aspect of human living, all carers of older persons, both informal and formal, should be involved in elder-learning. Learning initiatives must be made available, free of

charge, to family relatives and volunteers involved in the care of older persons. Such programmes are to focus on the dynamics of sensing the feeling of older persons and perspectives, taking an interest in caring outcomes, empowering older adults' development and strengthening their abilities, cultivating opportunities for diverse people, and anticipating, recognising, and meeting the needs of the person under care.

Conclusion

This research paper has highlighted that despite the strong recognition of the need to embed older adults in lifelong learning, the conceptual and practical implications have been limited. Focusing on the Republic of Malta, it argued that the dominant vision for learning is anything but lifelong, and that older adults are left out in the cold as far as educational policy is concerned. Moreover, there is no doubt that policy documents and action plans dealing with some aspect of late-life learning may be well-intentioned, but ultimately function nothing more than empty rhetoric concealing neo-liberal values. Despite the dedication of the International Year Literacy Year in 1990, there is very little research or policy relating to older persons and literacy. In late modern society, literacy is not simply a vehicle for economic survival but also to acquire the understanding and ability to survive psychologically in a complex and constantly changing world. The penultimate section also provided an attempt to suggest policy directions for a really lifelong and long-life learning. Although the ordinances emerged from empirical research conducted in one particular region – that of Malta – there is no doubt of their relevance to other geographical regions. After all, literature includes an emergent body of literature criticising lifelong learning policies for their 'enonomist' and 'ageist' biases (e.g., Hake, 2006; Slowey, 2008).

The road toward a successful policy and action plan on lifelong and late-life learning is, of course, not without obstacles. The hegemonical grip of 'Third Way' politics (Giddens, 1998), which celebrate the human capital model of development and individuated lifestyles, has led to an almost absence of philosophical reflection on the empowering potential of late-life learning. Late-life learning must be embedded in a critical value system which seeks to expose 'how relations of power and inequality, (social, cultural, economic), in their myriad forms combinations, and complexities, are manifest and challenged in the formal and informal education...of adults' (Apple, Au & Gandin, 2009, p. 3). As a result, there exists a strong need to engage older adult learning as a form of resistance toward the neo-liberal political ideology that makes successful

ageing contingent on meeting the employment needs of the new knowledge economy. On a more practical level, public resources may be seriously limited which necessitates collaboration with voluntary and third sector resources, and self-organising provision, which may lead to further logistic and organisational difficulties. As McNair (2009) stressed, public resources, especially access to buildings, workshops and equipment which could be used for learning may exist but ultimately be unavailable due to conflicting priorities, unhelpful regulations or a simply lack of awareness of inherent possibilities. The implantation of provision is only half the work as one must ensure that programmes really target the generational habitus of older learners, and remain sustainable and relative to incoming generations. Moreover, quality and accessibility are not to be underestimated since otherwise the overarching rationale underlying the implementation of older adult learning would be forfeited. Such issues are surely not easily resolved but, in the spirit of critical paradigm, there is a real hope if local and global movements collaborate together for social transformation.

Notes

1. There is no commonly agreed definition of 'older' persons, and different people age at very different rates. Herein, the author is thinking of people above the age of 50, which is the beginning of what is generally seen as the 'third age' of life – a period life phase in which there is less employment and child-raising responsibilities to commander time – before a 'fourth age' where morbidity tends to limit activity and people become dependent on others and specialized services for some aspects of daily living. However, for statistical purposes, a cut-off point was determined at age 60 which currently represents the required age to qualify for the statutory state pension in Malta.
2. The Maltese archipelago is made up of three islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino. It is located in the Mediterranean Sea with Sicily 93 km to the north, Africa 288 km to the south, Gibraltar 1,826 km to the west, and Alexandria 1,510 km to the east. Comino is uninhabited, and with Gozo having a population of just 29,904 persons, Malta is the major island of this archipelago state (National Statistics Office [NSO], 2009a). The total population of Malta is 365,568 on a total land area of 315 km^2, which makes it the most densely populated European Union member state (NSO, 2009a).

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TOGETHERNESS, COEXISTENCE OR CONFRONTATION – THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE ON PEER-TO-PEER SOCIAL RELATIONS IN CATALONIA, SPAIN[1]

MARIBEL PONFERRADA-ARTEAGA
SILVIA CARRASCO-PONS

Abstract – *This paper presents some of the results of the study 'Coexistence and Confrontation among Peers in Secondary Schools in Catalonia' commissioned by the Ombudsman's Office of the Catalan government and carried out at the Institute of Childhood and the Urban World (CIIMU) in Barcelona, Spain, in 2005-2006. It offers a description of the indicators of malaise and exclusion among students at nine public and private secondary schools serving varying social environments in Catalonia. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were applied, based on focus groups and in-depth interviews with students, teachers, parents associations and school management, and a questionnaire for students in Year 1 and Year 4 of secondary school (ages 12 and 16). Though the results obtained also reveal a certain amount of verbal, social and physical bullying in these schools, this study's main interest was the factors consititing each school's climate as it affected student peer-to-peer relationships. Such factors included the type of 'model' student promoted by the school; the values governing social popularity and stigmatisation among the students; the sorts of academic expectations placed on students by the school; the perception of teaching methods and practices among students; the social relationship between teachers and students as perceived by the latter; the different models of governance through rules and the level of internal coherence in applying sanctions; the strategies used by the school to create groups; and the degree of recognition by the institution of the diversity of students' origins.*

Theoretical focus: beyond bullying

*I*n 2004, the Ombudsman's Office of the Catalan government started to receive increasing numbers of complaints about peer bullying in the secondary school context, after the striking news of the suicide of a teenage student that later has come to be known as 'the Jokin case'[2]. As a result, in 2005 the Office commissioned the Institute of Childhood and Urban World (CIIMU)[3] to carry out an in-depth study into how school climates might be affecting relationships of

coexistence in local secondary schools and thus having a negative impact on the wellbeing of students.

Rather than following a psycho-pedagogical approach that is chararacteristic of most of the classic studies on bullying and school climate, the study was carried out from a socio-anthropological perspective, although the contributions of previous literature, regardless of disciplinary perspectives, were carefully taken into account. Priority was given to looking at practices and relationships among students and school institutions from a holistic point of view, focusing on student agency in social interactions with and within the school. We therefore regarded gender, social class, ethnic/national origin and language[4] not only as independent variables but also as elements of processes that are constructed and (re)produced in the school as well as in peer relationships. The (re)creation of femininity and masculinity, social distancing and cultural/ethno-racial/national and linguistic hierarchies are interwoven in the processes of identity-building and also through social relations. In particular, our approach draws heavily on Bourdieu's notion of different forms of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and Ross Epp's notion of systematic violence (Ross Epp, 1999), a kind of inherent institutional 'violence' that favours exclusion, malaise and inequality of power in the heart of schools. Our main objective was to identify the factors and processes in schools that students perceive as being of key importance in their relationships of conviviality/coexistence, as opposed to the information provided by adult agents in the same institutional space.

Schools and peer relationships

Exclusion in school: bad for many, good for some?

Ethnographic research in schools has shown how the institution of the school itself creates the conditions for violence and opposition among peers. Through the structure and the order within that structure is created what Payet (1997, p. 177) has called 'logical institutional discrimination', a hierarchical mapping on the school structure itself[5] which favours the creation of groups of winners and losers according to the different levels of prestige they enjoy. Involuntarily, this also favours the emergence a system of 'systematic violence' for which nobody feels responsible but which has the effect of excluding some sectors of students (Ross Epp, 1999).

> 'Systematic violence is found in any *institutionalised practice that affects students unfavourably*. In order to be damaging, the practices do not need to produce a negative effect in all students. They may be beneficial for some and damaging to others.' (Ross Epp, 1999, p. 18; italics in original)

Hallinan & Williams (1989) have shown the influence of certain factors on the organisation of schools when it comes to developing interethnic friendships, such as the presence or absence of groups separated according to performance, the balanced presence of children of different origins in the same class or the use of teaching methods based on public exposure of students in their evaluation. But the school as an institution can produce class, ethnic and sexual segregation in spite of an apparent discourse of equal opportunity (Oakes, 1987; Payet, 1997). In Catalonia, previous research has also shown how the kinds of discourses circulating among the different agents in relation to ethnicity and performance in the school affect the level of racism present in interethnic relations (Serra, 2001; Pàmies, 2008).

Segregation and violence: when does resistance emerge?

Academic segregation of the students and their consequent social isolation within the school increases school violence, as has been shown by research carried out in France: '…the feeling of violence and the climate of anti-social behaviour grows according to the increase in "internal" and social exclusion experienced by its students' (Debarbieux, Dupoux & Montoya, 1997, p. 35).

Success in positive coexistence and bonding between students and the school depends on how this tension between differentiating and equalising mechanisms is resolved (Araos & Correa, 2004). Some British studies (Hargreaves, Hester & Mellor, 1975) show that the values and norms transmitted in low academic ability groups (constructed as 'bad') contribute to the crisis of oppositional sub-cultures among young people. The working class sub-culture of 'mates' among young people (Willis, 1977) is constructed in resistance to the school culture and this implies hostility toward more conformist, less 'masculine', minority and female students. Student groups are constructed 'against' the others, thanks to a firm separation between ability-level groups as well as daily practices in the school (Eckert, 1989; Flores-Gonzalez, 2005). Moreover, the de-legitimisation of working class culture (Feito, 1990), the emphasis on body control and behaviour and the repetitive teaching methods in working class schools (Fernández-Enguita, 1997) also encourage resistance among students.

Hidden violence: organize, separate, teach

Violence is latent in school processes and structures, between power relationships in the institution and in relation to the teachers' authority (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and sometimes it only becomes evident in certain acts which in themselves are unmistakeable distress calls, such as depressions, suicide attempts or blatant aggression:

'Violence corresponds to the unsought-after part of internal processes of discrimination, remaining hidden or unnoticed (what has been called systematic violence), unless it takes the form of victimising actions that are unavoidable in school self-observation ...' (Araos & Correa, 2004)

Bureaucratic organisation and disciplinary techniques (such as isolation, sorting of students) provoke feelings of being different and alienation in young people from minority groups as a result of cultural distancing and a lack of power (Davidson, 1996), which in turn affects the formation of their identity and social relationships. On the other hand, on the specific subject of bullying, factors such as the stress induced by high levels of academic competition, a decline in confidence in education as a means to social betterment, the authoritarian styles of teachers, strict hierarchies in school, harsh tools of discipline and weak teaching skills have revealed themselves to be key in the growth of this phenomenon in Japan (Yoneyama & Naito, 2003).

School climates and bullying

Moos (1979) defines school climate as a learning environment which involves both the categories of personal growth among students and the school's system for maintenance or change, which includes order and clarity in the rules of conduct. Taking all this research as a starting point, our own definition takes 'school climate' to have four dimensions:

- An institutional dimension, which includes elements ranging from the public image projected/attributed to the school, to the system of rules and how diversity is approached.
- A teaching dimension, including academic expectations, teaching methods and school rituals.
- A participatory dimension, which considers the extent of real participation of students in the classroom and school.
- A relational/social dimension, which includes elements like social popularity among students, the profile of the 'ideal' student, friendships, conflicts and relationships of abuse and intimidation.

It has to be noticed that bullying itself remains an important interest, in spite of our focus on school climate that we would regard as an important part of previous conditions for its emergence or development. We understand bullying as the type of situations where a student is repeatedly exposed to negative actions by one or several of their peers, as originally defined by Olweus (1993) and adopted

later by Del Barrio et al. (2003). We are talking about reiterated actions that reveal intention and inequality of power between individual students. However, like Pellegrini (2002), we also consider bullying a deliberate strategy for achieving status among classmates that has to do with systems of stratification at school and the way social relations are understood.

Previous research in Spain that has focused on coexistence in the school context and on peer bullying can be fundamentally grouped into the following categories:

- Measuring the extent of peer bullying (Bisquerra & Martínez, 1998; Mora-Merchán et al., 2001; Del Barrio et al., 2003; Oñederra, 2004; Serrano Sarmiento & Iborra Marmolejo, 2005; Defensor del Pueblo, 2006).
- Analysing aggression among peers in relation to juvenile subcultures (Martínez & Rovira, 2001).
- Exploring the relations of coexistence in schools and families (Martín, Rodríguez & Marchesi, 2003) – one of the few that identifies school climate as an independent dimension.

Therefore, beyond a narrow focus on bullying, our study intended to answer the following questions, as a guide to orientate our *reconstruction of the conditions created by different school climates from the perceptions and experiences of students* (Síndic de Greuges, 2006; Carrasco et al., 2007; Ponferrada & Carrasco, 2008):

- What factors of social, ethnic and gender stratification affect the hierarchies and peer relationships in the school environment?
- What school processes emerge as factors of exclusion and malaise and have the capacity to affect identities and relationship styles among young people?
- What peer groups emerge in the school schools, what characteristics do they have (class, gender, ethnic origin, group values, social and academic status) and what kind of relationships do they have with one another?

Methodology and sample

In parallel to a review of the literature on peer relations in schools, and following a methodological orientation inspired by grounded theory, we organised three focus groups of students from different social, academic and neighbourhood backgrounds with the aim of incorporating their perceptions into the research instruments we intended to apply, namely questionnaires and guided interviews.

The fieldwork was carried out in nine secondary schools in different areas of Catalonia. We collected data from students in their initial and final years of compulsory secondary education (known locally as ESO[6]), their teachers and

their schools' management teams. The selection of schools was made with the cooperation of a special unit at the Catalan government's Department of Education that is devoted to preventing, responding to and mediating in situations of conflict or maltreatment among members of a particular school community (USCE[7]). The nine secondary schools were selected to represent different types of realities in terms of private/public ownership and management of the school; socio-economic status of students; location; proportion of immigrant students; and the availability of specific strategies for the promotion of good relations and/or mediation programmes, that is, whether a particular school had an official or unofficial culture of conflict resolution.

Different types of data were obtained for each school under study. The team started by obtaining and analysing information about the school and its educational goals, rules and norms. Next, statistical data were gathered about the students according to sex and ethnic/geographic origin, as well as the number of disciplinary sanctions they had received, and their cause and resolution. Websites, journals and documents on discipline and conflict resolution were also consulted. Guided interviews were also carried out with members of each school's management team (i.e., the head teacher and head of studies), the school's educational psychologists, members of the Parents' Association, Year 1 and Year 4 programme coordinators in all nine schools, and Year 1 and Year 4 students in a smaller subset of five schools. The students to be interviewed were selected with the help of the coordinators and class tutors[8]. Different students were selected from each class according to their relative positions in terms of peer leadership in the context of the classroom and the school (in other words, we selected some students who ranked highly as peer leaders and some who had low rank). Finally, a questionnaire was administered to the full set of students from all nine schools ($N = 1,197$). Each researcher personally visited the schools assigned until all the interviews were completed and the documents and statistical data were collected. The same team personally handed out the questionnaires to students and collected ethnographic data during pre-questionnaire visits and while the questionnaires were being completed.

