European Journal of Educational Sciences (EJES)

2015 / March

Publisher:

European Scientific Institute, ESI

Reviewed by the "European Journal of Educational Sciences" editorial board *2015*

March 2015 edition vol. 2, no. 1

About The Journal

The European Journal of Educational Sciences is a peer - reviewed international journal which accepts high quality research articles. It is a quarterly journal published at the end of March, June, September and December and is available to all researchers who are interested in publishing their scientific achievements. We welcome submissions focusing on theories, methods and applications in educational sciences, both articles and book reviews.

Authors can publish their articles after a review by our editorial board. Our mission is to provide greater and faster flow of the newest scientific thought. EJES's role is to be a kind of a bridge between the researchers around the world. "EJES" is opened to any researchers, regardless of their geographical origin, race, nationality, religion or gender as long as they have an adequate scientific paper in the educational sciences field.

EJES provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public, supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

Sincerely,

EJES, Team

Table Of Contents:

HIGH SCHOOL PEER BUDDY PROGRAM: IMPACT ON SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Ragea Alqahtani, PhD
Najran University, Saudi Arabia
Francie R. Murry, PhD
University of Northern Colorado, USA

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the Peer Buddy Program at a high school for students with disabilities (i.e., learning and behavior disabilities) in academic and social achievement. Two specific questions were addressed: Do students with learning and/or emotional/behavioral disabilities, who are participating in the Peer Buddy Program, show improvement in their use of social skills according to self-report, special and general curriculum teacher ratings on a standardized social skill rating scale? and 2) Do students with learning and/or emotional/behavioral disabilities, who are participating in the Peer Buddy Program, show improvement in academic skill use according to past to present year comparisons on grade point averages, and special education informal assessments (Fast Math, System 44, and Acuity)? Student, special and general education teachers' ratings on the Social Skills Achievement Scale (SSIS) and student archival records data was examined through pair *t-test* analyses pre and post the Peer Buddy Program intervention. The results indicated that the Peer-Buddy Program had a positive impact on the social and academic achievement of high school students with learning and behavioral disabilities.

Keywords: Peer buddies, emotional and behavioral disabilities, learning disabilities, peer mediation, peer support

Introduction

Students with learning disabilities (LD) and with emotional and behavioral disabilities (EBD) have poor outcomes after graduating from high school (Carter, Cushing, Clark, & Kennedy, 2005). They face worse outcomes if they are part of the one-fourth of all students with disabilities

ages, 14-21, who drop out of school (Snyder & Dillow, 2011). The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005) showed that in comparison to their same age peers within the 6 years after leaving high school, students with disabilities were less likely to enroll in post-secondary education; less likely to complete schooling if they do enroll, less likely to be employed, and more likely to have been stopped by the police and twice as likely to have been arrested.

Five barriers have been identified that impede the after high school success of students with disabilities. These barriers include high drop-out statistics, low graduation rates, high unemployment, and lack of social and academic skills (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, & Knokey, 2009). In general, adolescents with disabilities have more complex difficulties that interfere with their completion of high school as successfully as their peers without disabilities (Carter et al., 2005; Wagner, et al., 2005). Adolescents with disabilities faced these same problems prior to entering high school, during high school, and after leaving high school.

Blackorby and Wagner (1996) found that approximately twice as many students with disabilities drop out of high school for every one of their peers without disabilities. The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (Wagner, et al., 2005) found 38% of students with disabilities drop out of school compared with their peers who drop out at a rate of 25%. Another study indicated that 85% of students with disabilities drop out of school (Morris, Ehren & Lenz, 1991). Adolescents with disabilities who dropout of school typically experience social skill deficits, lack a social network, do not participate in their communities' activities, do not maintain full-time jobs, nor do they live independently, or maintain relationships (Groce, 2004).

Importance of the Study

Adolescents with disabilities who have difficulties which impact their acquisition of social and academic skills and in turn, influence their displays of achievement negatively, will struggle at the secondary education level and in employment unless intensive interventions are implemented (Candace & Sharon, 1998; Carter, Sisco, Chung, & Stanton-Chapman, 2010; Cheney & Bullis, 2004; Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006; Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998). The focus on academic and social skills growth for students with disabilities has long been viewed as important (US. Department of Education, 2009). They became even more necessary with the implementation of No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2002) and the reauthorization of Individual with Disabilities Education Act (2004) as more students with disabilities began receiving educational services in inclusive settings than ever before (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). The movement into more inclusive settings created a

need for students with disabilities to be able to use effective social skills as well increase competence in the use academic skills.

The objectives of this research were to examine increased social and academic achievement by high school students with disabilities participating in a Peer Buddy Program. The examination is of considerable importance given that by the time most students with learning disabilities or emotional/behavioral disabilities have reached high school they are considered to have reached their maximum learning. They are given support toward job placement or completion of high school; however, they are not expected to make large gains or significant changes in grade point average or increases on standardized test results, let alone significant social advancements. This study not only examined the academic growth of the students with disabiltiies but also examined how adults in the environment viewed the behavioral and social growth attributed to student involvement in the Peer Buddy Program. Two questions were specifically addressed regarding the impact of the high school Peer Buddy Program. They were 1) Do students with learning and/or emotional/behavioral disabilities, who are participating in the Peer Buddy Program, show improvement in their use of social skills according to self-report, special and general curriculum teacher ratings on a standardized social skill rating scale? and 2) Do students with learning and/or emotional/behavioral disabilities, who are participating in the Peer Buddy Program, show improvement in academic skill use according to past to present year comparisons on grade point averages, and special education informal assessments (Fast Math, System 44, and Acuity)?

The bulk of studies found in the literature review on peer supports that have been found effective for the enhancement of social and academic skills for students with disabilities andthat these skills have been taught as isolated components from one another rather than as a cohesive program. The research provided has shown that peer support programs and intensive academic programs with peer supports, targeting the increase of individual skills, have had successful outcomes for adolescents with intellectual disabilities and students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, however, not for high school students with emotional/behavioral disabilities.

Learning disabilities and emotional/behavioral disabilities adversely affect educational performance amongst a great many students and interfere in skill acquisition for career performance or employability and most notably interfere with and thus, are identified through social skill use deficits. Given the political and social movements for inclusive education being the first and foremost placement for students with a disability, it is extremely important that a thorough examination of promising interventions be performed (Jackson, Ryndak, & Wehmeyer, 2008, 2009). Peer support interventions are considered an important element in promoting inclusion. By developing

students' skills and effectively implementing peer support interventions in the general classroom environment, such supports are more than likely to be adopted, maintained, and to become common place (Schwartz & Baer, 1991).

A great deal of recent research has examined the changing roles that peers play for students with severe disabilities (e.g., Autism, Intellectual Disabilities, Physical/Orthopedic Disabilities) during adolescence and the environmental factors influencing the development of social relationships between students with and without disabilities (e.g., Brown & Klute, 2003; Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003, Carter, Sisco, Brown, Brickham, and Al-Khabbaz, 2008). Many of the examined social interactions between students with disabilities and their classmates without disabilities took place in the preschool and elementary settings (e.g., Dymond & Russell, 2004; Katz, Mirenda, & Auerback, 2002), but little is known about the interactions between students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities in secondary inclusive general education classrooms.

Peer Support Programs

Research in the area of peer support as an intervention for social skills development has indicated encouraging results between students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities. The bulk of research on peer support interventions has been completed with students who have mild to severe physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

Copeland et al. (2004) found that students who acted as peers in the peer support program believed that the students with disabilities in the program had more positive outcomes than those who were not in the program. Students reported that they thought the peers they worked with were provided appropriate opportunities for social interaction and even showed increased functional academic skills. The peers who acted as supports after the program was completed had higher expectations for their peers with disabilities, assisted students with disabilities to accomplish more, had more positive attitudes toward peers with disabilities, developed friendships with peers with disabilities, introduced their peers and their teachers to peers with disabilities, and described increased levels of fun when with the students with disabilities.

Carter et al. (2005) collected data that showed peer support interventions were effective in developing the social skills of the students with disabilities when they were working with more than one peer. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1996) of the total number of adolescents with disabilities, 29% need social skills instruction after leaving high school. Supporting adolescents with disabilities socially is an extremely important procedure for ensuring that adolescents with disabilities interact

normally with their peers, families, and within their communities. The fundamental procedure for the development of social skills for adolescents with disabilities is creating effective models to improve their social interactions (Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs, 1998). Bandura (2000) suggested a modeling strategy that supports the ideology that learning happens through observing others and imitating their actions.

The effectiveness of the peer support on the interactions and academic engagement of 23 secondary grade level students with disabilities within inclusive classrooms found that there was little to no social and task related discussions or conversations during one-fourth of the observations of the students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities (Carter et al., 2008). When conversations did take place there was a balanced exchange of reciprocal social and task related topics.

In the United States students with disabilities must receive access with the support of resources and supplemental materials for the general education content to the same extent as their nondisabiled peers (IDEA 2004). Therefore, educational programs must be effective in developing student social skill use, input and output of language, reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic skills that they will need to live successful and independent lives after leaving high school (Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2003). Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) supports the use of many materials for assisting students to understand concepts being taught and it uses rewards and reinforcement procedures that promote academic sharing among students with disabilities and their peers (Barley et al., 2002).

Stowitschek, Hecimovic, Stowitschek, and Shores (1982) found significant results when they implemented a peer-mediated intervention with students with emotional and behavioral disorders. They found statistically significant positive gains in spelling with a mean effect size of 2.42 and a range of 0.69 to 3.00. This study included 12 students in a peer tutoring program where peers without disabilities provided academic support in the development of spelling skills to students with emotional and behavioral disorders for 40 fifteen-minute sessions. The peers without disabilities were same ages as the students with EBD, which ranged from 14 to 17 years.

Method

A paired samples *t*-test research design was used to collect two sets of data from the same sample group as outlined by Gravetter and Wallnau(2009). Grade point average (GPA), social skill ratings (SSIS), and informal special education assessment scores were collected from the students school files as pre-measures. Participation in the Peer Buddy Program was considered the intervention and then the same measures from

students' archival school files listed above were collected again 1 year later as post-measures.

The high school (grades 9-12) where this study was completed was located in a rural region of Colorado (USA), with a population of approximately 600 students, of which 29 students in the special education program were potential study participants. The ethnicity breakdown for the high school was 2 (.3%) African American; 3 (.5%) American Indian; 9 (1.4%) Asian; 46 (7.4%) Hispanic; 0 (0%) Pacific Islander; 0 (0%) 2 or more races; and 564 (90%) Caucasian. The school had 35 full-time teachers, who provided an approximate student/teacher ratio of 17:6. The socio-economic status was identified as moderate to high based upon 13% of the student population found eligible for discounted/free lunch.

Peer Buddy Program Description

The creation of the Peer Buddy Program in this study was adapted from the model described by Hughes et al. (1999). The adaptiaon provided for a to focus not only on socialization but academic growth as well. The program studied was designed to provide supports for both the social and academic skills of students with learning disabilities and behavioral/emotional disabilities in order to allow them access to the general education content areas and emphasize inclusion in social school activities. The program provided these supports through matching peers without disabilities with their peers with disabilities in the general content area courses where they were scheduled together or during a scheduled class in the special education program where they could work together on content area assignments.

Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS)

The SSIS analyzes and measures social behavior according to the self-perceptions of children/youth, parents and teachers (Gresham, 2010). The scale has been validated for use on children/youth ages five to eighteen. It measures interpersonal strengths, family involvement and school functioning. For example, items on the Student Form that measure interpersonal strengths include, "I try to forgive others when they say sorry". On the Teacher Form an item example for School functioning is, "Pays attention to your instruction". On the Parent Form, an item example for family involvement is, "Follows household rules".

The SSIS is used widely in schools as well as social agencies. McFall (2008) conducted many studies to determine convergent validity of SSIS. According to a study conducted by Epstein (2008), a correlation of eighty-eight percent existed between SSIS and Child Behavior Checklist, another widely used instrument for behavioral problem identification. In another

study that aimed at determining convergent reliability, a portion of Gresham Behavior Rating Scale portrayed a strong relationship with the Child Behavior Checklist (Merrell, 2010). The child Behavior checklist is a consistent and strong indicator of skills for interpersonal strength use at school. The correlation is quite high for the social functioning relationship with the externalizing scale on Child Behavior Checklist (Emerson, 2010).

According to Quinn (2009), the SSIS adequately fulfills the requirements of discriminant validity. It has been found to effectively discriminate children and adolescents with behavior and learning disabilities from those without. For instance, the assessment of intrapersonal and interpersonal strengths helps in evaluation of learning disabilities (Merrell, 2009). Besides, assessment of family involvement and school functioning is imperative in assessment of behavioral disorders. The preciseness of the two assessments makes SSIS valuable in the test of discriminant validity. Furthermore, a close relationship exists between discriminant and content validity (Reamer, 2009).

Fastt Math

FASTT Math is an informal assessment used to arrive at the fluency and automaticity of the students' basic mathematics fact use. It is also a teaching system once level of ability is ascertained. The technology used steps the student through levels of a mathematics intervention program that assists to develop fluency with basic math facts up to Algebra I (Scholastic, 2011). It helps students to avoid the use of incorrect strategies often used to achieve answers for basic mathematics facts such as finger counting and uses techniques to improve student ability to retrieve answers for basic facts from memory quickly and effortlessly (Scholastic, 2011).

System 44

System 44 is an informal assessment and a program designed for struggling readers in Grades 3–12. It helps students who lack basic decoding skills understand that the English language is a finite system of 44 sounds and 26 letters that can be mastered (Scholastic, 2011). It uses research-based techniques for phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension instruction for older students. Emphasis is placed on explicit instruction of the English language, and includes motivations and age-appropriate adaptive technology. The Scholastic Phonics Inventory program (SPI) is embedded in System 44, which tracks progress during the assessment portions. This tracking system supports teachers' ability to know when the students have acquired the knowledge necessary to move to next level. It will also provide corrective instruction when necessary to enhance students' reading skills (Scholastic, 2011).

Acuity Assessment

Acuity is a predictive assessment that helps to provide diagnostic measures for grade 3-8 students in language arts. Acuity reports provide standards-aligned performance data, which support an educator's ability to inform instruction at the individual student and class level (McGraw-Hill, 2010).

Data Collection

The sampling procedure that was used was a volunteer group of high school students with disabilities who were participating in the Peer Buddy Program. The criteria for students to participate in this study was that they were (a) enrolled in the high school, (b) receiving special education services through an individualized education program, (c) participating in the Peer Buddy Program, and (d) provided assent and had parental consent to participate. The conditions stated above were well suited to the purpose of this study and constituted the necessary rationale for using a convenience sampling method (Gall, Gall, & Walter, 2007).

Archival School Files Review Procedure

Quantitative information was collected from the students' school files for each participant. The file information included the SISS Rating Scales,from the students, the special and general education teachers, informal special education assessment scores, GPA, general education content area grades, and Individualized Education Plans.

Data were analyzed using a paired samples *t*-test (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). The primary measure in this study was the Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) which was administered both pre- and post-Peer Buddy Program. The use of the paired samples provided advantages since the sample population was small, treatment conditions that took place over time, and the paired samples could prevent or avoid problems caused by individual differences. The same students completed the SSIS both pre- and post-Peer Buddy Program which eliminated the issues of matching students for age, IQ, and/or gender.

The SSOS scores were analyzed to determine if the mean found on the pre-measure was statistically different from the mean found on the post-measure scores (Holcomb, 2009). Once pre- and post-measure raw scores for each domain area and totals of the SSIS were entered, a comparison of means test was conducted. Descriptive statistics were generated for the mean, standard deviation, and the standard error mean.

Results

To address the initial question posed, a pre- and post- analyses of the SSIS scores for the students was employed using a paired samples *t*-test. The scores from the students, the special education teacher, and general education content teachers regarding the perceived social skills achievement of the students with disabilities were analyzed separately. The SSIS teacher form also included an academic scale, which both the special and general education teachers completed.

The *t*-test from the students' SSIS social ratings equaled -2.62, and the *p*-value equaled .028, and the $p < .05$. There was a statistically significant difference between means of the pre-SSIS score of students with disabilities' perceptions toward their social skills in the scores ($M = 12.53$, $SD = 1.80$) and their post- SSIS score ($M = 14.50$, $SD = 2.81$); $t(9) = -2.63$, $p = .028$. From the students' perspective the Peer Buddy Program positively improved their use of social skills.

The *t*-test from the special education teachers' SSIS social ratings equaled 5.24 and the *p*-value equaled .001, and the $p < 0.05$ indicating that there was a statistically significant difference in the pre-SSIS score of special education teacher's perceptions toward the social skills of students with disabilities ($M = 12.17$, $SD = 2.92$) and the post-SSIS score of the perceptions ($M = 15.55$, $SD = 2.87$); $t(9) = -5.24$, $p = .001$, $p < .05$. In conclusion, from the perspective of the special education teacher, the Peer Buddy Program increased the high school students with LD and EBD use of social skills.

The *t*-test from the general education teachers' SSIS social ratings equaled -.071 and the *p*-value equaled .95, so $p > 0.05$ indicating that there was no statistical significant difference between the pre- SSIS scores of general education teachers' perceptions of the social skills of students with disabilities ($M = 11.91$, $SD = 3.97$) and their post-SSIS scores ($M = 12.04$, $SD = 4.33$); $t(9) = -(.071)$, $p = (0.945)$. The outcome of the SSIS scores from the general education teachers' perceptions was that the Peer Buddy Program had not had a significant impact on the social skills of the high school students with LD and EBD.

To address the question regarding academic acheivement, data from the teacher SSIS form and the student archival records was analzyed. The general and special education teachers completed the SSIS academic competence form before providing the Peer Buddy Program and then again after the Peer Buddy Program. These component measures were also analyzed pre and post Peer Buddy Program using a paired samples *t*-test.

The analyses of the special education teachers' SSIS academic ratings provided a $t(9) = (-7.9)$, and a *p*-value $= (0.000)$ which was < 0.05, indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between the

means of pre-SSIS scores (M = 1.4, SD = .62) and post SSIS scores (M = 3.6, SD = 1.10) of the special education teachers' perceptions toward the academic achievement by the students with LD and EBD. Therefore, the analyses indicated that the special education teacher's perceptive was that the Peer Buddy Program had an influence on the academic achievement of the high school students with LD and EBD.

The analyses of the general education teachers' SSIS academic ratings provided a $t(9)$= -1.46, p = (.18) > .05, indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between the means of pre- SSIS scores and post- SSIS scores mean of the general education teachers' perceptions toward the academic skill development of students with LD and EBD. This result indicated that from the general education teachers' perspective the Peer Buddy Program was not influential on the academic achievement of the high school students with LD and EBD.

Data of Archival Files

The additional data collected from students' files included the Grade Point Average (GPA) and the special education informal assessments (i.e., FASTT Math, System 44, and Acuity). These data were analyzed before and after the Peer Buddy Program was provided to the high school students with disabilities.

Students' Grade Point Average

The students' GPA was collected before and after the Peer Buddy Program. The GPA data was analyzed using the t-test and the results yielded were as follows: (a) the average of students' pre-GPA was 2.35, (b) the standard deviation of their scores was .82 (c) the standard error score was .82, (d) the averages of students' post-GPA was 2.58, (e) the standard deviation of their scores was .67, (f) the standard error score was .21, (g) the correlation between the students' pre- and post-GPA was .97, (h) the significant level was .97, (i) the t-test value of the students' pre- and post GPA of -3.12, (j) the lower level of confidence interval was -.39, (k) the upper interval of confidence was -.06, (l) the degree freedom was 9, and (m) p-value was .01.

The results of the analysis was that the students had a higher post-GPA than their pre- GPA by .22 points. Furthermore, the difference between the standard deviation of pre-GPA and post-GPA was .23, and the difference between the standard error of pre and post GPA was .07). Since t-test equaled -3.12, and the p-value equaled 0.01, and p < 0.05, the final result was a statistically significant difference in the scores for students' pre-GPA (M = 2.35, SD = .82) and students' post-GPA (M = 2.58, SD = .67) ; t (9) = -3.11, p = .01. The results indicate that there was a positive effect of the Peer

Buddy Program for increasing the academic GPA of the high school students with LD and EBD.

Students' FASTT Math Scores

The students' FASTT Math scores were collected prior to and after the Peer Buddy Program was provided. The analyzed data resulted in the following: (a) the average of students' pre FASTT Math scores was 43.90, (b) the standard deviation of their scores was 14.62, (c) the standard error score was 4.62, (d) the average of the students' post FASTT Math was 107.29, (e) the standard deviation of their scores was 56.25, (f) the standard error score was 17.79, (g) the correlation between the students' pre and post FASTT Math scores was .59, (h) the significant level was (j) the lower interval confidence difference was -98.47, (k) the upper interval confidence difference was -28.31, (l) the degree freedom was 9, and (m) p-value was .003.

The results illustrated the improvement of the students' FASTT Math scores, the difference between pre FASTT Math score and the post FASTT Math score was -63.39 points. Furthermore, the difference between the standard deviation of the pre FASTT Math score and the post FASTT Math score was 49.04, and the difference between the standard error of the pre and the post FASTT Math scores was 15.51. Since t-test equaled -4.1, and the p-value equaled .003, and the $p < 0.05$, the result was that there was a statistically significant difference in the scores for students' pre FASTT Math scores ($M = 43.90$, $SD = 14.62$) and students' post FASTT Math scores ($M = 107.29$, $SD = 56.25$); t (9)= -4.09, $p = .003$. The results indicate the positive effect the Peer Buddy Program had on the development of the academic skills of the FASTT Math scores for the high school students with LD and EBD.

The results illustrated the improvement of the students' FASTT Math scores, the difference between pre FASTT Math score and the post FASTT Math score was -63.39 points. Furthermore, the difference between the standard deviation of the pre FASTT Math score and the post FASTT Math score was 49.04, and the difference between the standard error of the pre and the post FASTT Math scores was 15.51. Since t-test equaled -4.1, and the p-value equaled .003, and the $p < 0.05$, the result was that there was a statistically significant difference in the scores for students' pre FASTT Math scores ($M = 43.90$, $SD = 14.62$) and students' post FASTT Math scores ($M = 107.29$, $SD = 56.25$); t (9)= -4.09, $p = .003$. The results indicate the positive effect the Peer Buddy Program had on the development of the academic skills of the FASTT Math scores for the high school students with LD and EBD.

Students' System 44 Scores

The students' pre- and post- Lexcile scores on the System 44 program were analyzed for the Peer Buddy Program students with disabilities. The average of students' pre-Lexcile scores was 627.29, the standard deviation was 278.01, the standard error score was 105.08, the averages of students' post-Lexcile score was 734.86, the standard deviation of the scores was 293.03, the standard error score was 110.75, the correlation between the students' pre- and post-Lexcile scores was .93, the significant level was .002, the *t*-test value of the students' pre- and post-Lexcile scores was -2.64, the lower confidence interval was 207.22, (k) the upper confidence interval was -7.92, (l) the degree freedom was 7; and (m) *p*-value was .038.

The results determined the difference between the students' pre-Lexcile scores and their post-Lexcile scores was 107.57, the difference between the standard deviation of pre- and post-Lexcile scores was 107.75, and the difference between the standard error of pre- and post-Lexcile scores was 40.72. Since the *t*-test equaled -2.64 and the *p*-value equaled 0.04, and $p < 0.05$, it can be concluded that there exists a statistically significant difference in the scores for students' pre-Lexcile score ($M = 627.29$, $SD = 0.278.01$) and students' post-Lexcile score ($M = 734.86$, $SD = 293.03$) conditions; $t(9) = -2.64$, $p = 0.038$. The finding suggested that there was a positive impact from the Peer Buddy Program on the changes in System 44 Lexcile reading scores of the high school students with LD and EBD.

Students' Acuity Scores

The Acuity test scores were collected before and after implementation of the Peer Buddy Program with students with LD and EBD. The analyzed data showed the following results: (a) the average of students' pre-Acuity scores was 386.75, (b) the standard deviation of their scores was 53.12, (c) the standard error score was 18.78, (d) the averages of students' post-Acuity score was 451.88, (e) the standard deviation of their scores was 52.83, (f) the standard error score was 18.68; (g) the correlation between the students' pre- and post-Acuity scores was 0. 37, (h) the significant level was 0.37, (i) the *t*-test value of the students' pre- and post-Acuity scores was -3.09, (j) the lower interval confidence difference was -114.90, (k) the upper interval confidence difference was -15.35, (l) the degree freedom was 7, and (m) *p*-value was .02.

The results determined the difference between the students' pre-Acuity scores and their post-Acuity scores which was -65.13, the difference between the standard deviation of pre- and post-Acuity scores which was 59.53, and the difference between the standard error of pre- and post-Acuity scores which was 21.05. Since *t*-test equaled -3.09 and the *p*-value equaled

.02, and $p < 0.05$ the result revealed a statistically significant difference in the scores for students' pre-Acuity score ($M = 386.75$, $SD = 53.12$) and students' post-Acuity scores ($M = 451.88$, $SD = 52.83$); t (8) = -3.09, p =.017. The results illustrated the positive impact of the Peer Buddy Program on developing the academic Acuity scores of the high school students with LD and EBD.

Conclusion

Overall results of the archival file data collection indicated that there was a positive statistically significant difference between the students' GPAs, FASTT Math, System 44, and Acuity scores pre- and post- Peer Buddy Program. The special education teacher's ratings supported the students' statistical significant academic changes indicating that the Peer Buddy Program impacted the academic achievement of the students. These results should encourage special education teachers to consider the implementation of this program in their high school programs for students with LD and EBD. The lack of general education teachers'perception that student academic achievement had changed can be explained by the fact that high school teachers do not typically have consistent contact with students as they may only have them for a single course across a school year, while special education teachers have consistent and engaged contact with their students. With more engaged contact time between the students and the general education teachers a difference in the scores may be seen. Both the students and special education teachers saw growth in the social and behavioral dispositions which is consistent with past research on peer programs that focused on social skill increases. The data results converged and it can be concluded that the Peer Buddy Program had a positive impace on the social and academic achievement of the high school students with LD and EBD.

References:

Bandura, A. (2000). Self-efficacy and the construction of an optimistic self. *Today's Youth, 4*(4), 18-22.

Barley, Z., Lauer, P. A., Arens, S. A., Apthorp, H. S., Englert, K. S., Snow, D., & Akiba, M. (2002). *Helping at-risk students meet standards: A synthesis of evidence-based classroom practices.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

Bender, W. N., & Wall, M. E. (1994). Social-emotional development of students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 17*(4), 323-336.

Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. *Exceptional Children, 62*(5), 399-414.

Brown, B. B., & Klute, C. (2003). Friends, cliques, and crowds. In G. R. Adams & M. D. Berzonsky (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of adolescence* (pp. 330-348). Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Candace. S. B., & Sharon. V. (1998). Strategies for teaching students with learning and behavior problems (4th edition). Needham Heights. Viacom Company.

Carter, E. W., Cushing, L. S., Clark. N. M.. & Kennedy, C. H. (2005). Effects of peer support interventions on students' access to the general curriculum and social interactions. Research *and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 30* (4)*,* 15-25.

Carter, E. W., Sisco, L. G., Brown, L., Brickham, D., & Al-Khabbaz, Z. A. (2008). Peer interactions and academic engagement of youth with developmental disabilities in inclusive middle and high school classrooms. *American Journal* on *Mental Retardation, 113* (6), 479-494*.*

Carter, E. W., Sisco, L. G., Chung, Y., & Stanton-Chapman, T. (2010). Peer interactions of students with intellectual disabilities and/or autism: A map of the intervention literature. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, *35* (3-4), 63-79.

Cheney, D., & Bullis, M. (2004). The school-to-community transition of adolescents with emotional and behavioral disorders. In R. B. Rutherford, M. M. Quinn, & S. R. Mathur (Eds.), *Handbook of research in emotional and behavioral disorders*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Copeland, S. R., Hughes, C., Carter, E. W., Guth, C., Presley, J. A. , Williams, C. R., & Fowler, S. E. (2004). Increasing access to general education: Perspectives of participants in a high school peer support program. *Remedial and Special Education*, *26* (6), 342-352.

Dymond, S., & Russell, D. (2004). Impact of grade and disability on the instructional context of inclusive classrooms. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 39*(2), 127-140.

Elksnin, L., & Elksnin, N. (2006). *Teaching social-emotional skills at school and home*. Love Publishing: Loveland, CO.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., & Borg, W. R. (2007) *Educational research: An introduction*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

Gifford-Smith, M. E., & Brownell, C. A. (2003). Childhood peer relationships: Social acceptance, friendships, and peer networks. *Journal of School Psychology,* (41), 235-284.

Goldstein, A. P., Glick, B. & Gibbs, J.C. (1998). *Aggression replacement training: A comprehensive intervention for aggressive youth.* Research Press: Champaign, IL

Gravetter, F. J., & Wallnau, L. B. (2009). *Statistics for the behavioral sciences*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, Cengage Learning.

Groce, E. N. (2004). Adoloscents and youth with disability: Issues and challenges. *Asia Pacific Disability Rehabilitation Jourrnal, 15*(2), 13-32.

Holcomb, Z. C. (2009). *SPPS basics: Techniques for a first course in statistics* (2nd ed.). Reno, NV: Pryczak Publishing.

Hughes, C., Guth, C., Hall, S., Presley, J., Dye, M., & Byers, C. (1999). They are my best friends: Peer buddies promote inclusion in high school. *Teaching Exceptional Clhildren, 31*(5), 32-37.

Indivdiuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). (2004). 20 U.S. C. §1401 *et seq.*

Jackson, L. B., Ryndak, D. L., &Wehmeyer, M. L. (2008/2009). The dynamic relationship between context, curriculum, and student learning: A case for inclusive education as a research-based practice. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities,* 33 (4), 175-195.

Katz, J., Mirenda, P., & Auerbach, S. (2002). Instructional strategies and educational outcomes for students with developmental disabilities in inclusive "multiple intelligences" and typical inclusive classrooms. *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities*, 27 (4), 227-238.

Lehr, C. A., Hansen, A., Sinclair, M. F., & Christenson, S. L. (2003). Moving beyond dropout prevention to school completion: An integrative review of data-based interventions, *School Psychology Review, 32*(3), 342-364.

Malmgren, K., Edgar, E., & Neel, R.S. (1998). Postschool status of youths with behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders*, *23* (4), 257-263.

Morris, J.D., Ehren, B.J., & Lenz, B.K. (1991). Building a model to predict which fourth through eighth graders will drop out in high school. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 59*(3), 286-293.

Newman, L., Wagner, M. Cameto, R., & Knokey, A. M. (2009). *The post-high school outcomes of youth with disabilities up to 4 years after high school. A report from the National Longitudinal transition Study-2 (NLTS-2)*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Education (NCSER2009-3017). Retrieved from http://www. nlts2.org/reports/2009_04/nlts2_report_2009_04_complete.pdf

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110 §115, Stat. 1425 (2002).

Schwartz, I. S., & Baer, D. M. (1991). Social validity assessments: Is current practice state of the art? *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 24*(2)*,* 189-204.

Snyder, T. D., & Dillow, S. A. (2011). *Digest of education statistics 2010* (NCES 2011-015). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.

Stowitschek, C., Hecimovic, A., Stowitschek, J., & Shores, R. (1982). Behaviorally disordered adolescents as peer tutors: Immediate and generative effects on instructional performance and spelling achievement. *Behavioral Disorders,* 7(3), 136-148.

U.S. Department of Education (1996). *18th annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2006.* Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education (2001). *Twenty-second annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2006.* Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education (2009). *28th annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2006.* Washington, DC: Author.

Wagner, M., Newman, L., Cameto, R. Garza, N. & Levine, P. (2005). *After high school: A first look at the postschool experiences of youth with disabilities. A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2).* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

SIGNIFICANT DIFFICULTIES IN LEARNING TO READ AND WRITE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION: A SET OF TASKS TO DEAL WITH THESE DIFFICULTIES BY MEANS OF A DIDACTIC APPROACH

M. Ester Romero Mariscal
Dr. Juan Antonio Lopez Núñez
University of Granada, Spain

Abstract

This article focuses on two main issues. On the one hand, it deals with early prevention of literacy difficulties. On the other hand, it deals with the same issue once pupils already present serious difficulties in reading and writing. Consequently, this paper has two main aims. Firstly, it aims to show teachers that, in order to carry out appropriate pedagogical intervention, it is essential to design educational intervention programmes based on thorough theoretical bases. These will aid the teaching of literacy skills while improving the learning process of pupils who require special treatment. Secondly, it intends to provide teachers with a series of activities that can be used with pupils who already present significant difficulties in this particular area of primary learning, i.e. reading and writing, and whose assessment reports already reflect these difficulties. The educational intervention presented in this paper focuses on a particular child whose mother tongue is Spanish. Thus, all the activities proposed as well as the texts they are based upon are in Spanish.

Introduction

In my professional experience as a primary teacher, I have confirmed that teachers often encounter some children who present serious literacy difficulties. In general, although we are aware that identifying a possible dyslexia is a complex process, we should not delay taking action during the

first stages of these complications, which involve obvious reading and writing underachievement in relation to the child's peers.

This situation becomes even worse, and so does the need to take care of it, during the last years of primary education. Therefore, it is important to establish a set of measures which will include daily work with these pupils, careful observation of their literacy development, and identification of risk factors, among others. Besides, it is essential to involve both the school's Educational Psychologist Team, and the pupils' families, as they are the ones who know them best.

The experience shared in this paper presents an educational intervention carried out with a nine-year-old learner, who is in his fourth year of primary education and whose mother tongue is Spanish. A detailed report has been issued as regards the different literacy difficulties he presents. This provides us with interesting data that should work as the bases of any appropriate and thorough proposal of intervention with this child. What follows is the information gathered in the report:

1. The boy presents a regular intelligence levels, an IQ score of 101, and he does not struggle with the mastery of basic concepts.
2. His problems regarding educational development all revolve around his literacy difficulties.
3. He is lagging behind as regards curricular progress. His level of curricular competence corresponds to that of second year of primary education.
4. He shows good behaviour at school, good relationships with his peers and the tutor, and he does not cause any problems at home, save for the concern of his parents regarding his underachievement.
5. As regards his learning style, one could say that he lacks independence, needing always to be pointed in the right direction. He usually benefits further from short and segmented tasks.