Findings

Status, expectations and methods: 'This school is crap'

Our questionnaires showed that 61.6% of students in the sample had between 'some' and 'a lot of' confidence in the school. Significantly, however, 34.8% reported that they had 'no' or 'little' confidence – a proportion of low confidence that was reflected throughout the four years of ESO. In relation to the academic

dimension, 44.1% of students were of the opinion that the school thought of them as a 'normal student' and 29.4% as a 'good student'. The qualitative analysis of our data showed that one of the factors with the most positive influence on relationships of coexistence are the high expectations placed on students and the positive image projected on students by teachers, as transmitted through teachers' discourse and practice in the daily life of the school. Competitiveness and high academic demands, contrary to what was expected, did not appear to be conditions that favoured conflict. What had a negative impact, rather, were the low expectations and/or negative views that the teachers had of their students, as indeed the students had of themselves. It even emerged that some schools view themselves as 'dead ends', in a hopeless situation because of the socio-economic level of their catchment area, where the operating agents appear generally to have given up. In those schools, desperation feeds feelings of malaise among students, which does not necessarily indicate that they treat students any worse, but points to a general disheartening and undignified social and school atmosphere. In these schools, students make greater demands to be 'respected' (34.7% compared with 22% in 'high' prestige schools) and perceive low expectations on the part of the school and negative labelling by the educational community:

> R: *What do the people in the neighbourhood say about this school?*
> S1: *About* [name of school] *they say a lot of bad things...*
> S2: *They say it's crap, and they say it, too, about all the rest* [of schools in the neighbourhood].
> R: *They say it about* [name of school]*?*
> S1: *Yes.*
> S2: *And they say to us, are you going to go to* [name of school]*? It's bloody awful!*
>
> (R – researcher, S1 – male student, S2 – female student, Year 4, School 5)

The students state that conflicts and insults arise more easily when they are bored in the classroom and cannot see the sense in what they are doing. This boredom in the classroom, with repetitive methods and students' skills left unchallenged, ultimately constitutes institutional violence.

> 'The intentional exposure to boredom and repetition is one part, but only a small part, of everything that is systematically violent in our schools.'
> (Ross Epp, 1999, p. 18)

The most common complaints by students, especially in private schools[9] – where children feel they have a right to complain – are related to the professional competence of teachers and their teaching methods: an excess of homework,

lecture-style teaching and low-level content. In the majority of schools, the teaching methods most commonly described can be summed up as listening to the teachers' explanation, summarising, doing exercises and correcting them.

> *Now read, summarise, explain and do the exercises.* (Male student, Year 4, School 5)

> *They make you read a bit each and they explain, and then they carry on reading, explaining and reading...* (Male student, Year 4, School 3)

> *They say bla, bla, bla and that's it…if you understood it, that's fine, and if not, that's fine too.* (Female student, Year 4, School 2)

> *Yes. Because they don't explain, and you're copying a really long part, and you don't understand it, and they just explain it the same way.* (Female student, Year 1, School 5)

The connection between the professional competence of the teachers and the emergence of classroom conflict seems evident, and is something that showed up in the focus group discussions and again in the interviews.

> *But the classes are really shit, and then they call your parents to say that you don't do anything, that you cause trouble.* (Male student, Year 4, School 1)

Ideal and contested identities: 'I see myself as completely the opposite of what they want'

In schools that promote an ideal student profile that combines academic success with social skills, among peers it is best to be seen as sociable and 'everybody's friend'. Therefore, better relationships of coexistence are promoted where compatibility between the academic and the pro-social is valued. However, this was only observed in one of the high-prestige private schools with students drawn from the middle and upper social classes, where the whole community expects a high level of performance from the school and its teachers.

> R: *What do you think is the ideal student profile in the school?*
> S1: *I don't know. Maybe like* [name of student; the girl interviewed as a positive leader].
> R: *How would you define her?*
> S2: *Very open...*
> S1: *Studious, very friendly, laughs a lot, she's always laughing and happy...*

S2: *Yes...she's like always really positive, you never see her like that...always has a smile on her face, she's quite mature I think too...*

S1: *Yes*

S2: *Socially she's got time for everything, for friends, for being with everyone, so in the end everyone gets on with her.*

S1: *She's got girlfriends too, they meet up a lot, I don't know...*

(S1 – female student, S2 – male student, Year 4, School 4)

The ideal profiles promoted most intensely in the rest of the schools in the study are based on pro-academic and pro-authority identities, but without any specific links to social skills in terms of either relationships with peers or adults. And no incentive is offered to pursue those identities – something that corresponds to the low degree of participation by students in classes and in school. For most students, the notion of participating is limited to answering the teacher's questions. They either do not know how to participate in the decisions taken by the school, or – especially in private schools – feel that their participation is allowed but tightly controlled. Students tend to think that the school is largely concerned with producing good academic results and that they are expected to adopt an attitude of apparent studiousness, of 'paying attention', as well as an unquestioning acceptance of school authority ('shut up and do as I say'). Relationships with teachers are perceived as social capital (i.e., it is advantageous to be a 'teacher's pet'). It is a conformist, silenced identity that uses the strategies of subterfuge. This is a good example of students describing what is expected of them:

S1: *Someone who never skips class, who studies, doesn't talk and is a bit of a teacher's pet.*

S2: *I don't know. Yeah, like this.*

(S1 – male student, S2 – female student, Year 4, School 2)

R: *What do you think the ideal student is like in this school?*

S: *One who pays attention, gets good grades.*

(S – male student, Year 4, School 5)

In schools with a majority of middle class students, there appears to be greater tolerance of diversity of dress and leisure habits. The main axes of maturity/immaturity that are seen through body appearance, dress and leisure habits create different, mutually exclusive groups that affect relationships of coexistence, but also have dimensions of social class: 'chavs' versus 'skaters'; 'brats' versus

'chavettes'. These are oppositions and distinctions in identity that interweave gender, class, age, lifestyle and consumption habits, as well as ethnic/national origin and habitual language, suggesting that these differences should be taken into account by the school as being fundamental in friend or enemy relationships. However, there are two other dimensions in which the school institution itself plays a key role: the *attitude to school* (being either a rebel or a conformist in class) and, linked to the former, the *attitude in peer relationships* (between 'marginalised' and 'hooligans'). The construction of gender and sociability is interrelated with the attitude toward school, given that it is precisely the male students perceived as being conflictive that are most popular socially and also most desirable sexually to the girls. Therefore, opposition to school and peer aggression forms part of the construction of traditional heterosexual masculinity (which continues to be mainly dominating), as has been shown by other researchers (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Swain, 2003), where this masculinity implicitly brings with it resistance to school authority.

> S: *The most popular are the ones who get into most trouble.*
> R: *Why do you think they are so popular?*
> S: *Because they are troublemakers.*
>
> <div align="right">(S – male student, Year 4, School 5)</div>

> *...It depends on what you like. For example, the Peruvian girls like Peruvian boys, the girls like the lads with attitude, and the lads...and so on...but the successful ones are a bit fit and give it a bit of attitude. I don't like them with attitude, but yeah, normally they are.* (Female student, Year 4, School 2)

However, among the girls, popularity is implicit in the evaluation of the female body, since the most popular young girls are the prettiest and most attractive physically in the eyes of the boys.

> R: *Who are the most popular girls in the school?*
> S1:   *The ones with the best bodies...*[expresses this more with hand gestures, as if he was holding one…]
> R: *Don't stop…*
> S1:   *The ones who are fit, the fit ones...well, the ones that aren't bitter and bad-tempered...*
> S2:   *Yes, the ones that aren't stroppy, the ones who are nice to you, and have a pretty face and...*
> S1:   *And if they're fit, even better.*
>
> <div align="right">(S1 & S2 – male students, Year 4, School 5)</div>

In schools in working class districts, the pretty ones also have to be 'hard' and 'a bit rebellious'. In these areas it is much more difficult to be 'respected' if you don't show that you're prepared to take insults or jokes. These are the codes that govern student-to-student relationships:

R: *Don't you get on with each other in general?*
S: *It's just that I've changed...before I was really like that, and here if you haven't got, to put it crudely, a pair of balls, you won't last a minute because I remember that I went in and I was like I was and they started on me, and they even wanted to hit me, and I've got a really strong character but I never showed it, and then I did show it and they said, well that stupid girl isn't so stupid, so I carried on like that, and now, yeah, people respect me...but they also have an idea about me that isn't true. Because now I'm behaving how I am* [talking about the time of the interview] *but the people in class see me as 'yeah, man, whatever' you know what I mean? They see me as mouthy and I'm not like that, I am super. People see me as being like mouthy, revolutionary, because I don't go to class...*

(S – female student, Year 4, School 2)

The data from questionnaires show that male students continue to be the main figures in acts of physical aggression: 6.4% of boys replied that they had regularly hit one of their classmates, compared with 1.4% of the girls. Models of femininity and masculinity – and even more when these are related to a social class that is implicitly or explicitly de-legitimised by the school authority – have a strong influence on relationships of coexistence. Schools that do not manage to create social inclusion in their institutional environment and which attend sectors of the population which already perceive themselves to be excluded in the social sphere promote separations among peers according to their attitudes of conformity or rebellion toward the school.

Exclusions and diversity: 'They pick on the Arabs a lot'

Despite the fact that 40% of the young people in the survey reported that they had never felt insulted or ridiculed, 22.1% of foreign origin students reported that they had been 'frequently' or 'always' insulted, compared with only 12.4% for local origin students. Most of the students denied feeling isolated at school, but among those who claimed to feel alone, the percentage of young people of foreign origin was double that of young people of national origin (18.7% and 9.3%

respectively, combining the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' categories). The statements made by some foreign origin students makes their sensation of vulnerability evident, something that is not seen in most of the studies on coexistence, where neither ethnic-national origin, phenotypical characteristics nor family language use are taken into consideration. Despite this situation, there is a general absence in schools of plans or policies designed to combat racism and promote cultural coexistence. Here is some evidence from an Ecuadorian student:

S: *I want them to come more often* [referring to the police]*, there are always problems, the other day they smashed my nose in a fight because they were insulting me and hitting me.*
      (...)
R: *Do you have problems with your classmates?*
S: *Yes, they are all really immature and they see me being quiet and they pick on me. They get* [name of boy] *every day, something happens and it's* [name of boy]*, always* [name of boy] *(…) The other day* [name of boy] *insulted me in class and I did him over in IT. And in the Catalan class I didn't hit him because the teacher came.*
      (...)
S: *And when I get tired I start to hit out, start punching people.*

                                      (S – male student, Year 4, School 2)

Our qualitative data showed that the experience of the Gypsy minority in these schools is also dominated by aggression and insults by their classmates, some of whom are foreign origin students who have themselves been assaulted by classmates. So the spiral of exclusion and violence grows. Young Moroccans, for example, for whom we were not able to collect any evidence in this study as they were not selected by the teachers for interviews in any of the diverse categories that we proposed (this in itself is an important piece of information that will form part of our research at a different time), are spoken of by their classmates as constant victims of aggression.

R: *What about in the other school?*
S: *No, it was in primary that there were problems. But in this school it doesn't happen as far as I know. What I have seen, and more last year, is that the Arabs get picked on a lot.*
R: *Who picks on them?*
S: *The Spanish. There were some that went around as if they owned the place, and they picked on them a lot...*

R: *And how did the Arabs react?*

S: *No, no, they didn't do anything, because they were weaker, and they saw that they were being marginalised...I did see that happen.*

R: *And did anybody say anything?*

S: *No, everyone ignored it and did like when there aren't any teachers, and they don't say anything so they don't get hit afterwards. But you could see one looking in the mirror and they were hitting him.*

(S – male student, Year 4, School 2)

The only exclusion that is apparently minimised is that of gender, given that girls feel that they receive equal treatment to boys at school, although they do show lower indexes of self-confidence (13% of girls and 5% of boys do not agree with the statement 'I like myself as I am').

Finally, behaviour such as insults and even physical aggression against male students who have masculinities that do not fall into line with the traditional gender models continue to be present in schools, both in working class and middle class environments. Some schools carry out occasional activities intended to foster gender equality and tolerance in tutorials and talks, but in general do not have cohesive plans to offset the gender values common in the school environment and among the students' home environment, such as homophobia, and in some cases, students even think that such talks by their teachers legitimise behaviour that is anti-homosexual. Not demonstrating a traditional male identity places a male student in a highly vulnerable position among his peers.

R: *Is there anyone who doesn't have friends, who is all alone?*

S: *No, it's not that they don't have friends but they're very weak...for example there is a really effeminate boy and even I recognise that I've gone over the top with him sometimes...and there are some who come and hit him and they told me all sorts of things from last year...Oh my God.*

R: *Like what for example?*

S: *Well they hit him, and then loads of people came and hit him, and they called him a poof, and because they see he's really weak and every time they come for him he's with the girls, and they know that the girls won't do anything, well...*

(S – male student, Year 4, School 2)

Diversification vs. homogenisation: 'Neither more stupid nor cleverer: levelled'

Segregation of students by academic performance, including the creation of reinforcement groups for certain students in certain subjects, contributes to naturalise and interiorise stigmas and hierarchies in students' minds about their own classmates. 'Low' group students develop increasing hostility toward peers in the 'high' groups as well as a negative view of themselves as students. This stratification ends up causing students to make generalisations about their peers according to the class groups they belong to:

> S2: *In Class A are the swots, in Class B as well, Class C is mixed and in Class D are the hooligans.*
> R: *And what do you think about being in Class D?*
> S1: *I don't care. I wouldn't like to be in Class A, they are all prats and daddy's boys.*
>
> (S1 & S2 – male students, Year 4, School 1, 'Low' group)

> S1: *In Class A they are all people who might later do a module or work and in Class B they're people who'll do Baccalaureate or they think that...*
> S2: *They have a chance of doing it...*
>
> (S1 – female student, S2 – male student, Year 4, School 2, 'Low' group)

> R: *Did they organise the classes by level?*
> S: *I don't know, but in the other class there are people who are repeating the year and they are more behind.*
>
> (S – male student, Year 4, School 2, 'Low' group)

In some of the schools in the sample, the 'low' level group was placed in an area apart from the other classes, adding a physical dimension to their symbolic separation, as could be seen in the results of the questionnaires. The effects are clearly negative, since some of the tutors interviewed even recognised the extra effort they had to make to motivate these students and include them in school life. In the schools where groups were made up of students regarded as diverse in terms of ability, students thought that in their classes there was 'a bit of everything', and the schools that experimented with completely flexible groupings[10] promoted relationships of companionship, since the perception of isolation was reduced and the perception of an improved situation of coexistence between students increased.

R: *What do you think of this kind of organisation?*
S1:   *I think it's good, because you learn to work in a group, well at my school we did that too but we always had to say you, you and you, and then you had the group. I think it's very good for learning to work in a group. For togetherness.*
S2:   *I think it's good, because whether you like it or not you always meet new people, of course you have to get to know them working for a year you get to know people, afterward outside you go with who you want, don't you? But you meet more people.*

(S1 – female student, S2 – male student, Year 4, School 4)

The school itself contributes to the creation of envy and malaise through the organisation of groups by academic performance and risks promoting aggressive relationships. For example, two of the students in a 'high' group explained how two classmates of weaker physique were bothered by some of the students in the 'low' group, in clear response to the subordinate position assigned to them as members of a low-prestige group.

Rules and discipline: Where do they come from? How are they understood? And how is social order achieved?

Some 59.8% of students at private schools and some 45.4% at state schools reported that conflicts of coexistence were most frequently resolved using dialogue, with a higher degree of satisfaction in conflict resolution being expressed by the former. A strict system of rules merely enforced through punishment appears to be negative for coexistence. However, a strict system of rules may have a positive effect when the rules encourage negotiation, and data suggest that this is more often happening in schools with high academic expectations of students, families and teachers, typically the private ones. A joint process of close academic and personal counseling by class tutors in these schools, where teachers are clearly expected to account for results in this sense, acts as an emotional cushion and facilitates tolerance and even identification with the system of rules.