Literacy acquisition processes, metacognition and metalinguistic awareness

In order to overcome literacy difficulties, one must pay close attention to the processes involved in literacy acquisition, as well as the cognitive abilities and metalinguistic awareness of the pupil at hand.

The processes involved in literacy acquisition are very complex in themselves. From the moment we look at a text and perceive a series of graphical symbols to the moment we decipher and understand what is written, we go through four reading stages, according to Cueto (1990). These processes, related to learners' linguistic and metalinguistic abilities, are the following:

1) *Perceptive processes*, or acquisition of information from letters and

perception of words, which span from the perception of symbols to giving meaning to the graphemes. In this sense, the visual input is transformed into linguistic material. Therefore, we establish a grapheme-phoneme association, and we become aware of the phonetic sequence of the sounds that comprise the syllables and the words.

2) *Lexical processes*, through which we understand the meaning of the words we have already deciphered during the previous process.

3) *Syntactic processes*, which enables us to determine the relation between the words in a given sentence. By understanding the value of the words and the relations between them, we can access the meaning of a particular sentence.

4) *Semantic processes*, or text comprehension processes, which distinguish the relation between sentences and their value so as to achieve global understanding. Also, it influences the ability to infer meaning and make judgements about the formal aspects of the text and its content.

In the same way, Flower and Hayes (1981) meticulously describe the subprocesses that comprise the composition of written texts. They distinguish the following ones:

1) *Planification*, which implies searching for ideas and carrying out a writing plan that considers the purpose of writing, the recipient, the information research or the information layout. In this way, one can turn a pre-text into a text.

2) *Textualisation*, which means producing a written text with coherence, correction (semantic, syntactic and spelling), and appropriateness (recipient, object described and context).

3) *Revision*, which involves rereading the text and evaluating the result, which will lead to some corrections or modifications so as to achieve the final result.

Such processes are closely related to the development of metacognition, which can be defined as the knowledge pupils have of the essential mental operations that take place during learning processes (perception, cognition, memory, attention), and the control they have over those operations. It is therefore a human ability which enables us to know our way of learning, to plan activities to access and process information, to know particular ways of solving problems, and to control and value our procedural effectiveness (Antonijevick and Chadwick, 1982). This ability, which appears at an early age and develops fully at adolescence, deserves special attention on the part of teachers, owing to the fact that literacy performance depends on it to a large extent.

As regards metalinguistic awareness and literacy acquisition, Tunmer, Pratt and Herriman (1989) claim that metalinguistic abilities precede

literacy skills, which means that it would be virtually impossible to foresee an adequate literacy performance without previously developing learners' metalinguistic abilities. In the same line of research, Ehri (1978) states that whilst it might be enough to have implicit knowledge of a language in order to communicate orally, it is crucial to gain metalinguistic awareness to develop proper written communication. This type of awareness will influence different areas of language: phonological, semantic and syntactic awareness. As the result of some research carried out by Ehri (1984), this author claims that infants who are not yet familiar with reading but obtain good scores in metalinguistic tests, reach high levels of success and good results when starting their literacy training.

On the other hand, Olson (1995) describes writing as a metalinguistic activity in itself. This is so because oral metalanguage is imperative to become aware of and refer to written language, and because writing involves distinctions between sounds, letters, words, spaces, and the relations between them. Therefore, one can assert that writing develops certain areas of metalinguistic awareness, such as phonologic, semantic and syntactic levels.

As a consequence of all of the above, we can see how important it is for teachers to understand their pupils' metalinguistic awareness, as well as the tasks that develop such aspect. Phonologic awareness, for instance, is chiefly developed between the ages of 3 and 8. In addition, this kind of awareness will have to be developed through oral games (tongue twisters, songs, riddles, word sequences, etc.), and by means of comparing the sound of words and the individual sounds within words. This is how Berko Gleason and Bernstein Ratner (2010) believe it should be done. They confirm that numerous researches have concluded that children's ability to read and write is closely related to their phonologic awareness. It is also claimed that the greatest development of phonological awareness is reached as a result of teaching reading. This is due to the emphasis on the correspondence between sounds and symbols, which eases literacy acquisition.

On the whole, we can draw the conclusion that it is crucial to pay attention to metacognition and metalinguistic awareness during the different stages of literacy acquisition. In order to do so, it is important to bear in mind the results of studies carried out by Korkman and Peltomaa (1993) and Etchepareborda (2002), which emphasise the importance of developing learners' metacognitive, linguistic and metalinguistic awareness, especially when they show literacy difficulties. This will no doubt ease and ensure a better learning process.

Proposal: set of activities for educational intervention

It is in this section that an intervention programme is devised and presented, taking into account the concepts and measures explained in previous sections, as well as the report of the pupil which was previously described. Therefore, a series of activities are proposed which will aid in planning a session or a succession of them. Bearing in mind that the child's mother tongue is Spanish, all of the activities and texts proposed are in Spanish.

Based on the knowledge of the teacher, the family's contributions and results of the psycho-pedagogical report, it has been decided to concentrate the efforts on catering for the pupils' literacy deficiencies, and on working towards an improvement of the learning processes involved in literacy acquisition. As a result, the activities contained in this proposal deal both with reading processes (*perceptive, lexical, syntactic, semantic*) and writing processes (*basic, complex, motor*):

A) ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING PROCESSES

1.- Activities to improve perceptive processes

1.1.- We will focus on the following groups of words, and will say the elements that change and do not change when read or written. For example, if we focus on the set of words *Gata, Masa, Pasa, Rasa*, we can tell that the only difference is the initial sound (oral) or the initial letter (written). The rest does not change (-*asa*). However, with the change of the first sound or letter, the meaning changes.

This happens with the following sets of words:
1) Gasa - Masa – Pasa - Rasa
2) Bata – Gata – Lata – Nata – Pata – Rata
3) Cala – Gala – Mala – Pala – Sala
4) Lisa – Misa – Pisa – Risa

1.2.- Now, we can divide those words into syllables. This would make us realise that they all have two syllables: *Ga-sa*; *Ma-sa*; *Pa-sa*, and *Ra-sa*.
You can do the same with the following words: *lisa, misa, pisa, risa, camisa, iglesia; mármol; pelotazo; guerra; cuento; quesito; yo; camarero*.

1.3.- As we see, words are made up of sound units (phonemes) that form larger units (syllables), and neither the sound units nor the syllables mean anything in isolation. Knowing this, we are now going to identify the similarities and differences of the following groups of words, which are both similar and different:

1)   Boca / foca
What is similar?
What is different?
What is the meaning of each word?

Do the same with the following words (What is similar? What is different? What is the meaning of each word?):

1) *Costura / postura*
2) *Loca / poca*
3) *Pintura / cintura*
4) *Balsa / salsa*
5) *Curiosa /furiosa*
6) *Cadera / codera*
7) *Madera / ladera*
8) *Lechera / pechera*
9) *Ranura / llanura.*

1.4.- With the aim of using language playfully and develop our ability to utter sounds clearly and read texts accurately, we are going to focus on the following popular tongue twister:
Dondín no tiene don.
¿qué hace Dondín sin don?

Due to its simplicity, we are going to memorise it and recite it. First, we will do so very slowly; then, whispering, and finally, with a regular volume and adequate tone. We can also work on this very same sound (/d/) with Rafael Alberti's following poem:

DON DIEGO

Don dondiego no tiene don,
don.

Don dondiego
de nieve y de fuego;
don, din, don,
que no tenéis don.

Ábrete de noche,
ciérrate de día,
cuida no te corte
la tía María.

Don dondiego,
que al sol estáis ciego;
don, din, don,
que no tenéis don.

1.5.- With the following poem, by Carlos Murciano, we can work on the sound /p/. The teacher should read it first so as to structure it rhythmically, and then the student, who should end up reading it speedily and accurately.

PATRICIA CON P

Patricia pinta un palomo
pillo, panzudo y pequeño:
le pone púrpura el pico,
le pone de plata el pecho.

El palomo de Patricia
se ha posado en el perchero
y ella le peina las plumas
con la punta del pañuelo.

Pronto el palomo pasea,
presumido y postinero,
mientras Patricia se prende
una petunia en el pelo.

1.6.- In the same way we have enjoyed these poems, we are going to read, memorise and recite simple traditional tongue twisters, which play with a variety of phonemes or phonemic groups:

Canta el cuco: cuqui-cuco.
Canta el cuco: cuqui-cuca.
Canta el cuco. cuqui-cuco,
cuqui-cuco-cuquicá.
- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
Mi primo propuso
que probáramos aquel pastel.
Él lo probó primero
y yo lo probé después.

1.7.- In the same way, in order to read correctly, we ought to perceive sounds correctly and know how to distinguish them within words. We also have to become aware of the punctuation in any given text. We will improve our interpretation of punctuation and our reading skills by means of the following texts:

The first one was written by Rabindranath Tagore, and it goes as follows:

Oye, madre, las flores tendrán su casa en el cielo con las estrellas,
¿verdad? ¡Mira tú, si no, qué ganas tienen de subir! ¿Y a que no sabes tú
por qué corren tanto? ¡Yo sí lo sé! Y sé también a quién echan sus brazos.
Las flores tienen su madre como yo te tengo a ti.

The second one belongs to Juan Ramón Jiménez, and it goes as follows:

No sé si tú, Platero, sabrás ver una fotografía. Yo se las he enseñado a
algunos hombres del campo y no veían nada en ellas. Pues éste es Lord,
Platero, el perrillo Foxterrier de que a veces te he hablado. Míralo. Está,
¿lo ves?, en un cojín del patio de mármol, tomando, entre las macetas de
geranios, el sol del invierno.

2.- Activities to improve lexical processes

2.1.- Read the following words and make a list with the ones you consider easy to read and the ones you think are difficult: c*asa, mesa, guerra, luna, ciego, guerrera, quesería, merienda, abuelo, degüello, kilogramo, cuadrilátero, superprotección, merienda, desparpajo, paupérrimo, descuajaringado.*
- Now we will divide the easy ones into its different syllables.

2.2.- Now we will do the same with the words we thought were difficult. Later we shall clarify the meaning of each word, and we will try reading them at an appropriate speed.

2.3.- In the following poem by Germán Berdiales, there is a playful use of the sounds /t/ and /p/. Firstly, read it in silence. Then try to identify which words have meaning and which do not. Underline the ones with meaning.

RONDA DEL ZAPATERO

Tipi –tape, tipi-tape,
tipi-tape, tipitón,
tipi-tape, zape-zape
Zapatero remendón.

Tipi-tape todo el día,
todo el año tipitón,
tipi-tape, macha-macha
machacando en tu rincón.

Tipi-tape en tu banqueta,
tipi-tape, tipitón,
tipitón con tu martillo
macha-macha, machacón.

¡Ay, tus suelas, zapa-zapa
zapatero remendón;
ay tus suelas, tipi-tape,
duran menos que el cartón!

Now we have to read the poem emphasising the sounds in each word. This should be done with a steady rhythm and good pronunciation, enjoying it as much as possible.

2.4.- Finally, we can do the same with other simple poems, such as the one by Antonio A. Gómez Yebra, who also plays with the sounds /b/ and /p/, which are easily confused both between them and with others that are written in a similar way (/d/ or /q/).

MI PELOTA

Esta pelota mía
bota, bota y bota.
Yo la tiro contra el suelo
y ella se eleva hacia el cielo
porque rebota.

Esta pelota mía
bota, bota y bota.
La arrojo hacia la pared
y ella regresa otra vez
porque rebota.

Esta pelota mía
bota, bota y bota.
Yo siempre seré su amigo
pues ella juega conmigo
mientras rebota.

3.- Activities to improve syntactic processes

3.1.- Focus on the importance of associating words in a sentence so as to read and understand a text correctly. To do so, we will see if in the following sentences the words are properly associated, or if they are not. If the latter is true, the sentences will not be understood properly:

La ardilla comían nueces.

Is it correct or incorrect?
If you think it is incorrect, how should we change it?
Why do we have to change it that way?

Do the same with the following sentences:

Este arroz con leche está muy mala.

La perrita no queja de su herida.

Mis amigos celebraron su cumpleaños en el cole.

El abono y el agua son buenas para las plantas.

3.2.- In order to know how words relate to each other in a sentence, we can practise with some strategies such as:
1) *Putting sentences into the correct order*. For example, we can do so with the following sentence: *de matemáticas / cuando / yo / la gripe / el maestro / explicó / el tema / tenía*. The result will be: *El maestro explicó el tema de matemáticas cuando yo tenía la gripe.*

Taking the previous example, we can do the same with the following sentences whose elements are in the wrong order:
- *vienen / en / Navidades / a / mis / del pueblo / casa / abuelitos / mi.*
- *cuando / todas / los deberes / un rato / termino / las tardes / leo.*
- *jugar / García Lorca / mucho /en / el parque / al balón / gusta / me.*
- *los sábados / mi / las macetas / todos / de / riego /mamá.*

2) *Expanding sentences*. From a sentence with two elements (subject and predicate), we can continuously add information to make it more complete. For example:
-*El niño come.*
-*El niño bueno come.*
-*El niño bueno come pan.*
-*El niño rubio come pan casero.*
-*El niño rubio come pan casero con chocolate.*
-*El niño rubio come pan casero con chocolate mientras está sentado.*
-*El niño rubio come pan casero con chocolate mientras está sentado en un banco.*
-*El niño rubio come pan casero con chocolate mientras está sentado en un banco de la plaza.*
-*El niño rubio come pan casero con chocolate mientras está sentado en un banco de la plaza de su barrio.*

Do the same with the following sentence: *La niña bebe.*

3) *Reducing sentences*. Now we shall do exactly the opposite to what we have done in 2). We start with a paragraph or a sentence more or less complex, and we end up with its essential elements (subject and predicate). For example:
- *El niño rubio, que viene todos los días al colegio, come pan casero con chocolate muy rico en la hermosa plaza de su pueblo.*
- *El niño rubio come pan casero con chocolate muy rico en la hermosa plaza de su pueblo.*
- *El niño come pan con chocolate en la hermosa plaza de su pueblo.*
- *El niño come pan con chocolate en la plaza de su pueblo.*
- *El niño come pan con chocolate en la plaza.*
- *El niño come pan con chocolate.*
- *El niño come pan.*
- *El niño come.*

Now do the same with this text: *La niña morena que va todas las semanas a la peluquería come ricos helados de vainilla en la heladería de su primo Andrés.*

3.3.- We are now going to work with the rest of the classmates. We are going to ask questions about some sentences in order to understand better and think about the relation between the construction of sentences and their meanings.

1A) *Después de acabar de merendar, Luis se puso a ver la televisión.*
What did Luis do first?
How do you know?

1B) *Luis se puso a ver la televisión después de terminar de merendar.*

What did Luis do after?

How do you know?

1C) Now we look at both sentences together:

- *Después de acabar de merendar, Luis se puso a ver la televisión.*
- *Luis se puso a ver la televisión después de terminar de merendar.*

Do these to sentences mean the same?

How do you know?

2A) *El perro arremetió contra el gato.*

What did the dog charge at?

How do you know?

2B) *El gato arremetió contra el perro.*

What did the cat charge at?

What did you look at to come up with your answer?

2C) We repeat the two previous sentences:

El perro arremetió contra el gato.

El gato arremetió contra el perro.

Do they mean the same?

How do you know?

4.- Activities to improve semantic processes

4.1.- To understand the meaning of any text we read, we have to pay attention to the way things are expressed. For this reason, let's focus on the following sentences and answer the questions:

1A) *La niña tomó el bocadillo antes de leer el cómic.*

1B) *La niña, después de tomar el bocadillo, se puso a leer el cómic.*

Do they mean the same?

How do you know?

2A) *La mamá está ante su hija.*

2B) *La hija está detrás de su mamá.*

Do they mean the same?

How do you know?

3A) *En este cesto hay más manzanas que peras.*

3B) *En este cesto hay menos peras que manzanas.*

Do they mean the same?

How do you know?

4.2.- Now notice that some of the words in the following sentences have more than one possible meaning. In order to know the meaning of the sentence, we should know all the different meanings of those words. For example, if we say:

Tenía un gato en mi casa

What is the meaning of "Tenía un gato en mi casa"? Did I have that pet we all know about which hunts mice? That may be true, but I could also be referring to the tool we use to lift cars when changing a wheel. In that case, the meaning of the sentence is totally different.

Now let's find out what the meanings of the words are in these sentences:

Esta sierra es muy peligrosa

What are the meanings of the word *sierra*?
With the first meaning of *sierra*, what is the meaning of the sentence *Esta sierra es muy peligrosa*?
Did you find another meaning? What other meaning could the same sentence have?

La pluma era marrón

What are the meanings of the word *pluma*?
With the first meaning of *pluma*, what is the meaning of the sentence *La pluma era   marrón*?
Did you find another meaning? What other meaning could the same sentence have?

La lechera se cayó al suelo

What are the meanings of the word *lechera*?
With the first meaning of *lechera*, what is the meaning of the sentence *La lechera se cayó al suelo*?
Did you find another meaning? What other meaning could the same sentence have?

Tenía la muñeca rota

What are the meanings of the word *muñeca*?
With the first meaning of *muñeca*, what is the meaning of the sentence *Tenía la muñeca rota*?
Did you find another meaning? What other meaning could the same sentence have?

Este cabo es muy pequeño

What are the meanings of the word *cabo*?
With the first meaning of *cabo*, what is the meaning of the sentence *Este cabo es muy pequeño*?
Did you find another meaning? What other meaning could the same sentence have?

B) ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING PROCESSES

1.- Activities to improve basic processes

1.1.- When writing, we must make sure that we separate the individual words correctly. To practise, separate this famous paragraph by Azorín:

Estehombreviveenelcamposucasaestálejosdelaciudadsucasaespequeñísima.

Once you have separated the words, copy the paragraph properly.

1.2.- The following text belongs to a children's short traditional story. Separate them and write the story correctly.

Esteeselcuentodelgallopeladoquedelargoqueerayasehaacabado.

1.3.- We are now going to learn to write by following the text below by M. Artigos. We should notice the perfect use of the full stop, and the use of capital letters after it. Besides, the spelling of some words is difficult, especially with the use of "s" or "c". Firstly, read it in silence. Then, read it aloud, making sure you make all the pauses. Finally, copy it trying to avoid spelling mistakes.

TEXT:

El año tiene cuatro estaciones y doce meses.
Las estaciones se llaman primavera, verano, otoño e invierno.
La primavera es la estación más bonita y más alegre de todas.
No hace frío ni calor.
El clima es bueno.
Los animales están alegres y el campo se llena de flores.
Por eso la primavera nos gusta a todos.

Read the following text extracted from *El Principito* (first in silence and then aloud). Once you have understood the meaning of all the words, underline all the words that have "r" or "rr". We are going to learn why we write "r" or "rr".

TEXT:

Todos los días, cuando uno termina su baño matinal, hay que ocuparse de limpiar cuidadosamente la casa y la tierra que la rodea, arrancando las pequeñas plantas malas, las cuales hay que saber distinguir de las de los rosales, ya que se parecen mucho cuando son pequeñas.

Now we can write sentences with the words we have underlined, paying special attention to "r" and "rr".

1.4.- We shall now carry out copying and dictation exercises in order to remedy spelling deficiencies. We will start with simple texts, reading in silence; then, aloud; we will learn the meaning of any unknown words; we will underline and

copy the words with difficult spelling; we will copy the text and, finally, we will carry out some dictations.

2.- Activities to improve motor processes

2.1.- Carrying out very short dictations (previously separated) and calligraphic copying exercises at word and sentence level, trying to join letters and separate words appropriately. It is also important to maintain the size of writing throughout.

2.2.- Writing compositions in a clear handwriting and with a neat layout, including an appropriate use of different colours, margins, spacings, etc.

2.3.- Creating murals with newspapers and magazines cut-outs, focusing on a good presentation and layout, and on the legibility of the texts (spacing, margins, etc.).

3.- Activities to improve complex processes

3.1.- We improve our written compositions trying not to do it by improvising, but by knowing what we have to write, to whom, what to say, how to organise our message, and how to express it clearly. To do so, we will practise our writing with the *free text*, writing about what one wishes and when one wishes to. But before writing, one should decide who we are writing to, what for, what we want to convey, how, etc. Then we will draft the first version.

3.2.- With a text that we have previously written, we should learn to proofread, revise and correct it. This should be done through reading carefully what we previously wrote and giving it to other to read (peers, teachers), and then correcting the mistakes we have found.

3.3. We must learn to write texts in a coherent and appropriate way, editing our drafts and making sure that the layout is suitable (no smudges, no cross-outs, neat handwriting…)

3.4.- Spotting incoherences. Many times some texts cannot be understood because there is no coherence. In order to make sure that our text makes sense, it has to be coherent. Now identify the incoherences in the following sentences and explain why they are incoherent. Then, express them in a coherent way.
  - Luis tiene veinte años y su abuelo, quince.
  - Los doce meses del año son seis: enero, febrero, junio y diciembre.
- Mi prima y su amiga van a la guardería de mi barrio, que su madre es amiga de la maestra, que es mayor.
  - Esta mesa rectangular es redonda.
  - He pintado de distintos colores cada uno de los cuatro ángulos del triángulo
  - Los Reyes Magos son tres: Melchor y Gaspar y otros dos de los que no me acuerdo.
- Mi amiga vive en una casa muy bonita y la fiesta se celebró hace dos semanas.

3.5.- Compose a topic. Write about a topic which is known to you because you learnt about it in class. For example: *Los animales domésticos.*
Before improvising on paper, try to follow these steps:
  -    Think about who will read it.

- Look for ideas and information about what you want to write (in your book, on the Internet, asking your parents, asking your teacher, etc.). Never start to write without having a clear idea of what you want to say.
- Put your ideas into sentences that summarise what you want to say.
- Give these sentences an order and write them in a logical order.
- Write your first draft.
- Read your draft and change what you think can be improved. Hand this draft to your classmates or to the teacher. They will provide you with useful opinions and corrections.
- Make any other pertinent changes and corrections, and when you think that your text is coherent and correct, write the final text.

Finally, taking into account the learning style of this child and his low achievement in relation to what is stated by the Register of Curricular Competence Level, it must be stated that the family, the teacher and the pedagogic therapist must work in conjunction so as to enable this child to reach a greater level of maturity as well as greater learning autonomy. Likewise, it is advisable to work with short and motivating activities that will succeed both academically and at a personal level, fostering self-confidence and self-esteem.

References:
Berko Gleason, J. and Bernstein Ratner, N. (2010). *Desarrollo del lenguaje.* Madrid: Pearson.
Cuetos Vega, F. (1990). *Psicología de la Lectura. Diagnóstico y tratamiento de los trastornos de lectura*. Madrid: Escuela Española.
Cuetos Vega, F. (1991). *Psicología de la Escritura. Diagnóstico y tratamiento de los trastornos de escritura*. Madrid: Escuela Española.
Ehri, L.C. (1978). *Beginning reading from a psycholinguistic perspective: Amalgamation of word identities*. In F. B. Murray (Ed.). *The Development of the Reading Process, International Reading Association Monograph (No. 3)* (pp 1-33). Newark (Del): International Reading Association.
Ehri, L.C. (1984). *How orthography alters spoken language competencies in children learning to read and spell*. In J. Downing & R. Valtin (Eds.). *Language Awareness and Learning to read* (pp. 119-147). New York: Springer-Verlag.
Etchepareborda, M.C. (2002). *Detección precoz de dislexia y enfoque terapéutico*. Revista de neurología, 32*,* 13-23.
Etchepareborda M.C. and Habib M. (2001)**.** *Bases neurobiológicas de la conciencia fonológica: su compromiso en la dislexia*. Revista de

Neurología Clínica, 2, 5-23.

Flower, L. and Hayes, J.R. (1981). *A cognitive Process. Theory of Writing*. In College Composition and Communication, 32. Illinois.

Galve Manzano, J.L. (2007). *Evaluación e intervención en los procesos de la lectura y la escritura*. Madrid: EOS.

González Rus, G. and Ramos Chofle, J. (2012). *La Dislexia. Concepto, Diagnóstico e Intervención.* Unidad 2: *La lectura y la escritura desde un enfoque cognitivo*. [DOC] Online course through CEP Granada, February-June, 2012.

Korkman, M. and Peltomaa, K. (1993). *Preventive treatment of dyslexia by a preschool training program for children with language impairments*. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 22, 277-287.

Núñez M.ª P. (2011). *Didáctica de las habilidades lingüísticas en la educación inicial*. Madrid: ITEM multimedia. ISBN: 978-84-96677-29-6.

Olson, D. R. (1995). *La cultura escrita como actividad metalingüística.* In D. Olson and N. Torrance (Eds.): *Cultura crítica y oralidad* (pp. 333-357). Barcelona: Gedisa.

Pinto, M.ª A., Titone, R. and González Gil, M.ª D. (2000). *La consciencia metalingüística. Teoría, desarrollo e instrumentos de medición.* Pisa-Roma: Istituti Editoriali Poligrafici Internazionali.

Sánchez Merchán, L. M. and Coveñas Rodríguez, L. (2011). *Dislexia: un enfoque multidisciplinar.* Alicante: Club Universitario.

Santa Olalla, G. and Bilbao León, M.C. (2002). *Evaluación e Intervención en las Dificultades de Aprendizaje de la Expresión Escrita*. In E. Del Campo Adrián, *Dificultades de Aprendizaje e Intervención Psicopedagógica.* Volumen II. Madrid: Sanz y Torres.

Tunmer, W.E., Pratt, C. & Herriman, M.L. (1984) (Eds.). *Metalinguistic Awareness in Children. Theory, Research and Implications.* Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

SLOVENIAN TOURISM CURRICULA ANALYSIS

Katarina Mušič
Janez Mekinc, PhD
Helena Cvikl, M.Sc.
Timotej Prelog
University of Primorska, Faculty of Tourism Studies –
Turistica, Portorož, Slovenia

Abstract

Advances are required in the Slovenian tourism education system in order to successfully cope with current and future issues and achieve balanced development. This research is focused on Slovenian undergraduate educational programmes in Tourism. We analysed the contents of the programmes, appointed relevant skill sets and later analysed the representation of said skill groups through the programmes' taught skills. We then compared the mean representation of skills and skill sets to those skills considered a requirement by Slovenian tourism. In addition, a comparison with more general theories of balanced tourism education was made. The evidence suggests that Slovenian undergraduate tourism education programmes are relatively well-equipped for serving the staffing needs of Slovenian tourism, however they still lack the fundamental balance between vocational, academic and transferrable skills in order to achieve theoretically ideal forms of tourism education programmes.

Keywords: Curriculum, education, tourism, programs, competencies

Introduction

In this study, we questioned the education dimension of tourism in Slovenia. From curricula content, we reviewed the knowledge and competencies that educational institutions provide tourism operators and tourism industry managers. Within Slovenia, there is an assumption that we have an effective Bologna Process higher education system for Tourism. The aim of this research is the analysis and comparison of study program content in the field of tourism, with particular emphasis on the competencies that these courses provide. In the study, due to missing data, we could not include

all factors that affect the education system, but we managed to effectively explore Slovenian undergraduate tourism education and its characteristics.

Theoretical assumptions about the ideals of education in tourism

In this study we encountered two problems: the first is related to the information on study programs in the field of tourism offered by higher education institutions in Slovenia. This information is not uniformly covered in publicly available records. As a result, it has not been possible to obtain information on the Slovenian tourism programs offered by higher education institutions in Slovenia, or, therefore, to analyse the correlation between them and to determine the quality of individual programs.

The second problem stems from the original problem, because without information on the Slovenian tourism education programs being offered, it was not possible to conduct a comparative analysis or substantiate content quality. Praprotnik Gomzijeva (2009) described several skills that are important for the future of the Slovenian tourism industry, and this included the ability to adapt quickly to changes and observations, knowledge in the field of information technologies and capabilities for managing new passenger connections such as low-cost flights. The proposed knowledge has a defined objective and utilisable value. According to the theories of David Airey (2008), such knowledge is referred to as professional skills, and in the history of tourism education development it is an economically focused foundation on which other scientific branches, over several phases, have built up the scientific field of tourism, as we know it today. In reality, we are still far from perfect in terms of the maturity of this scientific branch. While the industry has begun to support itself (Kim, Savage, Howey & Van Hoof, 2009) to some extent, it has not yet outgrown its so-called rigid economic usefulness and focused basis. Academic knowledge is required, which corresponds to the double-sided character of tourism as a branch (Paris, 2011). The academic knowledge of tourism is neglected (Fidgeon, 2010) and still waiting to reinforce this abstract knowledge, which is crucial for understanding complex phenomena in tourism, to calibrate, balance and complete the field of the science of tourism. In theory, with such a balanced approach, prospective employees could better understand tourism and thus achieve better results, which would raise the value of tourism employees who currently work hard for low pay; lower even than the expectations of tourism students (Zagonari, 2009). But such a balanced system can act in opposition to the interests of stakeholders and employers. As Fidgeon (2010) says, prospective personnel must meet the needs of the tourism economy and not vice versa. Consequently this means that a state, which organises personnel education to meet the needs of its industries, must know its education system and its contents, and control them to suit the

aforementioned needs. Certainly, different tourist economies seek different personnel, and in the study by Acolla Lewis (2005), stakeholders have shown interest for personnel with managerial competencies, transferable skills, an expanded understanding of tourism and an independent and holistic way of thinking. This brings us to the third dimension in tourism education, which is the dimension of transferable competencies. These are not taught as part of the educational program, but they are gained during the training process (Stergiou, Airey, & Riley, 2008)(Paris, 2011). They are specific to each individual and are applied to all areas of work. In general, good working practices, conscientiousness, ethical responsibility and specific competencies that help the individual perform their work and, in addition to this, success, they also develop a more mature personality; all of these as side effects of successful learning techniques. The future of tourism education is reserved for those who balance competence between the profession and academia, with the educational process adding key transferable skills (Inui, Wheeler, & Lankford, 2006). In December 1994, the UK hosted an academic conference for the Association for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE) identifying seven key bodies of knowledge, which in their opinion, provides for balanced teaching of competencies for future tourism graduates. These are: understanding the scope and nature tourism, the structure of the tourism industry, dimensions of tourism and the problem of measuring the importance and impact of tourism, tourism marketing, tourism planning and development, policy and management (Fidgeon, 2010). These seven bodies of knowledge require competence areas in which the subjects of educational programs are designed, and through the learning process give some competencies that are consistent with one or more competence areas. This is the logical sequence that we selected for the survey, and also the basis for the analysis of Slovenian tourism undergraduate programs.

Form of the slovenian education space

In the pilot analysis of the programs of study phase, we found certain characteristics, confirmed by the fact that the courses were designed not on the basis of the identified competencies needed by graduates, but on the basis of the human resources available in each higher education institution. As a result, we questioned the constructive approach to the analysis and design of the competencies that are required by Slovenian tourism workers to realize sustainable development objectives in Slovenia. The majority of the largest Slovenian educational institutions are state-owned (public state universities). There are five according to the latest figures; in addition, there are 30 independent institutions of higher education (Ministrstvo za visoko šolstvo, znanost in tehnologijo, 2011). Public institutions are financed from the state

budget, while the remainder are self-financed with the help of concessions or participation in public tenders (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport, 2012). The Higher Education Act (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport, 2012) and the Vocational Education Act (Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport, 2004) also describe a binarily-opposed education, with higher education and higher professional education programs offering a more skills-based orientation; university programs with academic orientation offering less practical experience. The resolution of the National Programme of Higher Education is not only a document describing the functioning of the education system in the Republic of Slovenia, but it is also a document which describes the planned development of the Slovenian education space until 2020. Key to this, is that the document represents the state's effort to guide education, which initially was considered a large limiting factor for tourism programs. In fact, the only limitations are in terms of financing the programs, which is consistent with the current economic climate and state policy. The document defines the oversight of the programs and operation of educational institutions from the point of NAKVIS, which accredits institutions, thus conferring the right to offer programs. Within its authority, NAKVIS defines the adequacy of the study program and, within the Slovenian space, whether there are legitimate requirements for specific graduate profiles (Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu, 2013). NAKVIS cooperates with the major international agencies for quality control in education, EQAR and ENQA (Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport, 2011). There are no limits to content of the programs except for quality control, and they themselves say that the need for a particular program is about ensuring a high level of training and research in Slovenian higher education (Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu, n.d.). The lower limits of the educational programs otherwise comply with the directives of the Bologna system, together with laws providing autonomy in decision-making for higher education and post-secondary institutions (Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences and the & Association of European Universities (CRE), 2000). In addition, it should be noted that, according to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport there is an anomaly in our vocational programs, in contrast to the Bologna Declaration, which completes training to the 1st Bologna level after only two years of education. The Slovenian post-secondary and higher tourism education system complements national vocational qualifications (NPK). Through NPKs, the Slovenian tourism industry can also be effective in adjusting the need for the specific skills and competencies of the labour market. In any event, it is a reflection of the low academic status of tourism and people's attitudes to this academic orientation (Mayaka & Akama, 2007). It is interesting that from a legal perspective the NPK and Diploma in

Tourism are by no means equivalent levels of education (Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti, 2006), but in some cases target the same places of employment. NPKs are also much shorter and their educational programs include competencies for specific employment. While NPKs, on the one hand, cast a bad light on the whole academic field of tourism, we cannot say that they are unnecessary, since they play a key role in employee training or retraining and lifelong learning (Gudeva, Mitrev, Janevik, & Boev, 2012). This is exemplified by the fact that the majority of NPK educational programs are proposed and created with the help of Slovenian companies that are engaged in tourism and related industries (Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti, 2010). Of course, in this way, stakeholders participate in the development and calibration of the whole tourism education system. This opinion should then be balanced by academia, thus not being completely dominated by the professional aspects and, above all, this should ensure a country-specific system of education adapted to their needs (Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008). More or less the success of the tourism educational system (or any other industry) requires system integration and communication, which in Slovenia is difficult to measure. The Bologna reforms in the Slovenian higher education system introduce a systematic approach and formalization, which could be beneficial if such reforms are carried out on the basis of previous analysis.