Two of the elements mostly responsible for a school's positive climate are the presence of rules drawn up by the school community as a whole, where students and teachers in all categories perceive themselves as participants to a certain extent, and the perception that the rules are applied consistently in the resolution of conflicts without relevant perceptions of injustice. In this regard, 59% of students reported that school conflicts were resolved fairly and 62.4% thought that all teachers used the same criteria to apply the rules. The way in which sanctions

are applied is an important factor, since arbitrary and unreasonable application of punishments on the one hand and the devaluation of the effect of written warnings on the other appear to be serious factors in the creation of malaise at school and resistance among young people. Such things lead to a general devaluation of the system of rules, which thus becomes less effective when more serious problems arise.

> R: *What do they normally punish you for most? Do they send notes home?*
> S1: *For the smallest, stupidest thing they'll give you a note.*
> S2: *Sometimes you say something and you think they're going to give you a note, and sometimes you say another thing and they say 'Note!' And what are you supposed to do?*
> S1: *When you deserve one, they don't give you one.*
>
> (S1 – female student, S2 – male student, Year 4, School 2)

Students' reactions were extremely negative before their perception of authoritarianism, defined by the existence of teachers who would not allow students' intervention, who use punishment frequently and who always impose their own opinion. The threat of heavy sanctions to prevent those problems perceived as being extremely serious, such as physical fights, substance consumption and dealing, physical aggression against teachers, may be an effective element of control. However, if students are not included in the rule-making process or in their application and high expectations of their behaviour are not placed on them, then other long term consequences may come about, such as the intensification of levels of resignation and lack of motivation among students, paradoxically leading to classroom disruption, high levels of absenteeism or aggressive peer-to-peer relations outside school.

Relationships with the teachers: 'They should inspire confidence'

With respect to relationships of proximity between teachers and students, quantitative analysis of our questionnaire results showed that 73.2% of young people 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that the relationships were good. Nevertheless, 11.3% reported that teachers 'often' or 'always' ridiculed them. When the students feel that they are listened to by the school as represented by their teachers, this even seems to compensate for strict rules and high levels of punishment. A quality tutorial project and a relation of trust between teachers and students are preventive factors in terms of the generation of confrontation.

Emotional closeness is one of the highest demands of the students, especially among lower-middle and working classes, together with the demand for 'respect', since some of them complain of cold treatment and even public humiliation as a normal part of school life. They want teachers who, in addition to knowing their field, are pleasant and involved as people, have a basically benign attitude toward students and do not automatically resort to punishment:

> *They should be more involved with the kids, and not send us out when we have a joke.* (Male student, Year 4, School 1)

> *They should be kind, explain things to you well, make you laugh, make a little joke if you are bored of listening, I dunno, be a good teacher.* (Female student, Year 4, School 2)

> *They should tell you things about themselves.* (Male student, Year 4, School 3)

In connection with this, we might recall the observation by Valenzuela (1999) with respect to the centrality of what she calls the 'politics of caring'. It would seem to be exactly what students in our study are asking for of the school as a model for good relations and as a social context in which they spend a good part of their days.

But it can also be concluded that the majority of students in our sample do not see their schools as 'dangerous places', as Potts (2006) has called them. They felt good about their schools and had a lot of friends (86%) in an environment where they, as youth, place considerable value on peer friendships: 73.7% valued the importance of friends as an influence on their personality. Moreover, most of them (75.5%) agreed that their school encouraged positive relations, despite the fact that certain specific practices provoked malaise, such as teachers' ridiculing of their learning efforts, the non-generation of relationships of trust, invasion in spheres that they considered to be private and non-intervention in cases of physical violence. More specifically concerning bullying behaviours, 14.3% of students responded that they had been insulted, spoken badly of or ridiculed 'frequently' or 'always', while those who did not report ever having received this treatment accounted for 41.3%. In relation to physical violence, 4.7% reported that their classmates hit them 'frequently' or 'always', while 79.2% confirmed that they had never been hit.

The analysis of interviews, however, revealed the profiles of students who are especially vulnerable in school: academically-inclined students with few social skills; young homosexuals or those with non-conventional masculinities/femininities; those who change schools and social contexts and who have to learn

a new cultural code of peer relationships; those from a low-prestige social class or ethnic-national origin; but also students from 'majority' groups perceived as being weak and who thus more easily fall victim to the 'revenge' of students from minority or marginalised social sectors.

Concluding remarks

This study gives some clear indications about what the key factors are in terms of creating a school climate that promotes solidarity and togetherness among students. The affective expectations that students have about their school, how students from one year are separated into smaller groups and the degree of recognition and legitimation of the differences between students as manifested by the practices of the school institution obviously have a bearing on how students deal with each other at school. Likewise, the style of authority exercised by the institution is important, with a need for consistency in the application of rules and sanctions as well as a sense that students are participating in the governance of the school. It is also essential that the quality of classroom instruction is such that students are not bored and active participation by students is fostered and encouraged. Last but not least, the type of student profile that is promoted by the school as an institution through daily practice and interaction can have a considerable impact on student peer-to-peer relations.

Obviously, schools differ between themselves in climate and culture and so do the schools in our sample. In this paper, we have identified and analysed some of the range of elements that commonly emerged in all of them that had an impact on peer relations though in varying importance and intensity as experienced by students. Three years after the public hearing to the Catalan Ombudsman report based on our larger study in the Catalan autonomous parliament, the Department of Education has created a mandatory programme[11] for all schools to implement with the aim to promote positive social relations. Unfortunately, it only partially draws attention to the role played by the school climate and culture on the nature and quality of peer relations and focuses by large on a disturbing and pervasive notion of inherent conflict as part of contemporary youth.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented in Spanish at the 1st International Conference on School Violence (2007) organised by the University of Almería, Spain. The authors take equal responsibility for the paper.
2. See, for example I. Viar Echevarría's paper in Diariovasco.com (14/02/06).
3. L'Institut de l'Infància i Món Urbà (CIIMU) is a consortium created by the Barcelona City Council, the Barcelona Provincial Council, the Unversitat de Barcelona, the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.
4. Language is a key element in any study of this sort in Catalonia given that most of the student population is, to some extent, bilingual in Catalan and Spanish, and there are also increasing numbers of first or second generation immigrant children who may speak a third language (or more) at home.
5. In a conversation with the coordinator of Year 4 in one of the secondary schools included in the study, the explanation she gave for how the groups were formed was '*First of all we make the structure and then we place the students in the structure that we have created*'. In other words, the groups were created with pre-assigned and different levels of prestige, since the basis for grouping at the school in question was academic performance for a standarised categorisation, not the real students' characteristics and/or needs.
6. In Educació Secundària Obligatòria (ESO), students are typically aged 12 to 16.
7. The Unitat de Suport a la Convivència Escolar (USCE) is a special unit of support to help schools in situations of conflict resolution, basically developing mediation strategies. It is also in charge of training activities and courses on mediation for teachers.
8. The total number of students in each 'Year' (i.e., form or grade) are divided into several (typically four) groups. In 'homogeneous' grouping, students are separarted according to academic level (what is known in the literature as 'streaming'). The tutor is the teacher who is in charge of all the students in a particular group.
9. Although the many so-called 'escoles privades concertades' in Catalonia are technically private, they also receive subsidies from the Catalan government.
10. New groups were formed for each new task that the students had to complete.
11. Programa de Convivència i Mediació Escolar (see http://www.xtec.cat/innovacio/convivencia).

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SCIENCE TEXTBOOK READABILITY IN LEBANON: A COMPARISON BETWEEN ANGLOPHONE AND FRANCOPHONE LEARNING MILIEUX

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Abstract – *Science subjects are taught in either English or French in the Lebanese high school system. In a strongly examination-driven system exhibiting parallel English and French science courses and textbooks, the issue arises as to whether the second language in which learning occurs has any determining effect on outcomes. This paper outlines an exploratory study involving the readability of the national Year 12 biology textbook using both Flesch and Cloze tests, and the reading strategies that students employ when reading science texts. On the whole, there did not appear to be any major differences between anglophone-medium and francophone-medium students with regard to the readability of the book, but the study raises questions which cast some doubt on the simplistic assumption that the choice of the second language makes no difference, particularly with regard to students' reading strategies.*

Introduction

*L*ebanese school education is bilingual: some subjects are taught in Arabic while others are taught in English or French, a choice which is made by individual schools be they public or private; there are parallel anglophone and francophone streams in some schools. The Lebanese dual language policy dates back to the French mandate (1920-1943) following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the end of the First World War, when the public education system was modelled on the French system, as it remains to this day. English has, however, been increasingly used in Lebanon since the 1960s, and there exists today a pronounced American influence in private education, especially at tertiary level. The school curriculum unit of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education prescribes curricula for all subjects from Years 1 to 12. The Ministry's Centre for Educational Research and Development produces textbooks for these curricula. Where subjects may be taught in English or French, parallel versions in those languages are produced.

The Lebanese secondary education system is dominated by two external examination junctures: the *Brevet* at the conclusion of Year 9, and the terminating

Lebanese *Baccalauréat*. The *Brevet* acts as a filter for promotion to Year 10; students who fail it either transfer to the parallel vocational education system or simply drop out. The *Baccalauréat* is a university entry qualification, although this may be supplemented by additional tests such as the SAT for private universities which follow the American model. Upper secondary schooling in Lebanon is strongly geared to university entry, with a very high transition rate operating between the secondary and tertiary education sectors (Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2007).

The need for secondary school students to study science and mathematics in a foreign language is compounded in the Lebanese context as there are two foreign languages to choose from. In the highly competitive, examinations-dominated world of Lebanese upper secondary schooling, the question arises whether studying science and mathematics in English or French is indeed a matter of 'six of one, half a dozen of the other', or whether there are subtle differences between the two learning milieux which may translate into a comparative advantage or disadvantage. Lebanese classroom practice tends to revolve around the official textbooks, and one line of enquiry into this issue is the evaluation of the comparative readability of those books for arabophone students. Accordingly, the purpose of this exploratory study was to gauge the readability of both language versions of the national Year 12 biology textbook, and to gain an insight into reading strategies used by students.

Textbook readability in the context of school science

Research from numerous countries suggests that science instruction in schools is generally heavily based on science textbooks (Ginsguger-Vogel & Astolfi, 1987; Otero & Campanario, 1990; Groves, 1995; Stern & Roseman, 2004; Fang, 2006). Reading a text in any language is cognitively challenging whatever the subject matter (Kern, 1989; Labasse, 1999) for both native and second language (L2) readers as 'it involves the coordination of attention, memory, perceptual processes and comprehension processes' (Kern, 1989, p. 135). Reading science texts seems to be a particularly painstaking endeavour for students whether these texts are written in their native tongue or a foreign one (Fang, 2006). Science texts in general constitute a distinctive genre characterised by a complicated, rigid organisation, a large number of both technical and non-technical words, long nominal phrases, sentences dense with information, and complicated syntactic structures (Halliday, 1993; Groves, 1995; Sutton, 1998; Parkinson, 2000; Gee, 2001; Fang, 2006). Given the inherent complexity of science texts, reading science textual material constitutes one of the main impediments to understanding

science concepts (Groves, 1995; Chavkin, 1997; Fang, 2006) as L2 readers have to deal with scientific concepts through 'a yet-unmastered language' (Lee, 2005, p. 492). This extra effort is constantly demanded from science students in Lebanon (Boujaoude & Sayah, 2000). Students need to develop adequate reading strategies to overcome their difficulties and extract meaning from their science textbooks. These can be simple traditional strategies such as skimming the text and re-reading (Carell, 1989), or more elaborate techniques such as activating background knowledge (Zvetina, 1987) or recognising text structure (Block, 1986).

In this study, the term 'readability' refers to what Fry (2002, p. 286) calls 'true readability', which is the ease with which a text or a passage may be read and the extent to which it is interesting to read. This definition contains a subjective dimension that distinguishes it from approaches involving the mere application of readability formulae. The readability of a text – in this case a scientific text or passage – implies the extent to which a reader can read and make sense of the text or passage s/he is reading. Because reading involves interaction with written texts, language proficiency is considered to be necessary in order to effectively understand the text. In other words, reading is a 'reasoning task connected to a language task' (Swaffar, 1988, p. 141). Hence, students need to learn and understand scientific language in order to comprehend the scientific concepts and acquire the needed communication and thinking skills (Kearsey & Turner, 1999).

Despite improvements in the quality of science textbooks over the past few decades, studies from a variety of countries have shown that students continue to face problems in reading science texts (Ginsguger-Vogel & Astolfi, 1987; Fang, 2006). Various researchers have reported that students find science a 'forbidding and obscure' (Halliday, 1993, p. 69) subject and that reading a science text is a difficult enterprise that can be frustrating (Fang, 2006). But, ironically, even though reading texts in a foreign language requires more effort on the part of L2 learners, research suggests that problems faced by second language learners are not very different from those faced by native speakers: both encounter similar challenges when reading science texts as 'science language' includes features that are peculiar to science, that is, the scientific register (Kern, 1989; Halliday, 1993; Fang, 2006). Other than technical terms, difficulties reside in the grammatical features which include interlocking definitions, technical taxonomies, special expressions, lexical density, syntactic ambiguity, grammatical metaphors and semantic discontinuity. Numerous empirical studies (Ginsguger-Vogel & Astolfi, 1987; Merzyn, 1987; Groves, 1995; Chavkin, 1997; Sutton, 1998; Fang, 2006) have shown that students are challenged by the lexical components of science texts. Fang (2006) identifies, in his extensive work with middle-school students, a number of linguistic features that seem to hinder reading in science. As well as technical vocabulary and high information density, texts use complex sentences

with long noun phrases and multiple subordinate clauses (see also Groves, 1995; Chavkin, 1997). These jointly slow down, or even impede, students' processing of information because of cognitive overload. Furthermore, Fang (2006) points out that prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns, frequently used in science texts to convey specific causal, consequential or chronological relationships, seem ambiguous to students. In addition, the employment of metaphors and ellipses as well as the nominalisations, which recur in science readings to pack information and build generalisations, appear to be too abstract for students, even native speakers.

Together, these linguistic aspects of the scientific genre give science a 'turgid, dense, abstract and distilled' (Fang, 2006, p. 505) character. As a result, Sutton (1998) believes that students are receiving a misleading image of science: one in which science texts look like passages that necessarily describe the truth. The investigative feature of science, its tentative nature as well as its value-laden character, fade. Instead, a rigid, imposed, untouchable, unarguable science is conveyed to students.

In science education, language is no longer an incidental medium through which students express their thoughts and reach better understanding. It is rather a new vocabulary *and* grammar to master before entering science classes. Hence, language can become an impediment to learning in that it may underlie many misconceptions (Boujaoude & Sayah, 2000).

The literature identifies a number of strategies used by readers whether reading a text in their native language or in a foreign language (Carell, 1989; Kern, 1989; Anderson, 1991). Some studies suggest that there is a clear distinction between the strategies used by successful readers and those employed by unsuccessful ones (Carell, 1989; Oxford & Crookall, 1989). According to a review done by Carell (1989), proficient readers seem to focus on the meaning conveyed by the text while less proficient readers tend to consider reading as a decoding process. Hence, proficient readers typically tend to skim the passage, skip unknown words that are unimportant for the overall meaning, make inferences and keep the meaning of the passage in mind while reading. On the other hand, less competent readers tend to lose the meaning of the sentence as soon as the latter is decoded, and seldom indulge in skimming as they fail to distinguish between essential words and insignificant ones.

Anderson (1991) classified and characterised reading strategies used by second language readers. His framework consisted of five main categories of processing strategies: supervising strategies, support strategies, paraphrase strategies, strategies for establishing coherence in the text, and test-taking strategies. According to his empirical studies, proficient readers and less competent readers use virtually the same types of strategies; however, proficient

readers are better at knowing 'how to use a strategy successfully and orchestrate its use with other strategies' (Anderson, 1991, pp. 468-469).