Methodology

We identified the specifics of Slovenian tourism and conducted a brief overview of the educational programs in accordance with all the information obtained, and, at the same time, using the ideals of a balanced program, we compiled a competency table, which we used to examine the dimensions of Slovenian undergraduate programs. We recorded the name of the educational institution, program title, subject titles, and competence areas, where we could classify individual competencies, offered by individual courses. The areas classified as professional competence areas were: hospitality, organizational skills/management, hospitality/culinary, components of tourism, economics/business and IT knowledge. The academic competence areas correspond to: research skills, foreign languages and social tourism. Transferable skills were recorded in the second segment. In addition, we also added specific competence areas and specific transferable skills. The data was collated from the catalogues of individual educational programs. The study included 12 programs from six higher education institutions. After collating the competency analysis as provided by programs of study, we compared the latter with competence/ requirements defined by the Slovenian tourism industry. In addition, a comparison was

made for compliance with the seven key bodies of knowledge; we made assumptions as to guidelines for a balanced educational program of tourism. Our hypotheses were, H1: In comparing competence/ areas on Slovenian undergraduate courses in tourism, "Research Skills" will have the lowest score; H2: That Slovenian undergraduate programs on average cover at least 60% of professional competence requirements and H3: Slovenian undergraduate programs do not follow the guidelines of a balanced program defined in the theoretical part.

The survey results

The results showed that hypothesis H1 is false, and that the lowest score across competence areas was hotel management rather than research skills. We also reject hypothesis H2, because the average of all competencies scored only 57.89% against the professional competence requirements, which is insufficient to satisfy the condition. Hypothesis H3 was rightly rejected, as analysis of content showed some full and partial matches to the balanced educational program of tourism proposed. It is therefore not possible to say that Slovenian tourism undergraduate programs do not follow these guidelines. More specifically, the comparative work demonstrates that the skills and competence areas partially or fully meet five of the seven key bodies of knowledge. We note, and it is our opinion, that the vast majority of professional competencies meet the needs of the Slovenian tourist area. We also observed the introduction of professional practices in the university program at the Brežice Faculty of Tourism. In general, the coverage lacked competence in the field of logistics and transport in the tourism industry, which, among others, was exposed as an important dimension of Slovenian tourism.

Conclusion

The research has shown the competence areas that are best represented, and in which programs. Competence/skill areas for hotel management are very weakly represented. The highest number with just two subjects are the Business Systems in Tourism (PST) program at FTŠ Turistica, the Catering and Tourism (CTUR) programs at Maribor VSŠGT and Bled VSŠGT, and the university (UNI) program at EF Ljubljana. Organisational skills and management are highly represented in the PST program at Turistica, with 27 subjects. Accommodation and catering are well represented by the CTUR programs at VSŠGT Maribor and Bled, with as many as 17 subjects providing the competencies in this field. Elements of Tourism is best delivered by the PST program at Turistica and by the UNI program at FT Brežice. A peculiarity and, at the same time, an anomaly, Economics and Entrepreneurship appears as the field of competence with by

far the largest representation of 39 subjects, on the UNI program at EF Ljubljana. The highest representation in the IT competence area is reflected in the Management of Tourist Destinations (MTD) program at Turistica (10 subjects). The best representations for foreign language programs are found on GTUR from VSŠGT Maribor and Bled (6 subjects). The Tourism (TUR) program from Celje FKPV faculty (19 subjects) stands out in representation of the Social Studies in Tourism competence. Transferable skills in "other" areas of competence are best represented in UNI program at Turistica with 22 subjects. It is important to mention that VSŠGT Bled and Maribor VSŠGT used identical subject catalogues as they are part of a consortium of vocational colleges for Hospitality and Tourism. The average number of represented competence areas has shown that undergraduate programs in Slovenia in tourism largely represent organizational knowledge management, followed immediately by transferable skills, and then economics and entrepreneurship. This data is also apparent in the following table, along with other information covered.

The study has limitations arising from the limited access to relevant information. The results show that the competencies in study programs are relatively well covered, which highlights the tourism economy on the one hand and the theory of the balance of competencies of workers in the tourism sector, on the other hand. At the same time, the survey also revealed competence areas that are not fulfilled by tourism study programs in Slovenia. To optimize Slovenian tourism education, we believe that there should greater control of content in education, ensuring better graduate employability, which does not occur without the explicit involvement of the state. NAKVIS already does this, but even with NAKVIS control, there remains major growth in tourism education because of the exclusion of private educational institutions from the national higher education program. We believe that even the Bled and Maribor vocational colleges for Catering and Tourism need to diversify their programs, and the whole of the Slovenian higher educational system, should last one year more as determined by the Bologna declaration.

We believe that this study also needs some improvements. Collation of undergraduate programs and their content only from subject catalogues may be highly misleading, because the realities of university programs vary considerably from written documentation. Sometimes the documentation itself does not provide sufficient detail to draw completely reliable data from them. To determine individual competence areas would require a separate study to define the precise ranges, and the competencies that correspond to these areas. The present study has opened up questions, which will require further research on the quality of competencies in the field of Slovenian tourism study programs.

References:

Cervera-Taulet, A., & Ruiz-Molina, M.-E. (2008). Tourism education: a strategic analysis model. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, *7*(2), 59–70.

Confederation of EU Rectors' Conferences and the, & Association of European Universities (CRE). (2000, February 29). The Bologna Declaration on the European space for higher education: an explanation. Evropska Komisija. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna.pdf

Fidgeon, P. R. (2010). Tourism education and curriculum design: A time for consolidation and review? *Tourism Management*, *31*(6), 699–723.

Gudeva, L. K., Mitrev, S., Janevik, E. I., & Boev, B. (2012). Implementation of national qualification framework for higher education in Republic of Macedonia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *46*, 2556–2560.

Inui, Y., Wheeler, D., & Lankford, S. (2006). Rethinking tourism education: What should schools teach. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education*, *5*(2), 25–35.

Mayaka, M., & Akama, J. S. (2007). Systems approach to tourism training and education: The Kenyan case study. *Tourism Management*, *28*(1), 298–306.

Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti. (2006, November 17). Zakon o nacionalnih poklicnih kvalifikacijah. Retrieved from http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=20071&stevilka=4

Ministrstvo za delo, družino, socialne zadeve in enake možnosti. (2010, January 1). Nacionalna poklicna kvalifikacija. Retrieved April 12, 2013, from http://www.npk.si/index.php?subpageid=5&katid=32&searchq=

Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport. (2004, July 23). Zakon o višjem strokovnem izobraževanju. Retrieved from http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=200486&stevilka=3840

Ministrstvo za izobraževanje, znanost in šport. (2012, April 19). Zakon o visokem šolstvu. Retrieved from http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=201232&stevilka=1406

Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport. (2011, March 31). Bela knjiga o vzgoji in izobraževanju v Republiki Sloveniji. Retrieved from http://www.belaknjiga2011.si/pdf/bela_knjiga_2011.pdf

Ministrstvo za visoko šolstvo, znanost in tehnologijo. (2011, Maj). Resolucija o nacionalnem programu visokega šolstva. Retrieved from http://www.uradni-list.si/1/content?id=103885

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu. (2013, April 5). Brošura nakvis. Retrieved from http://test.nakvis.si/sl-SI/Content/GetFile/235

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije za kakovost v visokem šolstvu. (n.d.). Nakvis.si. Retrieved from http://test.nakvis.si/sl-SI/News/Details/120

Paris, C. M. (2011). Social constructivism and tourism education. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sports and Tourism Education*, *10*. Retrieved from http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/assets/hlst/documents/johlste/vol10no2/PP3385 Paris103to108.pdf

Stergiou, D., Airey, D., & Riley, M. (2008). Making sense of tourism teaching. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *35*(3), 631–649.

EXTEGRITY OR THE ACADEMIC MIDWAY

Maurice J. O'Sullivan, PhD
Kenneth Curry
Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida

Abstract

As American colleges and universities face increasing financial pressure and political criticism, their leaders have responded by adopting risk-averse, reactive strategies that have profoundly weakened the autonomy and creativity of higher education in the United States. Rather than emphasizing the integrity of their institutions, too many academic leaders search for validation from competing external accrediting agencies and commercial rating organizations. While some of those accrediting agencies focus on the quality and health of entire institutions, the increasing number of disciplinary accreditors has encouraged colleges and universities to privilege special interests and cede the responsibility for establishing values to groups which are largely self-serving.

Keywords: Extegrity , integrity, American universities, accreditation, trustees, AACSB, APSA, gudgets, business education, liberal arts

Extegrity, or, The Academic Midway

Like a series of bumper cars, America's colleges and universities seem to bounce erratically from crisis to crisis. Smashing off negative financial outlook reports, they veer into the path of cost-cutting state legislators before finding themselves jammed by growing skepticism about the very goals of higher education. While some of those crises stem from the economic uncertainties of riding a global financial rollercoaster and others from the confusion of trying to imagine a future in today's maze of competing technological visions, all have been aggravated by failures of external and internal leadership among those responsible for managing the circus midway that higher education has become. Not least among those failures has been the unwillingness of college presidents and political leaders to acknowledge that their inability to question the way we educate our students, especially the growing number of business, politics, and technology students, is largely responsible for transforming academic challenges into political and cultural catastrophes.

At the same time that a rising tide of fiscally tough governors and state legislators realize that they can slice and dice university budgets with relative impunity—at least such actions carry far less political risk than cutting police or fire departments—more and more college presidents have decided to model themselves on America's corporate CEOs and embrace a risk-averse, reactive philosophy. Giddy with their soaring salaries and re-enforced by trustees with little understanding of higher education, a surprising number of our academic CEOs appear to have as little understanding of the difference between an education and a degree as the CEOs of J.P. Morgan, Bank of America and Prudential had of how derivatives work. While college presidents have always struggled to educate their boards, to help them understand the distinct and unique nature of American higher education, today's academic leaders seem more interested in emulating than educating the largely corporate members of their boards.

Our universities and colleges became the crucible which shaped the nation from the 1860s on largely because of federal policies aimed at expanding opportunities, like the 1862 Morrill Act which established land grant colleges and the 1865 Higher Education Act which helped fund historically black colleges and universities. As higher education became the engine that drove America's growth, academic leaders like Charles William Eliot and James Bryant Conant of Harvard, Robert Maynard Hutchins of Chicago, Robert Goheen of Princeton, and Fr. Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame served as both its conductors and engineers, preserving academic integrity while making sure their schools moved forward safely and purposefully. They believed that it was their role, in a creative dialogue with their faculty and communities, to develop a curriculum that continually adjusted to a rapidly evolving world while providing students with the academic, cultural and moral preparation for effective citizenship and rewarding careers. Where universities once prided themselves on the integrity of such leaders and their programs, today's academic leaders wander on a constant quest for validation through a wasteland of competing external accrediting agencies and commercial rating organizations in a culture where extegrity has exiled integrity.

That reliance on extegrity, searching for truth and meaning primarily through external validation, largely accounts both for the homogenization of higher education and its failure to address the economic, cultural, and technological crises we face. Perhaps there is no better example of this problem than in our closely related political and business universes. While the 2012 presidential election may not have been the nastiest in our history—in 1800 Thomas Jefferson's supporters attacked John Adams' sexuality, calling him a "hideous hermaphroditical character," while Adams' supporters responded with racial slurs, describing Jefferson as "a mean-

spirited, low-lived fellow, the son of a half breed Indian squaw sired by a Virginia mulatto father"—it may well have been the least enlightening. Both political parties and their supporters spent billions engineering campaigns that relied primarily on attack ads, half truths, and lies.

If our politics have become disgraceful, our business world is catastrophic. After its members developed arcane investment and irresponsible banking policies which created the worst recession since the Great Depression, causing a boom in bankruptcies, massive unemployment and 3.1 million foreclosures in 2008 alone, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce spent an estimated $36 million in 2012 to support candidates who vowed to eliminate the very laws passed to block such policies from crippling the economy again. Rather than promoting a vigorous debate on which regulations are necessary, the Chamber and many of those politicians it supports have simply demonized all regulation.

At a time when our politics and business departments should be leading a re-examination of how their fields have gone so far astray, neither has shown much interest in examining its conscience. The American Political Science Association (APSA), which identifies itself on its web site as "the leading professional organization for the study of political science [with] more than 15,000 members in over 80 countries,"[1] has a committee on ethics which seems primarily concerned with arcane academic ethical standards among faculty rather than practical or ethical ones for their graduates. So long as faculty neither plagiarize nor display any ethnocentric bias, it should not matter how their students corrupt the body politic.

While the 2012 APSA convention was cancelled due to Hurricane Isaac, its 2013 Teaching and Learning Conference identifies 12 tracks it will focus on, including "Teaching Research Methods," "Integrating Technology into the Classroom," and "Internationalizing the Classroom," all important objectives. There is, however, apparently nothing on ethics nor any obvious session on understanding why its graduates seem so focused on and skilled at creating negative rather than substantive campaigns and on winning at all costs. I can only assume that a discipline which changed its name from politics to political science would argue that, as scientists, their focus is on empirical evidence not all that soft morality and ethical stuff.

Why should we be concerned with marginal and esoteric academic organizations like the APSA?   The answer is simple. The more corporate college administrations become, the more they look outside themselves for validation. And if our colleges now cede the responsibility for establishing values to groups which are largely self serving, what values should we expect them to offer students? Except for a tiny handful of colleges that have

---

[1] apsanet.org

a clear vision of themselves and their goals, most now look to outside groups like the APSA for validation.

That abnegation of responsibility is largely why accrediting groups have mushroomed and federal regulation has blossomed. Where college presidents once assumed that the legitimacy of their programs rested on the integrity of their institutional culture, history and faculty, today legitimacy relies on extegrity, the validation by external groups, whether the feds, accreditors or raters like the *U.S. News and World Report*. As a result, college administrators focus on how they are seen rather than who they are and race to make those external groups happy rather than ensure that their students grow as people and gain the kinds of skills and knowledge that will help them achieve lives of meaning and use.

American accrediting divides into the fairly benign regional accrediting agencies and the far more divisive disciplinary accreditors. (Various national accreditors for career, trade, vocational and for-profit schools work with more opacity and seem harder to evaluate, especially when they bear such curious names as the International Association of Non-Traditional Schools or, with complete disregard for either spelling or grammar, the Accreditation Association of Ametrican [sic] College [sic] and Universities.) The six regional accrediting agencies in the United States have gerrymandered the country into comfortable geographic sections. Since each is an association of its members and since all focus on the quality and health of the entire institution, their evaluations tend to be broad and fairly objective. And their bark is always worse than their bite. Relying on the support and good will of the institutions they evaluate, their chief weakness is an overly cautious, somewhat clubby approach to identifying weaknesses. Individual staff members or members of visiting committees may at time allow idiosyncratic values to affect initial judgments, but all of the agencies have such elaborate review systems that final results rarely sting any but the most egregious transgressors.

The goal of any disciplinary accreditor, however, is to elevate a special interest. As expensive and time consuming as institutional accreditation by the six regional agencies may be, the process at least forces colleges and universities to articulate their philosophies and evaluate their practices. Disciplinary accreditors like the APSA, however, care little about anything but their own programs. Accreditation is clearly a growth industry. Ten years ago the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors had 46 members; now it has 63. And the ASPA does not even include nationally recognized organizations that focused on highly specialized graduate education like the AMA and ABA. Even libertarians generally agree that someone needs to certify whether a surgeon really understands how to remove a kidney or a lawyer an heir. Part of what gives those

organizations credibility is that they hold their members to standards and can disbar them or revoke their licenses if they fail to meet those standards. Without licenses lawyers and doctors cannot practice.

But what about the National Association of Schools of Music? Or the American Board of Funeral Service Education? Or, clearly inspired by *CSI* and *Bones*, the Forensic Science Education Program Accreditation Commission? Each of these organizations establishes standards for undergrad programs. The appeal of such groups becomes apparent on web sites like the one at San Jose State University which boasts that 35 of its degree and certificate programs are certified by 26 accreditation agencies.[2]

So, what can be wrong with this process? To begin with, these groups care only about their own faculty, programs, and majors. They are all simply interest groups, lobbying for more money, better facilities, and special privileges for their own members. Few have any interest, for example, in the full education of their majors. More importantly, in any finite pool of money, the more one group gets, the less others do. If the music building must be constantly improved, other campus buildings, even those with greater need, will have to wait. If the music faculty need more released time, better equipment, or more staff to obtain or maintain accreditation, they become an immediate priority. To ensure that accredited departments have enough full-time faculty, marginal programs like math and English—i.e., those not savvy enough to develop national accreditation standards and commissions—will need to hire more adjuncts.

There really is no difference between this process and tax loopholes. When the federal government offers a $6,500 tax credit for electric golf carts, non-golfers will have to make up that money. By bowing to these organizations, college administrators cede their authority. If the National Association of Schools of Theatre, despite its difficulty with American spelling conventions, finds a program worthy, directors, deans and presidents no longer have to think about whether their theater majors can write effectively, understand the constitution or discuss the relative benefits and costs of fracking and nuclear energy.

Realistically, most of these programs are relatively small and distort college budgets minimally, although even minimal can be significant in today's minimalist budgets. Business programs, however, are a different matter. At the vast majority of American colleges, the business major rules. In 2010, according to the most recent data from the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of bachelor's degrees earned for business (358,000) almost tripled the number in the health professions and related fields (130,000). There are, of course exceptions. Most Ivy League

---

[2] sjsu.edu

universities and elite liberal arts colleges have no undergraduate business degree. Oddly enough, few college administrators try to understand why our finest schools disdain their largest program.

Because business programs have become so central and attractive—and so essential to most presidential fund raising drives—relatively few people have been willing to question what they are doing. In 2010 some dissident voices emerged. Richard Arum of NYU and Josipa Roksa of University of Virginia published *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), which, as its title suggests, offered a broad indictment of higher education. Among their findings, Arum and Roksa reported that the Collegiate Level Assessment (CLA), a national test of writing and reasoning skills, found that the scores of business majors improved in these areas less than any other group tested.

While the CLA results are discouraging—what skills are business majors learning?—the following year the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the leading newspaper and web site about higher education in the United States, discussed a study that showed that at all schools, from the most competitive to least competitive, business students report studying less than other students.[3] Even more chilling was the *Chronicle*'s report that business majors have lower mean scores on the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) than students in the other ten most popular college majors, including education, communications and journalism and the visual and performing arts.[4] How can it be that the very program intended to prepare students for careers in business is the least effective in preparing them for the graduate study of business?

Given this sorry state of affairs—and the even sorrier state of the national economy and financial markets which graduates of accredited business schools found so easy to manipulate and nearly ruin with their subprime lending and credit default swaps over much of the past half dozen years—what is the AACSB doing to help its majors become more ethical citizens and better stewards of the national economy? From all evidence, it simply seems to be doubling down on what it has always done. Accreditation clearly means never having to say you're sorry.

Even if it chooses to do little, the AACSB did announce that "it has responded to recent revelations of corporate malfeasance by searching for ways to strengthen its role in preparing socially responsible graduates for business careers."[5] Its vision of social responsibility, however, appears simply to add more business classes. At its conferences and in its

---

[3] LVII.33 (April 22, 2011) A4.

[4] LVII.33 (April 22, 2011) A5

[5] http://www.aacsb.edu/resources/ethics-sustainability/relatedstandards.asp

publications, ethics is still a stepchild whose interests pale in the company of marketing, branding, and expanding. In AACSB's Standard 15, for example, "ethical understanding and reasoning ability" are lumped together as only one of seven goals, along with "communication abilities" and "multicultural and diversity understanding." Like the fraternities in *Animal House*, the AACSB realizes that ethics needs to be invited to the mixer, but it usually winds up on the couch with the other misfits.

Between October 2012 and June 2013, the AACSB web site advertised well over 50 seminars, workshops, and conferences. While at least ten focused on accreditation issues and another ten on assessment, only one focused on Teaching Business Ethics and Corporate Responsibility. And that one was sandwiched into a two-week period that offers eight other programs, including two (sold out!) assessment programs and two accreditation programs. As important as it may be, social responsibility earns less than 2% of the AACSB's attention in these programs, the same as "Optimizing B-School Financial Performance," certainly a major goal of any academic institution.

While most academics would conclude that the way to improve the performance and social responsibility of business majors would be to expand their horizons by encouraging them to take a wide array of demanding classes across the curriculum and interact widely with a broad range of students, that is not the B-way.

Take the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University, the nation's largest university. The Carey School's program for incoming undergrads is to offer them a chance to live in a W.P. Carey Residential Community and to take courses in clusters with cohorts of 19 students designed "to build a network of peers."[6] Communities, clustering and cohorting are sexy these days, since most colleges have found that re-enforcing this generation of students' comfort level (i.e., their self-referential belief in their own importance) increases retention and satisfaction by encouraging students to believe they are experiencing diversity in ideas and cultures without actually having to encounter real diversity in either. In this brave new educational world, teamwork has become a euphemism for homogeneity.

Clustering might be very comforting to the students—and help retention—but it also means those students will have far less interaction with non-business majors. Locking majors into homogeneous groups also allows a little fiddling with the curriculum. Some of the courses that appear to be part of the clusters (e.g., Brief Calculus and Computer Applications) sound not only non-threatening—who would not prefer brief calculus to a real

---

[6] wpcarey.asu.edu

calculus class?—but also reinforce the impression of a less demanding major.

While limiting students' exposure to people and ideas by isolating them and moving them steadily through a narrowly focused curriculum may benefit universities, academic programs and faculty, it does little to expose them either to the world they will encounter after college or to a true diversity of ideas. Textbooks reinforce those limits. How many undergrad B-school students actually read Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, Karl Marx or John Maynard Keynes? They may be given some excerpts, along with essays by Ludwig van Mises and Milton Friedman, but they generally encounter those ideas through the medium of textbooks explaining them without all the tough math and economic theory. That is why many undergrad business programs tailor economics classes to their own students. As a result, far too many business students gain a Cliff's Notes knowledge of economic theory.

Part of this curricular decision is in response to students' social habits. While it is difficult to gauge exactly how students divide their online time, it is clear that most students like being connected through their email, texting and Facebook page most of their waking hours. (The twin difficulties with sorting through how much time any group of students spends in any one activity stem from the fact that most students try to multitask despite evidence that multitasking diminishes effectiveness in each component and from the nature of the surveys themselves. Most surveys are self-reported, so that the information may be how students perceive what they do or what they want people to believe they do rather than what they actually do. Such surveys are as inherently flawed as surveys about sexual practices. Do we admit how much more or less we are doing than what we believe our peers to be doing?)

So, why does the AACSB not simply hire formally trained philosophers and allow them to create rigorous, comprehensive courses in ethics? Unfortunately, everything that AACSB is designed to do works against that model. In a world which has become at the same time increasingly integrative and diverse, cross disciplinary and creative, the AACSB devotes much of its energy into encouraging its majors not to think outside the business box. Philosophers would simply muddy the process by complicating questions, challenging assumptions, and suggesting that there might be more than one right answer. When ethics is taught, it is usually business ethics taught by business faculty and offered in the comforting frame of case studies.

No wonder B-school students work less than others. Like most students, they pay careful attention to what we do not what we say. The dumb ones are happy with limited demands; the smart ones realize that they are already in the club. English and philosophy, history and math majors

know that they will have to work to convince the Bank of America or GE to hire them. All the B-boys and B-girls think they'll need is that major on the transcript. Unfortunately, they are often right.

Given the travesty that the AACSB is making of the business major (and our economy), why have college presidents not begun questioning it? The simple answer is that their role has changed radically from the days of Eliot, Conant, Hutchins, Goheen and even Hesburgh. While there are still college presidents with vision and integrity, they seem to be part of a diminishing species. If we judge by actions rather than words, most see their job as a job, a fairly lucrative corporate position. Where college and university presidents once had deep roots as faculty members, with a practical, realistic understanding of both pedagogy and scholarship, many of them now begin administrative life early as one of the mushrooming number of administrative staff.

The poster child for the new college CEO is E. Gordon Gee, who boasts that he has held more college presidencies than any other American. With an impressive record as a fund raiser, he has an equally impressive life style, remodeling the president's mansion at Vanderbilt for $6 million and spending $700,000 a year on parties and a personal chef. Back at Ohio State now for his second term, he has been a bit more modest, spending only $2 million to renovate the presidential residence, which, after all, had been renovated seven years before for $1.3 million. His housing costs might be lower in Columbus because he appears to be travelling more. Between 2007 and 2012, he had $844,000 in travel expenses.

While many might argue that Gee's fund raising prowess has earned him such perks, others seem concerned that his corporate lifestyle may also shape his academic values. After all, when he was faced in 2011 with a growing football scandal—Tattoogate—and Coach Jim Tressel's tepid response, he was asked by reporters if he would consider firing Tressel. With his tongue only partly in his cheek, President Gee responded, "No. Are you kidding? I'm just hopeful that the coach doesn't dismiss me." Tressel was finally eased into resigning only after he was accused of lying. Even worse, Ohio State had to vacate all 12 of its wins the previous season. For those who hoped Ohio State had learned a lesson, especially after Gee hired Urban Meyer as coach, the third string quarterback, Cardale Jones, brought everyone back to reality in 2012 when he tweeted, with dramatic emphases, "Why should we have to go to class if we came here to play FOOTBALL, we ain't come to play SCHOOL, classes are POINTLESS." Out of the mouths of 6'5", 235 pound babes.

Gee's attitude reflects the prevailing leadership philosophy, the spirit that made Penn State's Graham Spanier genuflect to Joe Paterno and Florida A&M's James Ammons protect the university's famous Marching 100.

Rather than acknowledge their own culpability in the Sandusky scandal, the Penn State trustees fired Ammons. And after the hazing death of a drum major and the revelation that a number of the 420 members of the Marching 100 were not students—math does not seem to be one of the A&M's Music Department's strengths—A&M's trustees accepted Ammons' resignation.

Does anyone believe that Ohio State's academic program had improved significantly under Gee's stewardship? (Meyer did, however, produce an undefeated season for the Buckeyes, whose past misdeed made them ineligible for a bowl game.) The increasing separation of college presidents from the academic and intellectual, a process accelerated by the enormous growth in presidential salaries—in 2004 none made over a million dollars, by 2010 36 had passed that magic number[7]—helps them identify more closely with their corporate board members. (Incidentally, Gee's salary which approached $2 million in 2010 is not quite up to the $2.34 million earned by Shirley Ann Jackson of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. But Gee has far better football seats.)[8]

This exponential increase in presidential salaries is a little difficult to understand, especially because there are few ways of measuring presidential performance. Football coaches have records and bowl wins, development directors have revenue raised, and faculty have student evaluations. For most colleges and universities, the Board of Trustees has its own curiously secret process of evaluating presidential performance. Since faculty and students rarely sit on boards, they rarely have a voice in decisions. Based on how little accomplishment individual presidents can claim, the bar most boards set must be remarkably low.

Administrators who dare to challenge their boards face the fate of the University of Virginia's Teresa Sullivan. While some of the details remain unclear, it seems that a small group of powerful trustees were able to

---

[7] Internal Revenue Service Form 990 reported in *Chronicle of Higher Education* LIX.1 (August 31, 2012) Almanac p.15.

[8] Presidents have not been the only administrators to benefit from the corporate model of college governance. Traditionally colleges offer settlements to quiet people (e.g., faculty forced into retirement) or to avoid lawsuits. Today, however, despite rapidly rising tuition and growing demands for fiscal responsibility, some colleges have begun offering generous bonuses to people leaving voluntarily. One of our major non-profit private universities, NYU, for example, admitted that when Jacob Lew, appointed Secretary of the Treasury at the beginning of President Obama's second term, left the university to join the decidedly profit oriented Citigroup in 2006, he received a $685,000 bonus, a highly unusual perk. That award was not unique. When Harold S. Koplewicz, the founder of NYU's Child Study Center, left to create a rival Child Mind Institute, the university gave him a very generous bonus of $1,230,000. It is hard to imagine a profit oriented organization rewarding an employee who leaves to form a competitor. Perhaps this is why colleges have so much trouble managing their budgets.

embarrass one of our great universities by trying to force the administration to adopt creative disruption, the latest management fad promoted by the nation's B-Schools. While there are useful kernels of truth in most of these fads—TQM, Chaos Theory, Team-Based Management—their value is usually a brief insight into re-evaluating practices. Only people addicted to self-help and management books, especially those who prefer to digest them quickly through executive book summaries, can believe in a Sisyphean solution for all managerial problems.

Two and a half years after unanimously hiring her, Virginia's Board of Visitors unanimously fired her. In addition to her skepticism about its managerial theories, some members also seemed unhappy with her consultative leadership style and her hesitation to partner with for-profit online education groups like one by Goldman Sachs championed by board members. After faculty, students and alums came to her support—and, more importantly, the governor threatened to replace the board—it unanimously reversed itself two weeks later and re-hired her.

Sullivan's travails suggest why most college presidents rarely challenge the wisdom of their boards, which usually consist of wealthy potential donors rather than anyone noted for intellectual achievement or academic distinction. And most board members love practical, career-oriented majors, especially those which validate their own careers.

Presidents who surround themselves with their trustees rather than unruly academics who revel in questioning and challenging assumptions generally find their own risk-averse, herd like leadership also validated. That validation, like the beneficent smiles of disciplinary accreditors, justifies a leadership style which confuses the conventional with excellence. Who needs a compelling internal vision when external admiration is so comforting and rewarding?

The problem with all this, of course, is that too many colleges have come to see their role as training and career prep rather than education. Had more college presidents paid attention during their physics and history classes, they would have realized how much nature and bureaucracies abhor vacuums. As they abdicated their responsibility to make a case for higher education, to explain to parents, prospective students, trustees, politicians and the world at large what we do and why it has value, the vacuum they left was filled by external bodies like the APSA and AACSB clamoring to define higher education.

Why do so many of our best colleges shy away from practical majors like business and forensic science, preferring to have their students study economics or biology instead? The traditional answer to this question is that those institutions recognize that higher education should provide students who have already developed the solid skills in reading, writing, math and

science that high school provides an opportunity to learn to understand significant issues in their historical and cultural contexts, to reflect on those issues, to approach them critically from multiple perspectives, and to articulate informed opinions orally and in writing in clear, powerful and sophisticated ways. The goal of higher education is not simply preparation for careers but preparation for life as a free, autonomous human being and citizen. For that reason classical philosophers distinguished between the *artes illiberales* (i.e., fields which prepare us for work) and the *artes liberales* (i.e., those disciplines which prepare us to live as free—liberated—men and women).

What business major claims that its primary purpose is to help its students understand the history and theory, ethics and values of business with no real interest in making those students effective businessmen or women? How many parents would agree to send their children to a college which admitted it really had no idea how to teach anyone how to market securities, open a cigar store, manage an Irish pub, sell Audis, or negotiate with a building inspector?

If our primary—or even total—goal is simply to help get people jobs and prepare them effectively for careers, why focus on college? Apprenticeships would be far better and far less expensive. No one will learn how to lead or how to sell from courses on leadership or marketing; by definition, we always learn practical matters by practice, by trial and error. That is why undergrad business programs have embraced internships.

Most of us in academe have long recognized that interning offers students a chance to learn what we have never pretended to teach them. Students studying philosophy, history and anthropology can spend time in a law office, newspaper or tutoring center to learn how to adapt their knowledge to the practical world. Biology, chemistry and physics faculty have always encouraged students interested in medicine to spend their summers working with medical professionals to see how their scientific knowledge forms the basis for medical care. We understand that we can teach students principles but not their practical application.

So long as college presidents continue riding this merry go round of mediocrity, grasping desperately for the brass ring of validation from the corporate carnies on their boards and organizations whose primary goal is self-promotion, they will continue creating academic midways that privilege illusion over reality. By distracting students into narrow applications of information, they discourage them from learning the kind of historical and scientific knowledge that allows us to evaluate data critically and empirically. The lack of such knowledge and sophisticated analytical skills among our college graduates helps explain not only our ongoing political and economic crises but also the curious phenomenon in which so many

American college graduates question simple scientific facts like evolution and global warming or accept bizarre, undocumented rumors about historical events and current politicians. Unless our academic ringmasters recognize how, in an academic corollary to Gresham's Law, extegrity is steadily driving integrity out of higher education, our colleges and universities may well become as marginal in American life as the midway has in American culture.

SCHOOL DISTRICT TURNAROUND: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AS THE NEXUS OF CHANGE

Nadine Bonda, PhD
American International College
Eva Mitchell, MA
Doctoral student at University of Pennsylvania

Abstract

Context: Urban school districts have gone through countless reform efforts to no avail. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has developed a model that has the potential to be a game changer in laying the foundation for student success.

Purpose: This article explores how one district used the model and targeted administrators as their nexus of change.

Intervention: ESE used a research-based approach to provide turnaround expertise and hold failing districts accountable for improvement. Each district was to develop and implement with support and monitoring, a plan known as the accelerated improvement plan, which became a blueprint for the change process.

Data Collection: Data was collected through monthly three-hour meetings and 12 full-day observations of instruction and meetings. Data was made public through quarterly progress reports posted on the ESE website and shared with the School Board and the public through local television.

Findings: The district chose to center their early change initiatives on building the capacity of school and district administrators. Critical to the plan's effectiveness was ongoing monitoring and feedback by ESE, since the failure of many change efforts is due to the inability of school districts to effectively self analyze and adjust practice which can lead to a lack of effective implementation.

Conclusions/Recommendations: The process mapped out an aligned "through-line" of changed routines and practices. Through-line is defined as changes at the district level resulting in changes at the school level, and, in turn, at the classroom level. Ultimately, that means that the lack of success at the student level is the result of insufficient improvement at the classroom level, the school level, and the district leadership and governance level. This

is a promising process that could lead to substantial improvement in student achievement in underperforming districts.

Keywords: Through-line, assistance, accountability, leadership, school effectiveness, increased student achievement

Introduction

In Massachusetts, many of the stories are the same: the old mill cities and towns where the mills are now empty, and an economy that once thrived are now struggling. These cities and towns are poor; a considerable percentage of their population is first generation American with a significant number of households speaking a language other than English. Here, many of the inhabitants live below the poverty line. These demographics impact their schools where large numbers of students are classified as low income; there is a sizable population of students classified as Limited English Proficient and First Language Not English. And their schools are often among the lowest performing schools in Massachusetts.

These school districts have tried several different approaches to turning around their failing schools. Administrators have written plan after plan, all with good intention, but also with few resources and a lack of turnaround expertise. The plans often end up on a shelf gathering dust.