In summary, reading science texts, be it in students' native language or a foreign one, constitutes a main impediment to understanding scientific concepts. This seems to be primarily attributed to the scientific register and the grammatical features embedded in the written language of science. Students seem to overcome the language barrier by developing various reading strategies. This study aims to examine and compare the main problems faced by second language speakers when reading science texts written in English and in French, as well as to investigate the reading strategies developed.

Methods

Biology was selected as the subject for this investigation as it is studied by all *Baccalauréat* strands except one, and is the backbone of the popular 'Life Science' strand. The parallel English language and French language national biology texts produced by the Ministry of Education for the Life Science strand are 'Life Science' and 'Science de la Vie' respectively (currently in the 2006 new editions). These books are used by most schools, public and private, which follow the Lebanese curriculum.

A single school offering the Lebanese curriculum, having both French and English as languages of science instruction for separate language sections, was selected in order to limit the number of situation variables. Grade 11 Life Science strand students were selected because they had not yet encountered the Grade 12 textbook. There were 29 students (16 boys and 13 girls) in the English section and 46 in the French section (23 boys and 23 girls).

The Flesch Reading Ease (FRE) formula (Flesch, 1948) and its French adaptation (Kandel & Moles, 1958) were applied to samples of each text. The FRE is a good objective indicator of the level of difficulty of a text, but it does not give any indication about the interaction between the reader and the text; a text may be easy to read in terms of decoding words, but be totally unintelligible (Labasse, 1999). The standard Cloze test was adopted in order to test students' ability to read meaningfully the same selected passage in English or French. The Cloze test has often been used on science texts, including biology textbooks (Cohen & Poppino, 1978; Merzyn, 1987; Fatt, 1991) and in the context of the second language medium of instruction (Steinman, 2002). A French version (*test de closure*) was developed by Landsheere in 1978 (Ginsguger-Vogel & Astolfi, 1987; Bennacer, 2007).

For the Flesch testing, the researcher extracted from the textbooks all passages discussing a single topic with minimum reliance on diagrams and pictures: the

passage had to be discursive rather than merely presenting a lot of new information. These criteria served the purpose of the study as they are very important for the selection of the texts eligible for Cloze testing (Steinman, 2002; Bennacer, 2007). The researcher ended up with 17 passages in each version of the book. For the Cloze testing, the researcher selected from these passages those that were at least 250 words long. To avoid concept novelty (Oller, 1979), passages discussing completely new topics were disregarded. This left 10 passages, of which one was randomly chosen. The final target excerpt was from the chapter entitled 'Genetic variation and polymorphism' in English and 'Variation génétique et polymorphisme' in French. The English passage was 298 words long, while the equivalent in French counted 315 words. Fifty deletions were made in both versions of the Cloze test (every fifth word, observing the usual rules of Cloze test preparation – Steinman, 2002). The last sentence of the French version had to be included intact. Deleted words were categorised as technical vocabulary, non-technical vocabulary or grammatical, and the Chi-square test was used to compare the frequencies of these between the two tests; the value of 1.95 indicated that the two versions of the test did not differ significantly in this regard.

Alternative words which did not substantively alter the meaning of the sentence were accepted when marking the Cloze tests. The *t*-statistic was used to compare the mean scores of the two groups.

Interviews and verbal reports are widely used as methods for diagnosing and understanding the strategies employed by readers when faced with a text (Carell, 1989; Kern, 1989; Oxford & Crookall, 1989; Anderson, 1991). Following the administration of the Cloze tests, interviews were conducted with 20 students (10 from each language section) whose Cloze scores were the closest to their language groups' respective means. This sampling method was used in order to compare two 'average' groups of anglophone- and francophone-medium students, rather than comparing groups of students with widely differing readability scores within each group.

Prior to the interviews, the researcher explained to the interviewees the purpose of the study and the valuable contributions that the interviews would have on the research conducted. The interviewees were assured that their participation was voluntary and confidential. The interviews were conducted using 15-minute timeslots. These were conducted in Arabic (although, as is the norm in Lebanon, the researcher and the students referred to scientific concepts in the second language; not having been taught science in Arabic, they do not have a scientific vocabulary in their mother tongue). The interviews focused on an excerpt from the chapter 'Mechanisms of evolution'. The passage was headed 'Mutation and genetic innovation' in English and 'Mutations et innovations génétiques' in French. The students were requested to read the text silently while the researcher

was taking note of any strategy applied (such as note taking, scanning, skimming). Interviewees were asked to rate the difficulty of the passage and to identify words and sentences that hindered their understanding. They were asked to explain terms (some scientific, others non-scientific) and sentences (some short, some long) to evaluate their reading strategies. The interviewees were also asked about the extent to which they used Arabic (their mother tongue) and how they used it while reading science texts in English or French (see Appendix IA).

The answers to the interview questions were categorised into the first four categories of Anderson's (1991) framework (supervising strategies, support strategies, paraphrase strategies and strategies for establishing coherence in the text; the fifth category, test-taking strategies, was not pertinent to the study). A coding sheet completed by the researcher was devised for this purpose (see Appendix IB).

Results and discussion

For the English passages selected for Flesch testing, Reading Ease scores ranged from 10.6 to 57.1 . Of the 17 texts selected, one text was ranked as 'Fairly Difficult', ten as Difficult' and six as 'Very Difficult'. The French passages likewise ranged from 19.9 to 47.3; nine were classified as 'Difficult' and eight as 'Very Difficult'. These scores and descriptors place the national biology textbooks well within the 'Scientific-Technical' category (see Appendices IIA & IIB).

The means on the Cloze tests were 26.3 (53%) and 29.2 (58%) for the English and French groups respectively. Despite what appeared to be a higher mean for the latter, the t-value of 1.76 was not statistically significant. According to the Bormuth criterion reference scores (Bormuth, 1968), these means place the English version at the Instructional Level (i.e., the passage is sufficiently understandable under supervised instruction) and the French version at the lower reaches of the Independent Level (i.e., the passage is suitable for student independent study; albeit, in this instance, very close to the borderline between the Instructional Level and the Independent Level). Overall, the tests used indicated that the reading difficulty of the textbook was about the same for both groups. The medium of instruction did not seem to favour substantially one group over the other in its capacity to read a scientific text meaningfully. The literature in the field suggests that very similar problems across languages arise in reading science texts even when students are native speakers of either language: English (Fang, 2006) or French (Ginsguger-Vogel & Astolfi, 1987). Students reading science material in a foreign language face comparable difficulties, albeit more acutely, as do native speakers of the same age.

In the course of the interviews, three students from the English section ($n = 10$) described the passage as 'easy' (cf. none in the French section, $n = 10$), five students from each section described it as 'accessible' and five students in the French section as 'hard' (cf. two on the English section). When asked about the main challenges that hampered their understanding of the science text given to them, the most common factor mentioned was that of difficult technical vocabulary (10 French section students and 8 English section students). School students commonly believe that high achievement in science depends to a great extent on the mastery of technical vocabulary (Groves, 1995; Sutton, 1998; Kearsey & Turner, 1999; Parkinson, 2000). Three students in each group noted difficult non-technical vocabulary. Four francophone students complained about ambiguous sentence structures (vs. none of the anglophone students), and four about the complexity of concepts/ideas under discussion (cf. two anglophone students). Other comments – sentence length, noun density, the lack of contextual clues – tended to be mentioned by two or fewer students.

TABLE 1: Frequency of reading strategies exhibited by interviewees

Strategy	Aspect	Frequency (out of 10)	
		Anglophone	Francophone
Supervising strategies	recognises loss of concentration	2	1
	states failure to comprehend a section of text	7	8
	states success in understanding a section of text	10	9
	adjusts reading rate to increase comprehension	9	10
	formulates a question	0	0
	makes a prediction about the meaning of a word of about text content	10	10
	referes to lexical items that impede comprehension	10	10

Support strategies	skips unknown words	7	8
	expresses a need for a dictionary	7	1
	skims material for general understanding	1	5
	scans material for a specific word or phrase	8	8
Paraphrase strategies	uses cognates between L1 and L2	5	8
	breaks lexical items into parts	3	5
	paraphrases	4	5
	translates a word or phrases into L1	5	8
Strategies for establishing coherence	rereads	10	10
	uses context clues to interpret a word or phrase	9	7
	reads ahead	8	10
	uses background knowledge	9	9
	acknowledges lack of background knowledge	7	8

Table 1 summarises the strategies used by the interviewees. Participants in both groups relied equally on comparable supervising strategies. Almost all participants stated success or failure to understand a portion of the text, adjusted reading rate in order to increase comprehension, made a prediction about the meaning of a word or about text content, and referred to lexical items that impeded comprehension. With regard to support strategies, the majority of the participants in both groups skipped unknown words and scanned the text for a specific word or phrase. However, most participants in the English group (7 out of 10) expressed

a need to use a dictionary, as opposed to only one of the ten in the French group. A possible explanation is that the anglophone-medium students were not as adept at breaking a word into parts. Another possibly significant observation was that half of the participants in the French group skimmed the text for a general understanding before reading, while only one participant in the English group did so. As for the paraphrase strategies, most of the participants in the French group (8 out of 10 participants) and half of the participants in the English group (5 out of 10) used cognates between L1 and L2 to understand the text and translated words or phrases into L1. The picture was again a homogeneous one in the case of strategies for establishing coherence in a text. Most or even all participants reread a text or read ahead to enhance understanding, and used contextual clues and background knowledge to interpret a word or phrase. In addition, most of the participants ascribed great value to the pictures and diagrams accompanying scientific texts, as they perceive them important tools that enhance reading comprehension.

On the whole, the students came across as proficient readers in the second language. It is important to note, in this regard, that the Lebanese education system is selective: as well as the *Brevet* filter after Year 9, there are further filtering and streaming processes in Years 10 and 11, especially in private schools. Year 12 Life Science students are necessarily academically good students, and would be expected to be proficient second-language users and readers. This study, however, suggests that there may be differences between English-medium and French-medium students with regard to support strategies. Francophone students appeared to be slightly more mature readers in this study, more intent on taking in the whole rather than getting bogged down in technical details. Given the limited scope of the study and the small sample size, we would not venture, however, to generalise upon this point.

Conclusion and recommendations

Although inconclusive, there are indications arising from this study that the use of English or French as the medium of instruction in science may 'make a difference'. Although not statistically significant, the readability of the French version of the textbook was slightly higher than that of its English counterpart according to both Cloze test results and the Bormuth criteria as applied to the Flesch scores. Francophone students were moreover considered to be the more adept readers. These may be spurious observations arising from the small sample size, but it may also point to a real underlying difference favouring francophone students in the Lebanese system. Extensive and comprehensive studies on a larger

scale at lower secondary as well as upper secondary level are needed to resolve this issue.

At the very least, the study has highlighted the importance of reading in classroom science. The promotion of effective reading strategies could be an indirect way of improving science education outcomes in Lebanon. Science teachers should focus on central scientific themes and concepts to promote meaningful learning and motivate students (Sutton, 1998; Groves, 1995; Fang, 2006) Teachers should also develop traditional reading strategies in students such as skimming, scanning, guessing or skipping unknown words, tolerating ambiguity, reading for meaning, critical reading, making inferences, and so on, and encourage students to develop more sophisticated ones that engage background knowledge. Fang (2006) encourages teachers to use paraphrasing exercises as they could serve as a way to transform the scientific language into everyday language.

Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX IA

Interview Questions

1. How do you find this text? Is it easy or difficult?

2. What is the main idea of this passage?

3. What do you find difficult in the text?

4. Which of these two words do you find hard(er)? (Given two difficult words selected by the researcher) Why?

5. What do you do when you come across such words?

6. Which of these two sentences is harder in your opinion? (Given two difficult sentences selected by the researcher) Why?

7. Can you explain these sentences for me, please?

8. What would you do to overcome the difficulties in those sentences?

9. While reading, do you use the diagrams found in your book? At what stage?

10. Do you use Arabic in order to understand what you are reading? How?

APPENDIX IB

Interview Coding Format

Name: _____   Language of instruction: E ☐   F ☐

Sex: M ☐   F ☐   Duration: _____ minutes

1. When given the text, the student:
a. Skims through the pages   b. Reads word by word

2. According to the student, the text is:
   a. Easy   b. Accessible   c. Hard

3. The main idea is:

   Paragraph 1: _____

   _____

   Paragraph 2: _____

   _____

   Paragraph 3: _____

   _____

4. What do you find difficult in the text while reading it:
   a. the sentence structure   b. the vocabulary   c. the concept/ideas

5. The meaning of: 'natural population' _____
   'aberration' _____
   'homeotic' _____
   'Innovation' _____

   The harder word is:
   a.   technical   b. non-technical

Why? _____

6. What do you do when you come across such words?

   _____

   _____

APPENDIX IIA

Flesch Reading Ease Scores of Science Texts
Texts in English

Text	Pages	R.E. Score	Style	Type	Syllables / 100 words	Average sentences length in words
1	58-59	40.2	Difficult	Academic	177	16.7
2	60-61	37.7	Difficult	Academic	176	20
3	62-63	37.7	Difficult	Academic	170	25
4	78-79	41.7	Difficult	Academic	178	14.3
5	80-81	10.6	Very Difficult	Scientific	204	25
6	82-83	39.3	Difficult	Academic	174	20
7	116-117	27.5	Very Difficult	Scientific	230	16.7
8[*]	120-121	57.1	Fairly Difficult	Quality	153	20
9	123-124	14.8	Very Difficult	Scientific	203	20
10	146-147	52.9	Fairly Difficult	Quality	162	16.7
11[*]	149	33.4	Difficult	Academic	181	20
12[*]	150-151	24.1	Very Difficult	Scientific	196	16.7
13	164-165	30.0	Difficult	Academic	189	16.7
14	220-221	43.4	Difficult	Academic	176	14.3
15	294	46.1	Difficult	Academic	170	16.7
16	352-353	47.8	Difficult	Academic	168	16.7
17	374-375	11.4	Very Difficult	Scientific	191	33.3

[*] Texts counting less than 250 words

APPENDIX IIB

Flesch Reading Ease Scores of Science Texts
Texts in French

Text	Pages	R.E. Score	Style	Type	Syllables / 100 words	Average sentences length in words
1	58-59	23.3	Très Difficile	Scientifique	222	20
2	60-61	24.8	Très Difficile	Scientifique	220	20
3	62-63	34.3	Difficile	Technique	207	20
4	78-79	47.3	Difficile	Technique	194	16.7
5	80-81	20.4	Très Difficile	Scientifique	219	25
6	82-83	40.2	Difficile	Technique	251	20
7	116-117	20.4	Très Difficile	Scientifique	226	20
8[*]	120-121	27.7	Très Difficile	Scientifique	216	20
9	123-124	31.4	Difficile	Technique	211	42.52
10	146	33.3	Difficile	Technique	213	16.7
11[*]	149	29.3	Très Difficile	Scientifique	207	25
12[*]	150-151	36.6	Difficile	Technique	204	20
13	164-165	24.0	Très Difficile	Scientifique	221	20
14	220-221	19.9	Très Difficile	Scientifique	237	12.5
15	294	46.6	Difficile	Technique	195	16.7
16	352-353	36.1	Difficile	Technique	215	12.5
17	374-375	40.2	Difficile	Technique	199	20

[*] Texts counting less than 250 words

CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION IN ACADEMIA: THE VIEWS OF FACULTY MEMBERS

SIDIKA GIZIR

Abstract – *The purpose of this study is to assess the interrelationships among factors negatively affecting the communication process among faculty members. Specifically, structural equation modelling was used to test the interrelationships among nine factors, namely: lack of motivation, alliances, lack of common goals, scientific discourse, individualism, inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge, administrative issues, introvert characteristics of the department and departmental atmosphere and their impact on poor communication among faculty members. The sample for the study consisted of 480 faculty members including professors, associate professors and assistant professors employed in seven state universities in Turkey. The data were gathered by utilising the Inventory of Communication Analysis in Academic Context (ICAAC) and analysed by using LISREL. Overall, the model explained 74% of the total variance in poor communication, and fit indices suggested a good fit of the data. The results and implications are discussed.*

Introduction

F inancial cutbacks, decreasing public spending, new accountability measures, enrolment uncertainties, calls for a broader range of services to society, economic recession, and confusion about academic goals, which are among the challenges facing higher education institutions, have combined to encourage the reorganisation of these institutions across the world (Altbach, 1995; Jacob & Hellström, 2003). The restructuring of higher education has generated various critical debates on almost all aspects of universities, such as collegial tradition, departmental structure, academic culture, knowledge, ethics and roles of academics (Barnett, 1993; Kerr, 1994; Altbach, 1995; Adams, 1998; Tapper & Palfreyman, 1998; Edwards, 1999; Marginson, 2000; Jacob & Hellström, 2003). The effects and acceleration of change in higher education vary in nature, provenance and intensity, but all impact on academic staff and their perception about their worklife and the workplace (Adams, 1998) in which communication takes place.