This is the story of one such school district that while engaged with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) in a turnaround project focusing on increasing student achievement, capitalized on the assistance it received and began to build a stronger foundation for high student achievement than in previous attempts where they were provided with regulation but little to no support.

In 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) took a new approach with five failing school districts. The districts are progressing at various speeds, but early indications are that the approach is taking hold in some districts. Although after almost three years of the process, there is not yet evidence of significant increased student achievement, there is evidence in each of the five districts that a foundation of good practice is being built at the district level and is filtering to schools and to classrooms. A through-line of urgency and improved practice can clearly be traced from the district, to the school, to the classroom, to the child.

Why Report on Only One School District?

Every school district is different – different demographics, different approaches to teaching and learning, different community beliefs about education. But every failing school district has something in common: its

students are not learning at the rate the school, broader community, and society want. Examining one school district and documenting the progress made and the process used can serve to inform other school districts with similar challenges, about the numerous aspects of this change process that are working. Picking and choosing one or two techniques and applying them in isolation may not have a significant effect. But that does not mean that these techniques cannot inform other approaches. This carefully thought out system of improvement, based on the literature, and orchestrated by the MA State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) has the potential to have a profound impact on schools.   The school district, however, must embrace the process and use that process to build its own path toward needed student improvement.

The Greater Educational Context

Across the nation, there is a renewed focus on education. Policy leaders, government officials, and parents are calling for all school districts to guarantee that every school brings its students to high rates of proficiency. The public is no longer willing to accept excuses for why our children cannot learn. In turn, schools must guarantee the public that each child receives the kind of individualized and directed instruction that will lead to proficiency in all core subjects, but particularly in math and English. In order for all districts to produce this result, but especially those in urban and low-income communities, they must evolve. They must become *high-performing organizations* that use the most current, research-based best practices. They must be *continuously improving* organizations that can adjust to rapid changes to circumstances, funding, demographics, staff turnover, and new research.   And these districts must differentiate funding, support, and strategies between and among schools and students in order to provide attention to individual and unique needs.   Layered onto the school district profile is that these districts must adhere to governmental regulation, are highly politicized, and often unionized, with long-standing histories and deeply embedded traditions. State Education Authorities (SEAs), which include child protection agencies, safety regulation agencies, building authorities, educator licensure regulators, funding authorities, curriculum officials, to mention a few, must, in turn, respond by supporting districts in being *high-performing and continuously improving* organizations by using research-based best practice to define what successful schools and districts look like, and by providing targeted support to help districts attain the highest standard.   Support needs to be re-envisioned to meet the differentiated needs of these school districts and the schools within them.

The Massachusetts Context

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has a definition of a *high-performing school district* articulated as six *District Standards* for systems of: leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, assessment and data use, human resources and educator development, student support, and financial and asset management. Each of the six standards is defined generally and contains three to five research-based indicators of best practice. These standards have been evolving since 2003 and are used by ESE's Center for District and School Accountability as the basis for a district self-assessment and a qualitative review of district practice using a protocol. These documents are available on the ESE website at (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/general/).

ESE also has developed an aligned set of *Conditions for School Effectiveness* with a school level self-assessment. However, the theory of action for ESE has evolved and after working directly with schools in the past has now made the strategic decision that the district is the focal point, as it has responsibility for ensuring the success of all of its schools. School improvement activities by ESE now focus on building district capacity to lead school improvement work, rather than have districts rely solely on the direction that ESE might take. This allows districts and school within the district to assess their own needs and their capacity for moving forward in a particular direction over a defined time period with an effort that can reach all schools in the district. This theory of action also undergirds ESE's *Framework for Accountability and Assistance,* which assigns a level 1-5 for each school and district. The district's level is determined by the levels of its schools, and can be placed in the highest levels of need (Level 4 and 5) as a result of a district review demonstrating that systems (related to the *District Standards* discussed above) are insufficient for supporting its schools effectively.

For districts at Level 4, the ESE began in 2010 developing an approach to accelerating improvements to district practice and student achievement through an *Accelerated Improvement Planning and Implementation process* (http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/). This process was developed to support districts in becoming a *continuously improving organization*, in order to rapidly make traction in becoming a high-performing organization. The *Accelerated Improvement Plan* (AIP) and the process were created initially through a partnership between ESE and Cambridge Education, a consulting company, which had documented success in turning around the lowest-performing district in Islington, England from 2005 – 2012 (Dibb, 2012). This process in Massachusetts continues to evolve based on developing research pertaining to district

improvement. Foundational texts that contributed to the formation of this ESE model can be found in the reference list.

Two Pronged Approach: Assistance, Accountability

Failing school districts are often encumbered with practices, rituals, politics, culture, and contracts that keep them on a steady path toward underperformance. Often this cycle needs to be broken in order to see progress. The research-based approach developed by ESE was to provide turnaround expertise while at the same time holding the district accountable monthly for making significant change.

Each district was given the funds and the support to hire a Plan Manager who was an expert in district and school turnaround. Some of these Plan Managers had the support of a company or network behind them. The job of the Plan Manager was to help the district write a plan, called an Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP), and then support the district in the implementation of that plan. Hiring the right company or consultant to design, manage, and coach the change initiatives was an extremely important first step. Companies and consultants were vetted by ESE, but hired by the district. The Plan Manager, who agreed to be in the district initially a minimum of two days per week, answered directly to the Superintendent. The first order of business for these districts was to get systems in place that would ultimately lead to higher student achievement.

ESE also recognized that the adage of "what gets measured gets done," must come into play to ensure accountability. If the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education was going to invest significant funding in these districts, it wanted assurance that research-based changes would be initiated and would become embedded in the practices of the district. Consequently, each district was assigned a Plan Monitor. The team of Plan Monitors reviewed the AIPs, provided feedback to the districts, and once ESE accepted the plan, monitored its implementation. The Plan Monitor assigned to the district wrote quarterly progress reports that went to the Superintendent and School Board and presented those reports at a public and locally televised School Board meeting. As well, once a year, the Plan Monitor wrote a summary report for the State Board of Education.

The Accelerated Improvement Plan

The plan that the district was required to write, the Accelerated Improvement Plan, became a blueprint for the change process over the next two years. The plan is based on the premise that if the district "can define a narrow set of strategic objectives to accelerate student learning, execute well-defined initiatives with a relentless focus on implementation, and systematically monitor the impact of those initiatives to inform mid-course

corrections, outcomes for students will be dramatically transformed" (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013). The plan focused on the three to five important goals that the district would spend its energies on. For each goal, or Strategic Objective, as they are called in the AIP, the district defines 3-5 objectives that have the potential to lead to the accomplishment of the Strategic Objective. For each objective, there needed to be a set of specific, measurable benchmarks that the district must accomplish. Benchmarks fall into three categories: early evidence of change, short-term outcomes, and final outcomes. Final outcomes were based on state-developed goals for student improvement. For each objective, the district defined a set of actions to accomplish that objective and attributed responsibility to an individual in the district.

To prepare for the Quarterly Progress Reports (QPR), the Plan Monitor held monthly Highlight Meetings, facilitated by the Plan Manager. The monthly highlight meetings might include, aside from the Superintendent and Plan Manager, the assistant superintendent(s), principals, directors, the Superintendent's mentor, the union president, or other personnel as seen appropriate by the Superintendent, Plan manager, or Plan Monitor for that particular meeting. At the monthly highlight meeting, the district discussed the progress it had made during the last month, as well as obstacles encountered and ways to mitigate those obstacles. The district also presented the Plan Monitor with any data aligned to the AIP that demonstrated progress on meeting any benchmark that month.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this research was a basic qualitative method. Qualitative research, as defined by Merriam (2009) includes four major characteristics: a focus on understanding the meaning of an experience, the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, the process allowing the researcher to build theory from observations and understandings, and a richly descriptive end product. The primary researchers in this project were the plan monitor and the Associate Commissioner for the Center for District and School Accountability at ESE. The Plan Monitor collected the data and both did the analysis.

In order to write the quarterly progress reports, the Plan Monitor gathered information presented at each monthly highlight meeting. This included descriptive data of the initiatives that were undertaken and their progress, as well as baseline and follow-up data from multiple sources including benchmark and summative testing. Other data might include, depending upon the focus of the Strategic Objectives, attendance, failure rates, disciplinary actions, data gathered during teacher observations, evidence of professional development enacted in the classroom to improve

performance, or data kept by principals and directors on their practice, among other numerous sources of data. In order to triangulate the data, the Plan Monitor spent one or more days in the district each quarter, observing classes, having meetings with teachers, administrators and parents, watching conferencing opportunities between administrators or administrator and teacher, attending district or school planning meetings, and observing professional development opportunities for teachers and/or administrators. In total, the plan monitor interviewed the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, every principal, and all other central office administrators who worked on the turnaround project. As well, she interviewed the team members from the consulting firm that coordinated the project.   This amounted to well over 30 individuals, some interviewed several times. The researchers transcribed each transcript, coded all data, and searched for patterns in order to organize similarly coded data into categories (Merriam, 2009). The researchers then created sub-categories where needed. After the coding was complete, the researchers organized and combined categories and compared this data with the additional data described in the above section in order to generate themes that synthesized the findings.

The Through-line

The ultimate goal of the work in each of the districts was to create a through-line from work at the district level to work with principals and other administrators, who would then bring important changes to each classroom in every school. The district was then held accountable for increased student achievement.   The Progress and Performance Index (PPI), which is a measure of the district, school, and group progress in narrowing proficiency gaps, determines the benchmark for student achievement in Massachusetts's schools.   Groups are defined as low income, special education, former/English language learner, or one of seven racial/ethnic categories. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education determines the PPI for each school district.   The PPI is the ultimate benchmark for the school district.

One District's Journey

Mill City, a pseudonym, had been at this work of systemic change for many years. District leaders created plan after plan and still Mill City was the lowest performing school district in Massachusetts.   In fact, there are many shelves in Mill City filled with old plans. Some of these plans resulted in small changes, but nothing that had the potential to change the culture. Culture can mean many things: as Deal and Kennedy once wrote, it is the way things get done around here (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), but it can also mean the willingness to change (Hargreaves, 1997).

States cannot afford to tinker in their efforts to address low district performance. As Tyack and Cuban asserted, "drawing on the twin themes of utopia and tinkering, we suggest reformers take a broader view at the aims that should guide public education and focus on ways to improve instruction from the inside out rather from the top down" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 143). Failing districts also cannot afford to tinker with turnaround efforts. They need to have a comprehensive plan that will affect all parts of the school system and will place teaching and learning at the center of district-wide improvement. The long history of ESE's failed turnaround efforts in Mill City since 1993 could be called "tinkering." Reform efforts did not go far enough to achieve results. After a decade of interventions, costing the state millions of dollars, Mill City still was among the lowest performing districts in Massachusetts.

As described previously, the Accelerated Improvement Plan (AIP) was designed to go deeper, and represent a district partnership with ESE. For their new AIP, Mill City chose three strategic objectives. One objective was a curriculum objective aimed at increasing teacher capacity. The other two objectives were to:

- Improve instructional quality by building leadership capacity throughout the district to continuously improve teaching and learning.
- Foster a cycle of continuous improvement and accountability by using data to effectively examine and improve teaching and learning.

Mill City started in the place that they thought could bring about the biggest change. If their administrators were more knowledgeable and could bring their new knowledge to classrooms, the through-line from district to school to classroom could be created. The first action plans included forming a District Instructional Leadership Team (DILT), consisting of all administrators in the district. That team met for an entire day each month for directed professional development. What the district leaders learned, they were expected to bring back to their schools and implement. For example, they were expected to guide their school leadership teams in developing a School Improvement Plan that followed directly from the AIP. As well, they were learning how to collect data, analyze it, and interpret that data into meaningful steps for improvement. Principals were expected to model the use of data in faculty meetings, committee meetings, and one-on-one discussions with teachers. Principals received support in their implementation efforts and were closely monitored by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. From 2011-2013, the Assistant Superintendent met with each principal monthly to discuss progress on his or her School Improvement Plan.

The momentum generated by the Accelerated Improvement Plan came from three major factors:

1. Time and energy was put in at the beginning of the process to build a district-wide sense of urgency and focus on the AIP.
2. Every administrator had a role in designing the plan for accomplishing the AIP, which built commitment to the goals of the AIP.
3. The plan took a systemic approach that was clearly laid out at the beginning of the process.

The initial focus of the AIP was to work with administrators to get them on board with the AIP process and to build their skills. Skill building was done through intensive professional development monthly for two years and was planned to continue into the third year.   A DILT planning committee, with representation from principals and district level administrators, carefully planned these meetings. The Plan Manager helped to give structure to the meetings and provide the needed professional development. The Plan Manager built into the professional development numerous ways to develop leadership skills. For example, a different administrator each month was responsible for running the DILT, making sure that each segment ran on time and those responsible for each segment were prepared.

Topics in the first year started with how to build a School Improvement Plan that was aligned to the AIP, and continued to include topics such as understanding what rigorous instruction is and recognizing it in the classroom, doing effective walkthroughs of classrooms followed by constructive feedback to teachers, monitoring teacher progress in increasing achievement of students in their classes, having difficult conversations with teachers about how best to improve their practice, using and modeling for the use of others data to support instruction, and strengthening core curriculum, particularly math and English. In addition, administrators were called upon to make their practices more public to the DILT.

Making practices public

Each administrator was taught how to do effective classroom walkthroughs. The administrators developed a tool that included a list of important instructional strategies and room for comment after each strategy, a copy of the results of which went into the teacher's mailbox that day, so that teachers were getting immediate feedback.   Additionally, each administrator was given a target number of walkthroughs to do each month. That data was reported to the Assistant Superintendent and she included it in the material packet for each monthly DILT meeting.

Administrators learned how to self-reflect. They were given a three-level rubric, highly effective, effective, improvement necessary, in four standards: leadership, continuous improvement, rigor, and data. Each month, they rated themselves in the four standards and provided a rationale for that rating along with next steps for their continued improvement. Again, those results appeared in the DILT packets for all administrators to see.

Each month each principal met individually with the Superintendent and/or the Assistant Superintendent to review the School Improvement Plan (SIP). At these meetings principals brought with them a color-coded copy of their SIP reflecting items that were complete, in progress, or had no action. As well, prior to each meeting, the principal was to reflect, assess, and color code their progress for each standard on the self-assessment rubric. They needed to identify the areas they were still working on, provide evidence to support the scores, set a goal for what they would achieve the next month, and specify the steps they would take to achieve the goal. The results of the self-assessment rubrics were reported in the monthly DILT materials. A memo to the principal followed each meeting reviewing the salient points that were discussed in the meeting, the decisions made, and areas for the principal to improve on.

Making their practices public, at least to the group of administrators, was not something that principals had prior experience with. Those who embraced the idea began to talk more openly about their practice and seek ideas from colleagues on how to improve it.

Intensive Feedback to Administrators

Principals received ongoing feedback from the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. The monthly meetings with individual principals were rigorous. Principals were expected to come prepared and ready to explain their practice over the previous month. They learned how to collect and display data to show their progress as a leader and their schools' progress toward increasing student achievement.
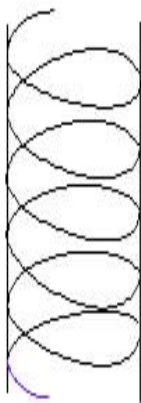
The Assistant Superintendent also frequently visited schools and did walkthroughs with principals. The principal would then sit with the Assistant Superintendent to discuss the instruction they saw, the areas for improvement, and then be expected to write a memo to the Assistant Superintendent outlining their plan for instructional improvement.

Steps for Systemic Change
- Change at the school and classroom level
- Intensive feedback to Principals
- Monitor new practices of Principals
- Supervision to Support Principals' change of practice
- Support for Principals to implement professional development in their buildings
- Professional development for Principals
- District level planning
  Accelerated Improvement Plan

The illustration demonstrates the throughline from district planning to change in instruction that directly affects student learning.

Concentrating on Leadership as the Nexus for Change

This model of change recognizes that the driving force within a district is a leader who has an understanding of how to develop a systematic change process within a district and within a school. Principals were given intensive professional development. They were then expected to implement components of that professional development in their own schools. Principals were supported throughout the process by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Plan Manager. However, critical to the effectiveness of this model was monitoring, since the failure of many change efforts is due to the lack of follow-through and assessment of the effectiveness of implementation. Principals were monitored by the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent in their planning, their execution of the plan, and their observations and feedback to teachers. Practices were made public and intensive feedback was provided to principals to help hone their practices. This process is intensive and relentless. The Plan Monitor assigned by ESE monitored at least monthly the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. Practices are changing in this school district. A foundation for improved student achievement is being laid.   The district has not yet achieved its goals, but the process is a promising one that could lead to substantial improvement in student achievement in a district that has had little success in this area over many years.

Organizational Analysis

As the case study describes, the Massachusetts' two-pronged approach with assistance and accountability has led to the district's development of a promising Accelerated Improvement Plan focused on three strategic objectives that form a "through-line" between leadership and

educator development in the classroom to improve instructional quality, use data effectively, and focus on literacy. Momentum was generated because the district had made effective decisions to upfront the focused planning work with a sense of urgency, include administrators in developing and taking responsibility for executing the AIP, and ensuring that there was a clear systematic implementation strategy. Everything about the AIP was public and involved intensive feedback—teachers had open classrooms; principals had open buildings and public school improvement plans; district leaders had outcomes to meet; and School Board members received quarterly progress reports. These efforts resulted in systemic changes, and leadership was identified as the nexus of the change.