In addition, quality in research, teaching and service, which are the basic tasks of a university, mainly relate to the quality of administrative processes, academic

staff and related aspects of their worklife and workplace, technical infrastructure, and so on. Among other organisational processes and themes that may be related to these changes and quality issues, organisational communication deserves more attention because of its central position in the organisational action, control, coordination and survival of organisations.

Organisational communication can be defined as a process through which an organisation's members express their collective inclination to coordinate beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes, and it also gives meaning to work and forges perceptions of reality (Kowalski, 2000). It is a transactional symbolic process that allows people to relate to and manage their environments by establishing human contact, exchanging information, and reinforcing or changing the attitudes and behaviours of others (Book et al., 1980). Communication also requires a common purpose and a common understanding of the goals which an enterprise aims to achieve. Thus, communication is the process most central to the success or failure of an organisation.

Hunt, Tourish & Hargie (2000) stated that, as with most organisations, universities as educational establishments engage in a wide variety of communications to realise their basic tasks – teaching, research, and service. However, universities have some distinguishing features which make their communication process more complex compared to business organisations. These distinguishing features can be categorised as goal ambiguity or multiplicity, complexity of goals and mission, administrative structure, academic profession (Birnbaum, 1988), and structural and cultural configuration (Birnbaum, 1988; Alvesson, 1993; Becher, 1994; Baldridge et al., 2000; Trowler & Knight, 2000; Ylijoki, 2000; Hearn & Anderson, 2002; Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

In addition, Millett (1968) proposed that the structure of the university may facilitate or impede communication. Structure impedes communication when it is not clearly related to the technological process and desired output of higher education. Also, structure hampers communication when it is not clearly defined in terms of functions to be performed by the differentiated parts of the enterprise. On the other hand, structure can facilitate communication when it is clearly defined and related to the technology and outputs of higher education.

Moreover, universities are labour intensive, that is, the staff of a higher education institution is a significant component having a major role to play in achieving the objectives of the institution (Rowley, 1996). Specifically, faculty members have a special status as part of an academic department and they cannot be just passive recipients of management communication. In other words, faculty members are the vital part of the entire university communication network. However, there is a dearth of research which specifically investigates communication among faculty members.

Research problem

Against this background, this study collectively suggests the value of assessing interrelationships among factors negatively affecting the communication process and their impacts on poor communication among faculty members in Turkish state universities by testing a hypothetical structural model (see Figure 1) drawn from the findings of a qualitative case study conducted by Gizir & Simsek (2005) and also the related literature.

In their studies, Gizir & Simsek (2005) aimed at investigating the most common communication problems and the ways of solving these problems according to the views of faculty members at the Middle East Technical University (METU). The results of their study indicated many factors that influenced, both positively and negatively, the communication process in an academic context. Factors influencing negatively communication within and between departments were named 'inhibitors', including disciplinary culture, high individualism, inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge, lack of motivation, competition, alienation, alliances, criticism, departmental atmosphere, lack of common goals, administrative issues, methods of communication, time constraints, size of the department, age profile of faculty, only personal contact, introvert characteristics of the department, inadequate collaboration in scientific work, upper administrative staff and communication, marginalisation, formal mediums, and general size of the campus. Gizir & Simsek (2005) also proposed that the number

FIGURE 1: Hypothetical structural model of poor communication among faculty members
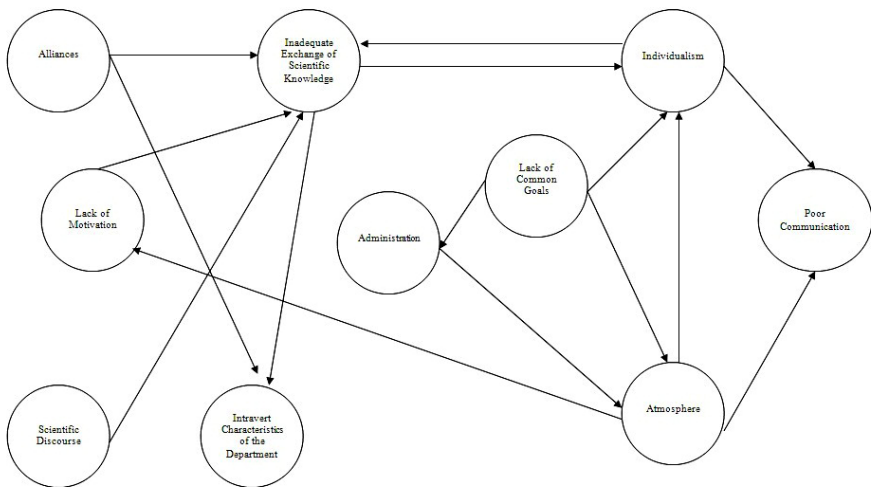
of inhibitors are greater than the number of enablers, and that this situation may be a sign of some problematic areas in the communication process in an academic context.

Gizir & Simsek (2005) also pointed out that some factors were stressed more frequently than others by the faculty members interviewed and appeared to have a greater negative influence on the communication process in an academic context than others. These factors were 'lack of motivation', 'administrative issues', 'departmental atmosphere', 'high individualism', 'introvert characteristics of the department', 'criticism', 'alliances', 'lack of common goals', and 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge'.

The present study employs a hypothetical structural model which takes into consideration the interrelationships among these factors[1] (as well as the related literature) and reviews their impact on poor communication.

Methodology

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 480 faculty members employed in seven state universities representing seven regions of Turkey. The sample selection process involved several consecutive steps. In the first step, seven state universities representing seven regions of Turkey were identified by using a criterion sampling strategy. Among the 53 state universities in Turkey, the selected universities have the oldest history, have more faculties and more faculty members, and more students compared to other public universities in the same regions (Council of Higher Education, 2004a, 2004b). The aim was to include the largest university in each region in order to enhance the representative power of the sample.

After identifying the faculties which were the most common and familiar ones in sampled universities in order to distribute the sample equally in the best way, a sample of faculty members was selected from these faculties by utilising a stratified random sampling procedure. Finally, the names of the faculty members from each stratum were drawn randomly and 1,000 faculty members were selected to form the sample.

Data were obtained by mail and out of 1,000 faculty members, 480 returned the surveys, representing a 48% return rate. Out of the 480 faculty members, 128 were from the faculties of Science (26.7%), 90 were from Education (18.8%), 102 were from Economics and Political Sciences (21.3%), and 160 were from Engineering (33.3%).

The mean age of the sample was 45.74 years ($SD = 8.5$) with an age range of 30.0 to 67.0 years. The service year of faculty members within their current university was 18.1 years ($SD = 8.9$) with a range of 1 to 41 years. Out of the 480 faculty members, 115 were female (24%) and 365 were male (76%).

Instrument

The Inventory of Communication Analysis in Academic Context (ICAAC) was used in this study in order to assess the potential factors affecting negatively the communication process and poor communication among faculty members in the academic context. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert scale with anchors labelled from 'certainly disagree' to 'certainly agree'. The ICAAC was developed mainly by Gizir & Gizir (2005), and a validity and reliability study was conducted by the same researchers. Results of the confirmatory factor analysis highlighted ten factors from this 36-item inventory: poor communication, individualism, inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge, lack of motivation, alliances, administrative issues, lack of common goals, scientific discourse, introvert characteristics of the department, and departmental atmosphere. The results also showed that internal consistency coefficients of the factors as estimated by Cronbach Alpha were satisfactory, ranging .67 to .88 .

Data analysis

In the present study, LISREL 8.30 for Windows (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1999) with SIMPLIS command language was used to analyse the data. The maximum likelihood estimation method was used in all the LISREL analyses. For the model data fit assessment, Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Relative Fit Index (RFI), Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardised Root Mean Squared Residual (SRMR) were used in the study (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). The expected values for a good model data fit interpretation are possible if the GFI, AGFI, CFI, NFI, NNFI, IFI, and RFI index values are above .90.; and RMSEA and SRMR index values are below .05.. In addition, the significance of the paths among latent variables was considered with respect to the *t*-test results and non-significant paths were deleted in a subsequent process of 'model-trimming' (Byrne, 2001). For the purpose of revising or improving the model data fit, modification indexes were also taken into account. Then, direct, indirect and total effects were examined.

Results

Descriptive statistics for the latent variables

The means, standard deviations and correlations of the latent variables used in the structural equation model are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Means, standard deviations and correlations among latent variables

	PC	IND	IESK	LM	ALL	AI	LCG	SD	ICD	DA
PC	–									
IND	.552**	–								
IESK	.547**	.623**	–							
LM	.453**	.556**	.541**	–						
ALL	.113*	.277**	.221**	.149**	–					
AI	.541**	.508**	.494**	.507**	.172**	–				
LCG	.574**	.590**	.568**	.541**	.182**	.739**	–			
SD	.466**	.523**	.539**	.543**	.309**	.615**	.672**	–		
ICD	.430**	.458**	.501**	.468**	.156**	.546**	.609**	.612**	–	
DA	.607**	.500**	.501**	.433**	.110*	.671**	.680**	.584**	.534**	–
Mean	11.55	12.50	6.28	9.80	9.31	18.22	9.52	9.67	7.13	12.54
SD	4.20	3.29	2.10	2.78	2.64	5.41	3.31	2.86	2.02	4.75
α	0.81	0.68	0.76	0.67	0.69	0.85	0.85	0.75	0.80	0.88

Note: Correlations: $*p < .05$; $**p < .01$. PC: Poor Communication; IND: Individualism; IESK: Inadequate Exchange of Scientific Knowledge; LM: Lack of Motivation; ALL: Alliances; AI: Administrative Issues; LCG: Lack of Common Goals; SD: Scientific Discourse; ICD: Introvert Characteristics of the Department; DA: Departmental Atmosphere.

The Structural Equation Model

Structural equation modelling was used to test the hypothesised interrelationships among 'lack of motivation', 'alliances', 'lack of common goals', 'scientific discourse', 'individualism', 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge', 'administrative issues', 'introvert characteristics of the department', 'departmental atmosphere' and their impact on 'poor communication'.

Two steps were used to determine the interrelationships among latent variables and their impact on poor communication. Firstly, the hypothetical model of the poor communication among faculty members presented in Figure 1 was estimated. Although this initial model indicated approximately a good fit to the data except AGFI and RFI (see Table 2), three paths between latent variables were found to be non-significant in this model. Specifically, the paths from 'alliances' to 'introvert characteristics of the department' ($\gamma = 0.06$, $t = 1.00$), and 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' to 'introvert characteristics of the department' ($\beta = 0.02$, $t = 0.31$) indicated non-significant t-values. The path from 'scientific discourse' to 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' was also found to be non-significant ($\gamma = 0.17$, $t = 1.87$). So, these three paths were deleted from the estimated structural model.

Secondly, as a result of inspecting the modification indexes, two new paths were added into this structural model, between 'scientific discourse' and 'introvert characteristics of the department', and between 'scientific discourse' and 'lack of motivation'.

Significant improvements in model fit of the structural model, as evidenced by the decrease in χ^2 and increases in other fit indexes, were obtained when the alterations proposed by the modification indices were considered. Consequently, as shown in Table 2, the goodness-of-fit indices calculated for the model provided a very good fit to the data. The model fit statistics were as follows: $\chi^2(555) = 828.11$, $p < .05$; $\chi^2/df = 1.49$; RMSEA = 0.032; SRMR = 0.041; GFI = 0.91; AGFI = 0.90; CFI = 0.97; NFI = 0.91; NNFI = 0.96; IFI = 0.97; and RFI = 0.90. These values were deemed adequate to interpret the significant interrelationships among the latent variables. Moreover, the structural model had path coefficients all of which were statistically significant and theoretically sound.

TABLE 2: Chi-square and goodness-of-fit statistics for the initial and the modified model

Indexes	Hypothetical Model	Modified Model
χ^2/df	1.66	1.49
RMSEA	.037	.032
SRMR	.046	.041
GFI	.90	.91
AGFI	.88	.90
CFI	.95	.97
NFI	.90	.91
NNFI	.95	.96
IFI	.96	.97
RFI	.89	.90

Table 3 presents standardised Lambda-*x* and Lambda-*y* estimates, *t*-values, and squared multiple correlations for the modified model. As can be seen from Table 3, all Lambda-*x* and Lambda-*y* values, which are the loadings of each observed variable on a respective latent variable, ranged from 0.44 to 0.89, and all parameter estimates were statistically significant as obtained through *t*-values.

TABLE 3: Standardised lambda-x and lambda-y estimates, t-values and squared multiple correlations for the fitted model

Latent and observed variables	λ	*t*	R^2
Poor communication			
Communication only related to academic issues	0.57	9.83	0.32
Limited personal communication	0.59	10.05	0.34
Giving extra effort for communicating with others	0.59	10.23	0.35
No need to communicate with each other	0.68	11.09	0.46
Insensitivity among faculty members	0.82	11.99	0.66
Individualism			
Inadequate participation in social activities	0.65	6.28	0.42
Individualism in scientific studies	0.56	6.15	0.32
Individualism among faculty members due to competition	0.45	5.66	0.20
Focusing only on personal work and activities	0.69	6.33	0.47
Inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge			
Inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge	0.80	6.38	0.64
Not informed about others' scientific activities	0.71	6.43	0.51
Lack of motivation			
Inadequate reward system for motivation	0.44	8.24	0.20
Low involvement in scientific activities	0.72	11.79	0.51
Low motivation for conducting research	0.73	11.86	0.53
Alliances			
Alliances with respect to gender	0.58	11.52	0.34
Alliances with respect to title	0.68	13.19	0.46
Alliances with respect to service year	0.70	13.59	0.49
Administrative issues			
Unclear organizational structure	0.71	13.14	0.51
Lack of administrative control over communication	0.56	10.71	0.31
Top-down and one-way communication structure	0.77	13.47	0.60
Alliances in the administrative staff	0.72	12.86	0.52

Inadequate social activities organized by administrators	0.61	11.70	0.37
Double standards	0.78	13.22	0.60

Lack of common goals

Lack of common scientific goals	0.76	18.58	0.57
Lack of common goals for the future	0.83	21.90	0.69
Lack of common solutions to departmental issues	0.89	24.10	0.79

Scientific discourse

Taking scientific discourse as personal	0.64	14.85	0.41
Scientific discourse through gossip	0.79	19.74	0.63
Avoid discussing issues because of interpersonal relations	0.67	15.76	0.45

Introvert characteristics of the department

Inadequate scientific communication with other departments	0.86	13.24	0.74
Only personal contact with other departments	0.77	13.52	0.60

Departmental atmosphere

Artificial, cold and boring climate in the department	0.85	14.16	0.72
Lack of sense of cohesiveness among faculty	0.84	14.14	0.70
Feeling oneself as a part of the department	0.55	10.40	0.30
Feeling of safety within the department	0.63	11.63	0.40
Feeling close to other faculty members in department	0.65	11.83	0.42

Direct relationships

Figure 2 displays LISREL estimates of the parameters in the structural model in which the coefficients were in standardised values and *t*-values. As can be seen from Figure 2, which displays the structural model of the factors for poor communication among faculty members, the standardised path coefficients changed between 0.11 and 0.86 in the fitted model. Cohen (1992; cited in Schoon, Sacker & Bartley, 2003) interpreted the absolute magnitudes of path coefficients or the effect sizes of the parameter estimates, determining that standardised path coefficients with absolute values less than 0.10 indicate a 'small' effect, while values around 0.30 indicate a 'medium', and values above 0.50 indicate a 'large' effect. With respect to these criteria, significant interrelationships among the nine latent variables which explain poor communication among faculty members were found.

Out of nine latent variables, two latent variables including 'individualism' and 'departmental atmosphere' have direct, positive and strong impact on 'poor communication'. Specifically, the path coefficient from 'individualism' to 'poor

communication' indicated a large effect size ($\beta = 0.52$); while 'departmental atmosphere' to 'poor communication' indicated almost as large an effect size ($\beta = 0.40$). The results also indicated that these latent variables explained 74% of the total variance of 'poor communication' in the fitted model. In addition, the fitted model identified positive and direct relationships among the other latent variables as explained in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: Structural model of poor communication among faculty members
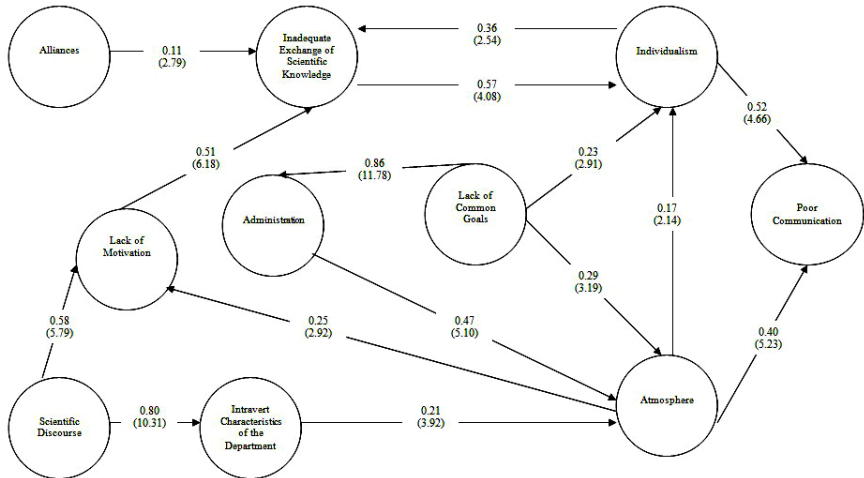
As shown in Figure 2, three latent variables directly and significantly predicted 'individualism'. The path coefficient from 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' to 'individualism' specified a large effect size ($\beta = 0.57$), whereas the path coefficients from 'departmental atmosphere' and 'lack of common goals to individualism' pointed out medium effect sizes ($\beta = 0.17$; and $\gamma = 0.23$, respectively). Eighty-six percent of the total variance of 'individualism' was predicted by the factors mentioned in the structural model.

The greatest relationship came from the path coefficient from 'lack of motivation' to 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' ($\beta = 0.51$), while the path coefficient from 'individualism' to 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' was moderate ($\beta = 0.36$), and 'alliances' to 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' indicated small ($\gamma = 0.11$) effect sizes. These latent variables explained 83% of the total variance of 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' in the structural model.

When 'lack of motivation' was taken into consideration, it was observed that the path coefficient from 'scientific discourse' to 'lack of motivation' indicated a large effect size ($\gamma = 0.58$), but the path coefficient from 'departmental atmosphere' to 'lack of motivation' specified almost a moderate effect size ($\beta = 0.25$). The total variance explained by the latent variables was 62% for 'lack of motivation' in the structural model.

In a similar vein, the path coefficient from 'administrative issues' to 'departmental atmosphere' indicated a large effect size ($\beta = 0.47$), whereas the path coefficient from 'lack of common goals' to 'departmental atmosphere' gave a moderate effect size ($\gamma = 0.29$). The path coefficient from 'introvert characteristics of the department' to 'departmental atmosphere' signified almost a medium effect size ($\beta = 0.21$) in the model. Moreover, the latent variables explained 78% of the total variance of 'departmental atmosphere' in the structural model.

The other two greatest effects in the fitted model were the path coefficient from 'scientific discourse' to 'introvert characteristics of the department' ($\gamma = 0.80$), and the path coefficient from 'lack of common goals' to 'administrative issues' ($\gamma = 0.86$). The explained total variances by latent variables were 64% for the former and 74% for the latter. When the directions of the relationships were considered, it was observed that all the relationships among latent variables were positive in the structural model.

Indirect relationships

As can be seen from Table 4, when the indirect relationships were considered, the results of the present study indicated that there are positive and significant indirect relationships between all the nine latent variables and 'poor communication' in the model. Specifically, the exogenous variable of 'lack of common goals' has the greatest indirect and significant influence on 'poor communication' ($\gamma = 0.54$) and goes through 'individualism' and 'departmental atmosphere', separately.

Again, the dependent latent variable of 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' has almost a large indirect impact on 'poor communication' ($\beta = 0.37$) mediated by 'individualism'. In addition, 'administrative issues', 'lack of motivation' and 'scientific discourse' have almost moderate indirect relationships with 'poor communication' ($\beta = 0.26$; $\beta = 0.19$; and $\gamma = 0.21$, respectively).

However, all the other path coefficients from 'departmental atmosphere', 'individualism', 'introvert characteristics of the department', and 'alliances to poor communication' indicated small but significant indirect effects with various magnitudes ($\beta = 0.16$; $\beta = 0.14$; $\beta = 0.12$; and $\gamma = 0.04$, respectively).

TABLE 4: Standardised indirect relationships among latent variables in the fitted model

	Latent Variables								
	LCG	**SD**	**ALL**	**IND**	**IESK**	**LM**	**AI**	**ICD**	**DA**
PC	0.54 (8.22)	0.21 (5.05)	0.04 (2.55)	0.14 (2.76)	0.37 (4.55)	0.19 (4.11)	0.26 (4.37)	0.12 (3.51)	0.16 (2.74)
IND	0.28 (3.56)	0.27 (3.62)	0.08 (2.42)	0.26 (2.53)	0.15 (2.14)	0.37 (3.67)	0.15 (2.50)	0.07 (2.32)	0.14 (2.84)
IESK	0.27 (3.08)	0.42 (5.11)	0.03 (1.81)	0.10 (1.34)	0.26 (2.53)	0.13 (2.49)	0.11 (2.76)	0.05 (2.50)	0.24 (3.19)
LM	0.17 (2.87)	0.04 (2.37)	---	---	---	---	0.11 (2.60)	0.05 (2.37)	---
DA	0.40 (4.95)	0.17 (3.90)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Note: *t*-values are shown in parenthesis in the table. PC: Poor Communication; LCG: Lack of Common Goals; SD: Scientific Discourse; ALL: Alliances; IND: Individualism; IESK: Inadequate Exchange of Scientific Knowledge; LM: Lack of Motivation; AI: Administrative Issues; ICD: Introvert Characteristics of the Department; DA: Departmental Atmosphere.

In addition, the structural model identified significant indirect relationships among the other latent variables. Specifically, the independent latent variables of 'lack of common goals', 'scientific discourse', 'alliances', and the dependent latent variables of 'individualism', 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge', 'lack of motivation', 'administrative issues', 'departmental atmosphere', and 'introvert characteristics of department' have significant indirect influence on 'individualism', with various magnitudes ranging between 0.07 and 0.37.

Similarly, all nine aforementioned latent variables also have indirect impact on 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge', again with various magnitudes ranging from 0.03 to 0.42. However, the path coefficients from 'individualism' and 'alliances' to 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' were considered to be non-significant with respect to *t*-values ($t = 1.34$; and $t = 1.81$, respectively).

Moreover, the indirect influence of 'lack of common goals' on 'lack of motivation' was approximately moderate ($\gamma = 0.17$), while the indirect influences

of 'administrative issues' (β = 0.11), 'introvert characteristics of department' (β = 0.05), and 'scientific discourse' (β = 0.04) on 'lack of motivation' were small. Finally, 'lack of common goals' (γ = 0.40) and 'scientific discourse' (γ = 0.17) also had strong indirect relationships with 'departmental atmosphere'.

Total effects

As shown in Table 5, when the total effects of the latent variables on 'poor communication' were considered, 'individualism', 'departmental atmosphere', 'lack of common goals', and 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' had the greatest total effects on 'poor communication'.

TABLE 5: Standardised total effects among latent variables in the fitted model

	LCG	SD	ALL	IND	IESK	LM	AI	ICD	DA
				Latent Variables					
PC	0.54	0.21	0.04	0.65	0.37	0.19	0.26	0.12	0.57
	(8.22)	(5.05)	(2.55)	(5.12)	(4.55)	(4.11)	(4.37)	(3.51)	(6.54)
IND	0.51	0.27	0.08	0.26	0.72	0.37	0.15	0.07	0.31
	(5.48)	(3.62)	(2.42)	(2.53)	(3.85)	(3.67)	(2.50)	(2.32)	(2.82)
IESK	0.27	0.42	0.15	0.46	0.26	0.64	0.11	0.05	0.24
	(3.08)	(5.11)	(2.68)	(2.17)	(2.53)	(5.92)	(2.76)	(2.50)	(3.19)
LM	0.17	0.62	---	---	---	---	0.11	0.05	0.25
	(2.87)	(6.72)					(2.60)	(2.37)	(2.92)
AI	0.86	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	(11.78)								
ICD	---	0.80	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
		(10.31)							
DA	0.69	0.17	---	---	---	---	0.47	0.21	---
	(9.74)	(3.90)					(5.10)	(3.92)	

Note: *t*-values are shown in parenthesis in the table.

Moreover, 'administrative issues', 'lack of motivation' and 'scientific discourse' had moderate total effects on 'poor communication' ($\beta = 0.26$; $\beta = 0.19$; and $\gamma = 0.21$, respectively), whereas the total effects of 'introvert characteristics of the department' and 'alliances on poor communication' were considered to be small ($\beta = 0.12$; and $\gamma = 0.04$, respectively). The total effects among the other independent and dependent latent variables can also be seen in Table 5.

Discussion and major conclusions

The results provide evidence that the proposed model representing the interrelationships among nine factors, namely, 'lack of motivation', 'alliances', 'lack of common goals', 'scientific discourse', 'individualism', 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge', 'administrative issues', 'introvert characteristics of the department', 'departmental atmosphere' and their impact on 'poor communication' was significant.

Specifically, the results indicated that there were direct relationships between 'individualism' and 'poor communication', and between the 'departmental atmosphere' and 'poor communication', while other relationships between each of the seven remaining factors and 'poor communication' were indirect.

The strongest direct relationship was found between 'individualism' and 'poor communication'. A close inspection of the items supposed to measure poor communication may refer to the existence of poor communication among faculty members. These items imply the existence of insensitivity among faculty members; the feeling that faculty members do not need to communicate with each other; and the requirement of giving extra effort for communicating with other faculty members. In the interviews with faculty members by Gizir & Simsek (2005), high individualism was one of the most frequently mentioned factors influencing the communication process within a department and was indicated as the main cause of inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge in the department, while the size of the department, lack of motivation, competition, the feelings of domination or possession of knowledge, the nature of the field, a promotion system based on publication and other criteria, lack of common goals were stated as the main causes of this inadequate exchange. In addition, they agreed that although there were some differences in reported causes of this, high individualism was one of the most common issues regarding work-related communication within the department. In their study, it was also claimed that individualism in scientific activities is reflected in informal relations.

Furthermore, Clark (1983) related individualism to the nature of academic work. He pointed out that the favourite doctrines of faculty members, freedom of research, teaching and learning, were heavily individualistic. Clark said that each person was to judge and choose for him or herself, so this idea seems to be atomistic. He believed that individualism remains a value that some faculty members sense they share, while showing respect for the choices and actions of others. He also mentioned that values do not produce similar behaviours to be integrated, in other words, faculty members acted differently according to their individual judgment and dictate, while they are also aware of moral bases for such actions, share attachment to the premises, exchange respect, and grant authority accordingly. So, individualism seems to be a flexible pattern, though one that has an elective affinity for the increasingly variegated nature of academic work, that is, it may be used to legitimate and rationalise such variety, while at the same time operating as a shared perspective.

Another direct relationship was found between 'departmental atmosphere' and 'poor communication'. A lack of conflict and the presence of team spirit and cooperation are distinguishing characteristics of cohesive climates, and members of cohesive work groups are more satisfied and possess more positive outlooks than do members of less cohesive groups. Optimistic predispositions and satisfaction are positively related to pro-social behaviours within work settings such as self-disclosure, the willing acceptance of others, empathy, and enhanced levels of trust (Pelton, Strutton & Rawwas, 1994). In such climates, open communication including instructions, scientific discourse, complaints, suggestions, good ideas, bad ideas, and personal opinions are pervasive among its members (Myers et al., 1999).

Less cohesiveness, not having a feeling of belonging and a feeling of insecurity as implied by the items used to measure departmental atmosphere in the present study seem to cause poor communication among faculty members. The existence of poor communication among faculty members in a department seems to be acceptable within an atmosphere in which faculty members, who are individually oriented, do not have a feeling of belonging but rather a feeling of insecurity.

The results of this study also indicated that lack of common goals had the strongest indirect impact on poor communication. The results showed that lack of common goals influenced individualism, and, in turn, individualism affected poor communication. The finding related to the relationship between 'lack of common goals' and 'individualism' is consistent with the reports of Gizir & Simsek (2005) who found that high individualism was mainly caused by lack of common goals in an academic context. In their study, the relationship between high individualism and lack of common goals was explained by faculty members interviewed as a situation in which there were no common goals, everyone had their own individual

goals, and they tried to achieve these goals by themselves. Interviewees also suggested that the communication process was impeded by the fact that faculty members did not agree on some basic issues and common goals due to the chauvinism within and among departments.

In contrast to business organisations, which have a clear unity of mission, complexity of mission and multiplicity of goals are unique features of universities. This complexity comes from their various constituencies and interest groups, namely academic staff, students, administrators, councils, government, the public, and the Ministry (Clark, 1983; Patterson, 2001). Each group holds divergent, even opposing, views on university goals and priorities, both within and between the groups. For instance, administrators try to achieve efficient use of resources, while academic staff focuses on both teaching and research, with different strengths of commitment to each. Patterson (2001) also stated that because individual, group, and institutional goals are so different, even conflicting, it is likely to be extremely difficult to formulate a statement of meaningful goals for the university. He also claimed that attempts to impose uniformity through specific goal-directed activity will always lie uneasily alongside this structure of segmented professionalism, and be inconsistent with the essential character and purpose of the institution – the challenging, reworking, maintaining, disseminating, expanding, defending, and evolving of knowledge generated by the commitment to research. Similarly, Cohen & March (2000) state that 'efforts to generate normative statements of the goals of a university tend to produce goals that are meaningless or dubious' (p. 16).

In a similar way, Clark (1983; cited in Patterson, 2001) claimed that although academics may share in common the fact that they work with and upon knowledge, they do not share common knowledge; in fact, they are rewarded primarily for going off in opposite directions. Disciplinary fields continue to become ever more specialised, and tend to function as separate cell groups. As a result, there is a high degree of professional autonomy and authoritativeness at the operating level of the university. In addition, Clark states that the university is both discipline based and discipline diversified, because the crucial links for specialist groups are their identification with others working in the same specialised fields, either within or outside the academic system; loyalty to the employing university or institution frequently takes second place. He also views the university as a loose confederation of knowledge-bearing groups, continually cell splitting and mutating, disunited by their disparate loyalties, interests, ideas and approaches to knowledge, each with a high degree of self-control.

In addition, it seems that the distinctive quality of academic institutions and systems is caused by their organisational structure and administrative processes, including a high degree of fragmented professionalism, and employees being a special kind of professional people characterised by a particularly high need for

autonomy (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Baldridge et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Rowland, 2002). This situation leads faculty members not to share common goals, but instead follow an individual path, which negatively affects the communication process.

The reciprocal relationship between 'individualism' and 'inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge' as one of the findings of this study seems to reflect the individualistic nature of academicians, professional fragmentation, departmental atmosphere, and lack of common goals among academicians as mentioned above.

Another finding of the present study was the relationship between 'lack of common goals' and 'poor communication' that goes through 'departmental atmosphere'. In other words, there was a direct relationship between 'lack of common goals' and 'departmental atmosphere'. As mentioned before, common goals are one of the basic requirements for the unity of an organisation; they give a feeling of belonging and motivation, and provide a means of justifying the institution to its various publics (Patterson, 2001). In addition, common goals strengthen cohesiveness and they are strongly related to effective communication in which people express their views openly, consider the opinions of others, and combine ideas. Such communication patterns are mainly related to positive feelings and confidence in future collaboration (Tjosvold & McNeilly, 1988).

Based on this background and as a result of close inspection of the items used to measure departmental atmosphere in the present study, including statements such as 'there is no sense of cohesiveness among faculty members within my department', and 'I feel myself as a part of this department' (reversely coded), it may be claimed that there is an atmosphere or climate in which faculty members do not have a feeling of belonging or a sense of wholeness in their departments because of an absence of common goals. In such an atmosphere, poor communication among faculty members seems to be inevitable.

The results of the present study also showed that there is an indirect relationship between 'lack of common goals' and 'poor communication' mediated by 'administrative issues', and then 'department atmosphere'. According to Birnbaum (1988), as colleges and universities become more diverse, fragmented and specialised, their missions do not become clearer, rather they multiply and become sources of conflict rather than integration. He claims that the problem is not that institutions cannot identify their goals, but that they simultaneously embrace a large number of conflicting goals. In a similar way, Baldridge et al. (2000) state that 'colleges and universities have vague, ambiguous goals and they must build decision processes to grapple with a higher degree of uncertainty and conflict' (p. 128).

Lack of common goals as an issue may be caused by the tasks of higher education being both knowledge-intensive and knowledge-extensive. Clark

(1983) stated that 'Goals are so broad and ambiguous that the university or system is left no chance to accomplish the goals, or to fail to accomplish them. There is no way that anyone can assess the degree of goal achievement' (p. 19). Similarly, Baldridge et al. (2000) claimed that goal ambiguity is one of the chief characteristics of academic organisations.

Besides professional fragmentation, Patterson (2001) mentioned the existence of a wide diversity in leadership styles and status found at the faculty departmental level. Patterson (2001) stated that many heads of departments, far from comprising a managerial level that will uniformly interpret, adopt and reflect an upper-echelon philosophy, often give a higher priority to their own and departmental goals than to overall organisational goals. Different goals and the differences in the priority of goals among administrators seem to lead to some administrative issues in universities.

When taking into consideration the issue of the complexity of the goals of universities and the characteristics of the university institution which inhibit goal clarification; together with administrative structure and the importance of common goals for the existence, wholeness, and effectiveness of an organisation, the relationship between lack of common goals and administrative issues seems quite high. Common or cooperative goals are highly influential on the effectiveness of administrative processes, such as decision making, motivation, organisational change, personnel management, and productivity (Lunenburg & Ornstain, 1996).

In conclusion, it can be stated that departmental atmosphere is one of the most influential of the factors considered, and it directly influences communication among faculty members. Similarly, another of the most influential factors was individualism, which was directly related to poor communication. Also, inadequate exchange of scientific knowledge appeared to be another influential factor. However, lack of common goals emerged as being more influential than other factors. This seems to be quite plausible when we take into account the distinguishing characteristics of universities as organisations, including multiplicity of goals, the nature of the academic profession, and structural and administrative configuration.

Regarding the composite approach to theory building proposed by Reynolds (1971), the study of Gizir & Simsek (2005) may be seen as an exploratory stage to provide guidance for procedures to be employed in the present study. In other words, the study of Gizir & Simsek (2005) was used as a preliminary study and provided some substantive categories and hypotheses for the present study. Then, this study tried to test the hypothetical model including interrelationships among the constructs. Thus, it might be claimed that the present study may be seen as an important step to building a theory. There is a need for further research to validate

various types of hypotheses that may be drawn from this earlier model. Further research studies may investigate whether the fitted model obtained in the present study is valid in other cultures, such as individualistic cultures or collectivist cultures. In addition, the fitted model should be re-tested over time. Furthermore, each factor and their relationships with poor communication represented in the fitted model may be studied separately.

Note

1. See Appendix I for the definitions of the factors. Among these factors, instead of 'high individualism' and 'criticism' which were used as the names of the factors in the study of Gizir & Simsek (2005), 'individualism' and 'scientific discourse' were used respectively in the present study because they were found to be more suitable to explain the phenomena.

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APPENDIX I

Definitions of the Factors

In this study, the factors negatively affecting the communication process among faculty members were defined as follows:

- *Administrative Issues* refer to issues which negatively affect the communication process caused by administrative and organisational structure, administrative processes, and the administrators of the universities. When compared with business organisations, universities exhibit some critical distinguishing characteristics that affect all organisational processes. Birnbaum (1988) categorises these distinguishing characteristics of universities as goal ambiguity or multiplicity and complexity of goals and mission, administrative structure and academic profession.

- *Alliances* refers to a kind of grouping formed by people holding the same or similar attitudes, interests, beliefs, or having the same or similar age, gender, tenure, and title (Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

- *Departmental Atmosphere* can be defined as 'the current common patterns of important dimensions of organizational life or its members' perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions' (Peterson & Spencer, 2000, p. 173). The dimensions of organisational life include members' loyalty and commitment, their morale and satisfaction, their quality of effort or involvement, and their sense of belonging (Peterson & Spencer, 2000; Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

- *Inadequate Exchange of Scientific Knowledge* refers to faculty members not sharing adequately scientific knowledge and not having any information about the scientific activities and scientific contributions of their colleagues (Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

- *Individualism* is defined as a situation in which people try to promote their self-interest, personal autonomy, privacy, self-realisation, individual initiative, independence, individual decision making, an understanding of personal identity as the sum of attributes of the individual, and less concern about the needs and interests of others (Darwish & Huber, 2003).

- *Introvert Characteristic of the Department* refers to a characteristic of an academic department in which faculty members have a poor or inadequate communication with other faculty members from other departments in the university with regard to scientific, formal, and informal message exchange (Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

- *Lack of Common Goals* refers to not sharing or having the same institutional goals for which organisations were established or created to achieve (Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

- *Lack of Motivation* refers to the faculty members not having much enthusiasm to conduct scientific research, to improve their intellectual qualities, and to teach the students (Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

- *Poor Communication* refers to the inadequacy in the process through which organisational members express their collective inclination to coordinate beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes in organisations (Kowalski, 2000).

- *Scientific Discourse* refers to a mean or a medium providing opportunity for faculty members to exchange scientific knowledge and experiences in order to improve their scientific works and other scientific activities (Gizir & Simsek, 2005).

BOOK REVIEWS

Carmel Borg, Mario Cardona and Sandro Caruana (2009) *Letter to a Teacher: Lorenzo Milani's Contribution to Critical Citizenship*, **Malta, Agenda, xvii + 253 pp., ISBN: 978-9993-86-42-4 (paperback).**

This book revolves around the educational ideas of Don Lorenzo Milani, an Italian Catholic priest and his political commitment to education for social justice, particularly in the empowerment of the poor. The main part of this book consists of a translation of the *Lettera ad una Professoressa*, which was written by Milani's students attending his school in the remote Tuscan village of Barbiana. The translation is accompanied by extremely well researched notes and detailed commentaries in a section that follows the translated letter and an introduction and translator's note, written by the authors and presented just before the translation of the letter. The book also includes a foreword by Peter Mayo, a prologue by Domenico Simeoni, a republished interview with Eduardo Martinelli, one of the eight boys who co-authored the letter and an epilogue by Adele Corradi, a teacher at the Barbiana school.

In reading this book, one immediately understands why the authors are deeply taken by Lorenzo Milani's thoughts and philosophy of education. The letter is a manifesto of the political and educational responsibilities that Milani managed to install in his students. It is a demonstration of the pedagogical passions that effectively convince his students to voice the injustices of an educational system that repeatedly fails them. Don Milani managed to develop their political actions for social justice through the pedagogical principle of 'I care'.

Carmel Borg, Mario Cardona and Sandro Caruana share Milani's political and educational convictions. As educators themselves, they reiterate the 'I care' maxim convinced that they can infuse similar commitments in all teachers and student teachers by making the letter accessible to them. The authors clearly find parallels between the injustices experienced by the Barbiana students and those of students today. The authors are deeply conscious of the fact that many students are not getting the quality education they are entitled to, that parental involvement in school is low, that assessment of students goes against the very educational aims they should be promoting and that schools are failing their students. The authors make good use of *Letter to a Teacher* to revive the critical and radical spirit in the educational and the social contexts that are becoming increasingly rightist, neo-liberal and interested in reproducing the privileges and interests of the dominant few. The authors are conscious that schools teach children to think solely of what is advantageous to them and to remain silent to the systematic injustices reproduced by the school.

The acts of translation engaged by the authors are also a reflection of such radical political commitment. Their use of English, which is considered the language of the coloniser, is used strategically to disseminate critical consciousness against the dominant language. Milani himself used to insist on the need for translation of the classical texts of writers such as Homer, Foscolo, Manzoni and others. Milani was convinced that students in Barbiana were entitled to read these texts in their own language, which is not solely and purely Italian but an Italian language which is alive; that manages to speak to them. One understands that Milani wanted to give his students the cultural capital they lacked, without forgetting or rejecting their own.

The translation of Borg, Cardona & Caruana truly vindicates the cultural capital of the Barbiana students. Their material poverty certainly does not reflect the richness of their thoughts and of their prosperous sensitivities to the eradication of social inequalities. This translation of *Letter to a Teacher* renders the voice of the students, classic. It transforms the culture of these children into a cultural capital that teachers today cannot do without. Milani states that translation provides a living language to those who are poor, it is not driven by polemical debate and is instigated by the desire to break down privileges. Milani's words describe precisely the aims of the authors of this book. Their love for those who are marginalised from and by the school is as strong as their contempt for the abuse of the power of the privileged few. The authors' work of translation, therefore, is evidently also politically and educationally loaded.

This point reminds one of Spivak's (1993) 'The politics of translation'. Unfortunately, Spivak uses a language which cannot be widely read. Her texts are a hard door at which readers have to knock several times before they access the political ideas hidden behind it. Nevertheless, in spite of the contradictions of using a difficult language, in Spivak's text one can find the magic word that allows the poor to enter the entitled cave of riches.

There are two particularly important points in Spivak's work that are relevant to this book *Letter to a Teacher* and particularly to aspects of translation that are discussed in the Translator's Note. Spivak explains that when she was translating the writings of Indian women she had to unlearn the way she had been taught to translate. She states that school has taught her to reproduce a collection of precise synonyms. Translation, she argues, is deeper than this and translators are challenged by a series of ambivalent decisions. Translators have to be faithful to the text, they have to become engaged with the text, but on the other hand, they have the power to extend its meaning. They cannot forget their presence in the political connections of translation. Such ambivalence is clearly evident in the Translators' Note in Borg, Cardona & Caruana's book. The note shows the translators' desire to surrender to the text they are translating. They acknowledge

that 'in this translated version the main priority has been to limit the distance from the original text as much as possible' (p. 22). However, later on in the same note they explain how difficult it was for them to do this, as the language they are using (English) cannot copy exactly the Italian language. The notes on commentaries on the text are meant to fill in the gaps between the two languages. One major interesting point here is their comment that when they did not manage to find words in English that reflect what is intended in Italian they 'use sentence structures and lexical items which may not correspond to what one might expect in formal, written English style' (p. 25).

As translators they have chosen to go beyond official languages that fix meanings. Spivak explains that 'in translation, ... meaning hops into the spacey emptiness between two named historical languages. Translation has to do with loss of boundaries, loss of control, dissemination' (Spivak, 1993, p. 180).

Spivak also insists that good translation involves the translators delving into the conditions and contexts of the texts rather that translating meanings superficially. The different sections of the book have this function of putting the reader into the pictures of the historical, political and social contexts from which the letter took shape.

One last issue that needs to be outlined is that of the agency of translators, in their acts of translation. Translators are not passive and cannot completely surrender to the text. They are agents of language and approach texts just like directors of plays or actors interpreting scripts. Spivak describes the relation of the translator to the text as a love relation. Translation facilitates the relation between the original and its shadow. Translators are possessed as if lovers possessed by love. The eroticism of the relation is ethical in that through translation one recognises the 'other' that can never be replicated. Translation reminds the translators of their cultural difference from the text which is being translated.

Borg, Cardona & Caruana's book is an example of the love relation that the authors have with the text. This relation is also ethical in that they recognise the 'other' in the students of Barbiana, but especially in the educational processes, including that of translation, that are committed to the dissemination of a pedagogy that makes difference.

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Michael Hand (2006) *Is Religious Education Possible: A Philosophical Investigation*, **London & New York, Continuum, 158 pp., ISBN: 0-8264-9150-2 (hardback).**

Many schools assume that it is logically possible to teach religious education in schools and that it can be taught in a non-confessional manner. However, some philosophers have argued that non-confessional religious education is not possible without imparting religious beliefs. This book is considered significant because it attempts to explore logically the debate by presenting arguments and views of different philosophers.

Hand begins his book by outlining the main arguments in the introduction chapter, particularly focusing on the possibility of imparting religious understanding without imparting religious belief. His concern is to discuss whether teaching religious education in schools is a futile practice, examining the claim that 'non-confessional religious education is a logically incoherent enterprise because religious understanding presupposes religious belief articles' (p. 2).

It is clear that Hand's book centres around Hirst's papers. In the first chapter, Hand uses Hirst's papers (see Hirst, 1975) to initiate the discussion. Hirst's premises that 'i) religion is a logically unique form of knowledge, and ii) understanding it involves holding certain propositions of that form to be true or false' (p. 4) are examined in conjunction with Wittgenstein's (1953) ideas in his *Philosophical Investigations*. Interestingly, Hand includes the arguments of various philosophers – such as Marples, Attfield, Gardner, and the 'river-bed' propositions – to make the reader consider the issue from different angles. He does this by cleverly dissecting each layer of the philosophers' arguments, whether supporting or opposing Hirst's premises, with the support of Wittgenstein's argument. Basically, Hand's first chapter sets out the agenda of the whole discussion by showing the flaws, not only in Hirst's arguments but also in arguments of the key contributors to the debate.

Hirst's second premise that 'understanding a unique form of knowledge involves holding certain propositions of that form to be true or false' is scrutinised in Hand's second chapter. Here, the ambiguity of Hirst's arguments for his second premise is elucidated with the help of Pring (1976), Wilson (1979) and Brent (1978). Hand concludes his second chapter with the restatement of the forms of knowledge thesis by presenting the taxonomy of three categories of proposition; necessary, mental and material propositions; and a logical space that introduces contingent propositions about non-material public referents. It is the latter proposition (i.e., contingent proposition about non-material public referents) that would allow the possibility of being moral and religious forms of knowledge.

However, the discussion whether or not religious propositions would take this form of knowledge, is ensued in the third chapter.

The third chapter examines several philosophers' attempts to show that religious propositions constitute an autonomous epistemological class. Hand claims that if religious beliefs are prescriptions which are considered to be binding (as argued by Wittgenstein or as Philip claims that they are expressions of feeling), then they would neither be beliefs nor beliefs of a distinct epistemological kind. On the other hand, if religious beliefs are referred to Hudson's transcendent conscious agents, Wisdom's patterns of human reactions, or Brent's autonomous personal beings, then they would belong to epistemological categories that are already familiar to us, hence losing its distinctiveness. Hand also examines Leahy and Laura's account of religious beliefs that refer to non-material public referents viewed by the believers, which he considers as implausible and incoherent. In concluding his third chapter, Hand sets his task to present a positive account of the meaning of religious propositions so as to identify their epistemological class(es) in the next chapter.

Chapter four displays the thoroughness of Hand's research in philosophy of religion as he delineates the concept of religion and propositions about god not only from different religious perspectives, but also from a philosophical perspective. His arguments that gods are transcendent (comprise of minds) or superhuman persons (comprise of minds and bodies) lead to his assumptions that propositions about gods constitute familiar epistemological classes of mental and material propositions. Since religion does not constitute a unique form of knowledge and only involves truth claims of familiar epistemological kinds, he concludes that the proposition that teaching for religious understanding without imparting religious belief is a coherent one.

The final chapter clarifies and expands the discussion on the distinction between mental and material propositions, which has been set out in the second chapter. Hand also counters the behaviourist contention that mental propositions are reducible to material ones. He argues that though we may not be able to establish the existence of other minds with logical certainty, we can make reasonable inferences to other minds from the appearance and behaviour of other bodies.

A believer of a religion who reads Hand may disagree with this contention, particularly if the believer accepts that his/her religion is a unique form of knowledge. Holding on to this assumption entails many conditions, including the commitment of the believer toward his/her religion. Readers who agree that Hand's contention is correct do so because they are not committed to the religion as s/he regards religious knowledge as not only unique, but mere propositions about religions and gods.

A point worth noting is that the discussions in the book centre around the general understanding of all religions in general. However an 'eye or an individual of faith' would have a deeper understanding of his/her religion, hence the view that religion is a unique form of knowledge would apply to him/her. On this account, I would argue that whether religion is a unique form of knowledge or whether it refers to familiar epistemological class or classes is not a discussion that can take place in an objective manner. It depends on the individual's readiness to accept the former or latter. A class that is learning about religious education would hold on to the latter's view, but a class of a religious school children learning about their religion would agree on the former. After all, truth cannot be objectively proven, but ultimately remains with the individual. Nevertheless, readers can be persuaded by the force of argument and truth is necessarily established in this way. Following this line of argument, Hand's attempt to resolve the debate about logical possibility of religious education by examining the claim that there is a religious form of knowledge, to a certain extent, has been successful.

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Maria Teresa Tatto and Monica Mincu (eds.) (2009) *Reforming Teaching and Learning: Comparative Perspectives in a Global Era*, **Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, 291 pp., ISBN: 9789460910333 (hardback), 9789460910326 (paperback).**

This book is the first volume of the five World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES) series. It originates from discussions held at an international congress in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 2007. The book consists of 17 chapters contributed by scholars from different countries.

The central argument of this book is set out in the following quote: 'In the name of globalization reform has become in many cases the essential tool of political systems to initiate change that often displaces other – more culturally relevant – arrangements' (p. 2). This book explores the 'contextual meanings of those culturally relevant arrangements' (p. 2) from comparative viewpoints. It helps the reader to appreciate: (i) 'the effects of (global) educational reform on teaching and learning'; (ii) 'the policies and politics where reform occurs'; and (iii) 'the role of the curriculum and experiences in education institutions' (p. 3), mainly in the field of teacher education in different countries.

The following is a synopsis of the chapters of the book. Chapters of the book are arranged basically by contents and the methodology utilised for research introduced in the book. Chapter 1 (Reforming teacher and learning: comparative perspectives in a global era) is written by the editors as an introduction and summary of the book. Chapter 2 (Reforming teacher education in Latin America and the USA: a comparative perspective through critical discourse analysis) presents some similarities between teacher education policies in Latin and North America by utilising a critical discourse analysis based on three main documents. Chapter 3 (Imagined globalisation in Italian education: discourse and action in initial teacher training) explores the 'forms of imagined (discursive) globalisation', 'internationality' (p. 23) and the 'dilemma' (p. 34) between an English model which is appraised in recent Italian policy documents and the Italian tradition by analysing a wide range of official documents, journals and articles. Chapter 4 (Policy, practices and persistent traditions in teacher education in South Africa: the construct of teaching and learning regimes) discusses how traditional viewpoints of teaching and learning affect the new requirements of education policy in South Africa by interviewing scholars and staff in three faculties in South Africa.

In Chapter 5 (Documentation for diffusion of education reform in Egypt: rationale, approach, and initial experiences), there is a discussion about the possibility of implementing a variety of methods in a research topic. Chapter 6 (Global trends in teaching employment: challenges for teacher education and development policies) utilises some data from two key sources of UNESCO to form

a discussion about trends on teacher education, employment and reforms in economies and globalisation. Chapter 7 (Qualified teacher status, one indicator of the teaching profession's standards: lessons for California from Finland, Ireland, and Korea) analyses standards and the status of teachers in three countries in comparison with California by exploring mainly the 'requirements for qualified teacher status', educational/school system and its performance in respective countries.

In Chapter 8 (Japanese technical cooperation to enhance teacher quality in developing countries: a multiple case study in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Cambodia), the research is conducted through three projects organised by JICA in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Cambodia. The authors are involved in one of the projects as technical advisors as well as researchers. Chapter 9 (A comparative analysis of teacher competences in England and Finland) explores what levels and types of competency are required by teachers in order to facilitate cultural change at schools in England and Finland with an analysis of project-based data. Chapter 10 (Teacher education in Serbia: towards a competence-based model of initial teacher education) also discusses several teacher competences which are regarded as being vital by teachers and educators in Serbia, using the research method of the Tuning project. Chapter 11 (Pre-service secondary school teachers' use of symbols and algebraic relationships in Turkey) examines pre-service secondary mathematics teachers' understanding and usage level of algebraic relationships and symbols in Turkey by questioning and interviewing the teachers.

In Chapter 12 (Teachers' concerns profile regarding the reformed mathematics curriculum in Turley), a questionnaire about the 6th grade teachers' concerns on the recent reform of mathematics curriculum in Turkey is analysed. Chapter 13 (Health education: analysis of teachers' and future teachers' conceptions from 16 countries in Europe, Africa and Middle East) discusses teachers' conceptions about health education in sixteen countries with the analysis of a questionnaire according to a KVP model. In Chapter 14 (Sex education: analysis of teacher's and future teacher's conceptions from 12 countries of Europe, Africa and Middle East), data from a questionnaire about conceptions on sex education in twelve countries through the Biohead-Citizen project were analysed. Chapter 15 (Teachers' linguistic and cultural potentials: empowering new school practice in France and Switzerland) discusses multicultural and multilingual environments in French and Swiss schools by utilising data collected by interviews, school visits and training sessions between 2003 and 2008. Chapter 16 (Knit together for a better service: towards a culture of collegiality in teaching science in Sri Lanka) explores how to develop teachers' potentials and make reforms work successfully through interviews, observations and documents in five schools. Chapter 17 (School projects in France: management strategies and state disengagement) shows the results of a research project undertaken to find the role of school inspectors in French primary schools.

The book highlights some important issues affecting the implementation of educational reforms and programmes in both developed and developing countries. Research in the book shows that reforms and programmes in teacher education are often affected by financial, social, political, cultural, historical and religious issues. For example, it indicates that 'institutional histories and traditions are powerful shapers of academics' responses to policy directives as they undertake the processes of curriculum making for teacher education' (p. 41). It is also pointed out that the 'social and political history of a country has immense implications for improving the schools' and '[w]ithout an understanding and appreciation for this aspect of educational assistance, donors of such assistance will find their task impossibly difficult' (p. 125). It shows how teachers' work in developing countries is 'vulnerable to global trends in education, the economy and employment' (p. 91). More importantly, 'If teachers are well-informed and convinced of the benefits of the reform movement, they can alleviate their concerns and focus on looking for ways to improve the program both individually and holistically' (p. 194). A wide variety of analytical, empirical and theoretical research methods are utilised in the book. A widespread methodology allows the reader to assess their characteristics, benefits and drawbacks for particular research.

The provision and acquisition of education relating to basic knowledge and skills are fundamental and essential for all children. The research in the book has rightly placed the greatest importance on them. Furthermore, some countries have already established in their laws what to teach and/or how to teach, thereby succeeding in providing a 'good' education system enabling children to acquire basic knowledge and skills. Some of these countries are now attempting to provide pupils with education tailored to individual needs, interests, aptitudes and abilities. With the foundation of basic knowledge and skills firmly established, it would also be very beneficial to consider education tailored to individual needs, interests, aptitudes and abilities in the future.

To summarise, this book is worth reading in order to consider teacher education in certain countries and its role in providing pupils with education for basic knowledge and skills. The book can also provide some ideas for research methods if necessary. It would be very interesting to explore how the research findings in the book affect teacher education in practice in their country. Some research has described educational and political movements within a country, and these should be well known. However, simple knowledge of the movements cannot change the reality of the situation. It would therefore be of more benefit if the research introduced a more detailed process aimed at the realisation of educational and political goals.

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Robin Campbell (2009) *Reading Stories with Young Children*, **Stoke-on-Trent, UK, Trentham Books, 132 pp., ISBN: 978-1-85856-452-4 (paperback).**

'…the primary school curriculum has become saturated with documents, strategies, targets and testing, testing, testing. So much so that sometimes there may appear to be so many accountability boxes to be ticked and plans to complete that fundamental aspects of literacy can be forgotten' (p. 2).

The starting-point for Robin Campbell's book is that reading stories with young children – variously known as story reading, storybook reading or read-alouds in different countries – is the most fundamental aspect of literacy. Children who are read to and with, become readers; those who are deprived of stories and books fail to make gains in literacy. As schools have more targets to meet, busy teachers feel guilt at engaging in such a pleasurable activity as reading a story or sharing books with their pupils. And yet, Campbell is insistent that without this shared love of stories, children will fail to make the progress they need to meet the literacy targets.

For those of us who share his obvious passion for passing on not just literacy, but a love of books and stories to our children, this book is timely. Despite gains made technically in literacy through recent intervention strategies and literacy strategies, children here in the UK, seem to enjoy reading less. Teachers of young children feel pressure to talk about the technical aspects of books every time they share one with their class, to point out and teach where words rhyme or alliterate, to discuss features of plot, setting or character, and so sharing books has become more teaching than pleasure. Following Campbell's advice here might both restore the pleasure for teachers and, more importantly, children, and make our children readers who enjoy reading.

The book is aimed at 'teachers of young children, teaching assistants and all those who work with young children' and to show parents how reading might be 'developed in educational settings'. It would also be an ideal introduction for student teachers. There is such a skilful blend of scholarly researched text, transcriptions of home and classroom dialogue, examples of activities to follow on from books and photographs of children's work, that the reader feels drawn into the home or class and the world of children's stories. As a former teacher of young children, so much of this book resonates for me with memories of similar conversations and signs of progress in children's engagement with books and stories.

Here are some much-loved favourites; The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Rosie's Walk and Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy, to mention just a few. For those unsure of what might be a successful book to choose to read with children, a good

place to start would be Campbell's reference list of children's books. He expands on some of the features of what contributes to success in chapters on 'The importance of narrative and quality books', and 'Reading stories in the classroom: getting started'. For those unused to reading to children, there is good advice here for the first few occasions: how to prepare before reading; how to 'perform' the reading by using voice and timing; and ways of involving the children during it.

The second half of the book discusses more structured work with children's literacy from stories: features of print and how to develop children's knowledge of letters, sounds and words (Chapter 5); developing activities such as role play or using puppets, writing and drawing, making books, art and crafts, linking to songs and rhymes (Chapter 6); ways of encouraging children's own reading skills through shared reading, sustained silent reading, the use of buddies and pairs, literature circles, individual and guided reading (Chapter 7). This leads on to the introduction of children's emergent writing skills and cross-curricular work from stories, particularly focusing on mathematics, science and social studies.

For all of this, there is a comprehensive set of references to enable the reader to follow any of these points further, which makes this particularly suitable for the student teacher starting out, but provides others with a window into the research on which the book is based. All of this research is shared lightly throughout, so that the book is immensely readable and as enjoyable as one of the stories Campbell recommends.

He concludes that his book 'has emphasised the literacy learning which can follow from the well prepared and enthusiastic reading of a story', and 'The enjoyment children receive from story readings sparks their desire to read for themselves in a way no worksheet can ever emulate' (p. 120). For those who would like to know how to provide children with both literacy learning and enjoyment from stories, this book is a good place to begin.

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AIMS OF THE JOURNAL

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.

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All contributors should be aware they are addressing an international audience. They should also use non-sexist, non-racist language, and a guide sheet is available in this regard.

Manuscripts, preferably between 6,000 and 8,000 words in length, should be sent to the Editor *MJES*, Professor Ronald G. Sultana, Director, Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research, University of Malta, Msida MSD 2080, Malta, accompanied by an abstract of between 100-150 words. Research Notes, Project Reports, and Comments (1,500 to 3,000 words in length) are also welcome.

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.

Authors are encouraged to send a copy of their manuscript as an e-mail attachment to the editor (ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt) in order to cut down the time of the refereeing process. It is essential that the full postal address, telephone, fax and e-mail coordinates be given of the author who will receive editorial correspondence and proofs. Authors should include a brief autobiographic note.

To enable the refereeing procedure to be anonymous, the name(s) and institution(s) of the author(s) should not be included at the head of the article, but should be typed on a separate sheet. The surname of the author/s should be underlined.

Figures and tables should have their positions clearly marked and be provided on separate sheets that can be detached from the main text.

References should be indicated in the text by giving the author's name followed by the year of publication in parentheses, e.g., '... research in Mahmoudi & Patros (1992) indicated ...', alternatively this could be shown as '... research (Mahmoudi & Patros, 1992) showed ...'. The full references should be listed in alphabetical order at the end of the paper using the following formula:

Book: Surname, Name initials (date of publication) *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher.

Article in Journal: Surname, Name initials (date of publication) Title of article, *Title of Journal*, Volume(issue), pages.

Chapter in Book: Surname initial/s, Name initials (date of publication) Title of chapter. In Name initials and Surname of (editor/s) *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher.

Particular care in the presentation of references would be greatly appreciated, and ensures earlier placement in the publication queue.

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**The Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies is published
with the support of the University of Malta**

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