However, the improvements in systems and practices have not yet led to clear results in student achievement. This analysis is an effort to understand what should take place next in Mill City Public Schools. First we will analyze the role of the state—the leverage and the limitations of the SEA's capacity to generate improvement in a school district. Then we will analyze the district's capacity to generate improvement given the local educational and political context in which it must operate.

Analysis of the State Role

The state can be a central actor in improving educational practices but this work can take quite some time—even decades—and during this time the role of the state needs to be multifaceted, including changes to policy, influence on media messages, and promotion of public and professional discourse (Russell, 2010). The AIP process is designed to promote a continuous cycle of improvement from the governance level, to the central office level, to the school level, to the classroom level, in order to create what Schlechty (2009) calls a "learning organization." AIPs work to break through change resistance through several steps: working with districts to develop effective improvement plans; supporting district capacity-building by providing ESE-funded, part-time Plan Managers; celebrating success achieved through new internal monitoring structures (developed in partnership with the district with the support of Plan Managers); providing objective information through external monitoring (including monthly site visits and data collection conducted by Plan Monitors); and quarterly public accountability reporting on the district's progress (during School Board meetings). Monitoring depends on valid and reliable self-reporting, and is useful only if the information about implementation effectiveness informs mid-course corrections.

The standards for the AIP[9] presume, as Meyer and Rowan (2003) do, that rapid change is promoted more by shifts in "environmental categories" than instructional changes in isolation, because they determine priorities. Meyer and Rowan find that "The formal structure of an organization is in good part a social myth and functions as a myth whatever its actual implementation" (2003, pg. 210). The formal structure is tied to ideology rather than results (Meyer & Rowan, 2003). The AIP is an attempt to change that. The AIP process couples an evaluation of district practices with the outcomes it receives. This is different from the typical U.S. practice; while other countries more frequently engage in a rigorous educational inspection system, in the United States, accountability has been mostly limited to testing (Meyer & Rowan, 2003). As the authors point out, coupling practice and outcomes can undermine the logic of confidence. After all, traditionally "a school's formal structure (its ritual classifications) is 'decoupled' from technical activities and outcomes" (Meyer & Rowan, 2003, p. 221).

District-State Interface

Even in the face of change agents, such as the AIP with its coupling of practices and results, school districts have an isomorphic tendency. The term "isomorphic" is a term used in science and mathematics meaning being similar in structure. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe institutional isomorphism in the face of three types of change mechanisms—coercive, mimetic, and normative. All three are employed in the SEA's AIP process, so Mill City's change resistance can be observed under this framework.

Coercive authority is exercised by the SEA when the state declares the district "Level 4/underperforming" and requires it to develop an AIP using a specific template, and requires it to participate in monitoring activities.

Normative authority is exercised in these ways: the Plan Monitor observes district practice and has conversations with district and school leaders concerning evidence of implementation, state leaders join the Plan Monitor in School Board meetings to discuss quarterly progress reports, and these reports may then be used in conversations with the state Board of Education as well as elected state leaders. The SEA is defining what is appropriate practice and shifting the dominant voices.

Mimetic authority is also exercised in more subtle ways—the monitor questions in monthly site visits the degree to which traditional district practices are working, and Plan Managers are assigned with the

---

[9] The five criteria for the AIP are outlined in a rubric used by the Department to assess each plan priori to approval. The criteria are: provides focus; promotes rapid improvement to teaching and learning; addresses systemic weaknesses; builds long-term capacity; and useful for measuring progress.

responsibility of pushing for changes to systems and routines that structure behavior. The authors argue that,

> Without constant monitoring individuals pursuing parochial organizational or subunit interests can quickly undo the work… despite superior resources and sanctioning power, organizational elites are often unable to maximize their preferences because 'the complexity of modern organizations makes control difficult.' Moreover, organizations have increasingly become the vehicle for numerous 'gratifications, necessities, and preferences so that many groups within and without the organization seek to use it for ends that restrict the return to masters. (Perrow as cited in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 157)

However, the multiple processes occurring at the highest levels and at the subunit levels are difficult to monitor not only because they are numerous and complex but because (1) political decision-making is a hard-to-detect actor and (2) leadership's tendency to avoid evaluation and inspection of their educational systems.

First take the issue of political decision-making. Meyer and Rowan note that,

> In the United States the legitimacy of local control in some measure de-professionalizes school administrators at all levels…They do not carry with them the authority of the central, national, professional, and bureaucratic structures and the elaborate ideological backing that comes with it. American administrators must compromise and must further lose purely professional authority by acknowledging their compromised role. They do not have tenure, and their survival is dependent on laypersons in the community, not professionals. (Meyer and Rowan, 2003, p. 221)

Operating in this political system often involves the avoidance of close inspection. Reasons for avoiding close inspection include: (1) complicity and satisfaction of staff, (2) the tendency to disassociate educational value with the efficiency of instructional activities or learning achieved per dollar, (3) increased technical uncertainty at the local level arising from state and federal expectations, and (4) provision of a buffer for inconsistencies that might otherwise need addressing—but might create conflict. "When the behavior of teachers and students is uninspected or located in isolated classrooms, the state, the community, and administrators are presented with little evidence of ineffectiveness, conflict, or inconsistency" (Meyer and Rowan, 2003, p. 207). As Meyer and Rowan recognize, the avoidance of monitoring is rational: "Consider this matter from the viewpoint of any rational college president or school superintendent. The whole school will dissolve in conflict and illegitimacy if

the internal and external understanding if its accredited status is in doubt"
(Meyer and Rowan, 2003, p. 203).   The stakes are certainly high:

> With the confidence of the state bureaucracy, the federal government,
> the community, the profession, the pupils and their families, and the
> teachers themselves, the legitimacy of the school as a social reality
> can be maintained. However, if these groups decide that a school's
> ritual classifications are a 'fraud,' everything comes apart. (Meyer
> and Rowan, 2003, p. 205)

District Organizational Learning and Coupling Practice with Results

The stated purpose of the AIP is to support more effective and
informed district-decision making. Critically important to district
improvement are organizational learning, role development, and increased
capacity at the district central office level for implementing improvement
initiatives effectively and supporting fidelity of practice and outcomes
(Honig, 2003).

Meyer and Rowan explain Goffman's idea of "'face work'—the
process of maintaining the others' face identity and thus maintaining the
plausibility and legitimacy of the organization (Meyer and Rowan, 2003).
They argue that decoupling school structures and their results (in terms of
adult practice and student outcomes) leads to what Goffman describes as
"avoidance, discretion, and overlooking" (Meyer and Rowan, 2003, p. 207).

The AIP was designed to couple systemic changes, to changes in
adult practice, to changes in student performance - the throughline. Each
objective must also contain benchmarks of success of two types: changes to
student performance (short term outcomes), and changes for adult behavior
or practice (early evidence of change). Evidence must be collected to
demonstrate that the district has met its benchmarks. The benchmark data is
collected to determine both whether the plan is being implemented in ways
that change routines (measurable changes to adult behavior are called early
evidence of change benchmarks in the AIP), as well as correlation with
student performance outcomes (these are called short term outcomes in the
AIP). Early evidence of change benchmarks redefines what is appropriate
teacher behavior. Success in meeting early evidence of change or short-term
outcomes redefines the way performance is legitimized. This process is an
attempt to support the development of a renewed organizational code to
socialize individuals to incorporate new practices. Some early evidence of
change benchmarks are also designed to determine changes in the ethos—
districts collecting survey data is one example. The AIP process of collecting
data about school-level implementation, ensuring an effective response, and
putting in practice supports by the central office level is critical. Chronicled
in a well-known case study, Baltimore Public Schools used data to

reinterpret the historical practices of the organization, to identify new targets, and to provide more understanding of the current level of practice, and therefore, what change is necessary (Grossman, Johnson & Brookover, 2011). This study gives credence to the process that the ESE is pursuing.

Summary

In an effort to develop a strong foundation of introspection in schools, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) engaged initially with five school districts in a turnaround project focusing on increasing student achievement. This paper documents the journey of one poor, urban school district that capitalized on the assistance it received and began to build a stronger foundation for high student achievement by using leadership as the nexus for change. It began its work by developing an Accelerated Improvement Plan that defined three strategic objectives. Initiatives and the component activities in the AIP were designed to map out an aligned "throughline" of changed routines and practices at each level in the system. In practice, the throughline means that changes at the district level result in changes to the school level, and in turn to the classroom level. Ultimately, that means that the lack of success at the student level is the result of insufficient improvement at the classroom level, and insufficient improvement at the school level, and also insufficient improvement at the district leadership and governance level. This notion interferes with the "logic of confidence" at multiple levels. It also recognizes the challenge of change because there are multiple players (Schlechty, 2009).

What Next?

Mill City is now in year four of this process. This is the year that it is expected that Mill City will demonstrate whether that throughline has occurred, and the strength of that throughline. School districts are not static organizations: the players change, new ideas are introduced, new pathways are taken. However, in Mill City a foundation was laid that was based on research and the best ideas available. And change started with a focus on developing school leaders to take a new kind of leadership in their schools. For our schools to improve, particularly our urban areas, we need to be putting in place those best ideas and documenting their implementation.

References:

DiMaggio, P. & Powell W.W. (1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2) 147-160.

Dibb, J. (2012). *Islington's education turnaround*. Retrieved from http://www.guardian.co.uk/teacher-network/2012/feb/15/

Edmonson, A. (2012). *Teaming: How organizations learn, innovate, and compete in the knowledge economy.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Elmore, R. (2006). *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work.* Indiana: Solution Tree.

Fullan, M. (2010). *All systems go: The change imperative for whole system reform.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Grossman, A., Johnson, S.M. & Brookover, E. (2011). *Baltimore City Public Schools: Implementing Bounded Autonomy.* Public Education Leadership Project at Harvard University, PEL-063.

Hargreaves, A. (1997). *Rethinking educational change with heart and mind: 1997 ASCD yearbook.* Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Honig, M.I. (2003). Building Policy from Practice: District Central Office Administrators' Roles and Capacity for Implementing Collaborative Education Policy. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 39(3): 292-338.

Kegan, R., & Laskow Lahey, L. (2009). *Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization.* Boston: Harvard Business Press.

Levitt, B. & March, J.G. (1988). Organizational Learning. *Annual Review of Sociology,* 14:319-340.

March, J.G. (1991). Exploration and Exploitation in Organizational Learning. *Organizations Science,* 2(1): 71-87.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2013). Guidance for level 4 districts: Focused planning for accelerating student Learning.   Boston: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2013). Accountability reports: Accelerated improvement plans for districts into level 4. Retrieved from http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=7210

Merriam, S. R. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Meyer, J.W., & Rowan, B. (2003). The Structure of Educational Organizations. In J.H. Ballantine & J. Z. Spade (Eds.). *Schools and Society: A Sociological Approach to Education.* Second Edition (pp. 201-212). Canada: Wadsworth Publishing. (Originally published in 1978.)

Russell, J.L. (2011). From Child's Garden to Academic Press: The Role of Shifting Institutional Logics in Redefining Kindergarten Education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 48(2): 236-267.

Schlechty, P.C. (2009). *Leading for Learning: How to Transform Schools into Learning Organizations.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Schlechty, P.C. (1993). On the Frontier of School Reform with Trailblazers, Pioneers, and Settlers. *Journal of Staff Development*, 14 (4): 46-52.

Tyack, D. & Cuban, L. (1995). *Tinkering towards utopia.*   Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

Zavadsky, H. (2012). *School turnarounds: The essential role of districts.* Cambridge: Harvard Education Press.

THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFESTYLE CHANGES AMONG MIDDLE EASTERN GRADUATE STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Salman Alzayani, MD, MSc
Department of Family and Community Medicine
College of Medicine and Medical Sciences, Arabian Gulf University

Abstract

High rates of health problems have been reported among undergraduate students, with increased stress levels among college undergraduates in the United States in several fields of study. Academic life stresses are believed to play an important role in the health of students, which may affect their learning abilities and educational performance on top of their health

Aim Understanding the effect of cultural and environmental changes on individual's behavior.

Methods : Graduate students from the Middle East who spent two years in the United States were selected for interviews. Colaizzi's phenomenological descriptive method of inquiry was adopted.

Results: Thirty-eight statements were extracted from the interview and sorted into nine themes: Away from home: homesickness, school is challenging and stressful, it is not cold it is freezing, lack of physical activity, social norms vs. peer pressure, dietary patterns and available options, away from home and arriving to new home, time is money and day to day expenses. An exhaustive description was created from the themes and the formulated meanings and was adjusted and validated by the interviewees. The fundamental structure was developed accordingly.

Conclusion : Despite changes in culture and environment, students' behavior and lifestyle have been affected in different ways, some were positively affected like being more time efficient and focusing more on work, and some were negatively affected like being under stress, eating unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. Students were aware of the changes in their lifestyle and were always trying to modify them.

Keywords: Lifestyle, Students, United States, Middle East, Health

Introduction

High rates of health problems have been reported among undergraduate students, with increased stress levels among college undergraduates in the United States in several fields of study. Academic life stresses are believed to play an important role in the health of students, which may affect their learning abilities and educational performance on top of their health (Al-Dabal, et al., 2010). This study is aimed to study the experience of lifestyle changes among Middle Eastern graduate students in the United States, using Colaizzi's phenomenological descriptive method of enquiry (Colaizzi, 1978), in order to explore the impact of lifestyle changes due to environmental and cultural change and how would that affect the behavior of the individual.

Evolution of the study

Students who pursue their degrees away from their cultural norms have different experiences than those who pursue their degrees at their home countries. This was explored in a study of international students in the United States, which raises some sensitive issues about the nature of cultural learning and the societal acceptance of diversity and differences. The researchers stated that the students' experiences appear to reflect the tensions that exist in the global context regarding such diversity and difference (Lee, 2004). Al-Dabal et al., (2010) concluded that " unhealthy lifestyles such as lack of exercise, insufficient sleep and poor self-health care among students could well have contributed to their worse physical status. Often the high pressure of studies and limited time to acquire vast knowledge prevent students from adopting a healthy lifestyle". Interestingly, it seems that "not the severity of negative life events but their cumulating determines health and behavioral negative effects" (Supranowicz, 2011).

Sedentary lifestyle and physical inactivity are pandemics and are leading causes of death in the world. (Kohl et al., 2012). A study concluded that weight gain does occur in the first year of university, but in this case the increase was small and transitory, while weight gain over the longer term is negatively related to the weight at which students begin university and predicted in part by eating behavior traits and physical activity levels (Finlayson, et al., 2012). Alzayani and Hamadeh (2011) have studied an aspect of medical students sedentary lifestyle which was the use of electronic entertainment devices like computers and mobile phones as part of a bigger study covering a wider range of lifestyle behaviors like dietary patterns, physical activity, sleeping pattern, tobacco smoking and alcohol consumption. The study showed that most medical students spent 1-4 hours daily working on their computers, using their mobile phones and watching TV and DVD. A smaller number of students performed these activities for

less than one hour per day. One hundred and thirty (42.2%) female students used their mobile phones for more than 2 hours per day, 95 (31.3%) watched TV and DVD and 203 (66.1%) used computers. This study was performed in Bahrain, a small country in the Middle East, where the students are traveling from nearby countries that share the same cultural values and environment, this study gives us an important indication of the effect of studying and accommodation environments on students lifestyle.

Deluca (2005) conducted a study on students from the Middle East, specifically from Jordan who are pursuing their degrees in the United States. The researcher concluded that some specific curricular and administrative interventions might have improved student adjustment and overall success. These included allowing an extended time for orientation to the social and academic environment and limiting course content in the first semester. Lee (2004) stated positively that these cultural differences have positive effects on students as well as direct international experience appears to offer ways of building student confidence, development and growth through the personal challenges involved. International experience offers a vital opportunity to explore other ways of thinking and living.

Purpose

I have connection to several students from the Middle East since their arrival day to the United States and I always keep observing them and how they adapt to the abrupt cultural changes. Throughout the two years prior to this study, I have observed tens of them, however, cultural shock was not an issue here. Instead there was a sense of instability and the detachment of the society at the early beginning mainly in lifestyle including dietary patterns, food selections, use of public transportation, sleep patterns and even weather differences. They usually adapt to these changes by the first year and become a way of life in the second. In this study, I would like to explore and understand their experience of lifestyle changes since they moved to the United States to pursue their graduate studies in New England, in order to develop proper programs and policies toward international students during their studies in the United States.

Method
Descriptive phenomenology

Colaizzi developed his descriptive phenomenology method (Colaizzi, 1978) "under the supervision of Giorgi, who produced a body of literature devoted to the ongoing articulation and demonstration of empirically based phenomenological research in psychology. Colaizzi's procedural modification of Giorgi's approach to enquiry involved a process of validating the findings with participants. This process required the researcher

returning the analysis of transcripts to the respective participants for review. Additional information arising from clarification and/or elaboration by participants would necessitate inclusion in the final explication of findings. This procedural modification by Colaizzi of Giorgi's method expanded the process of phenomenological analysis contributing to advancing a rigorous approach to phenomenological enquiry" (Edward & Welch, 2011) The method is illustrated in Figure 1.
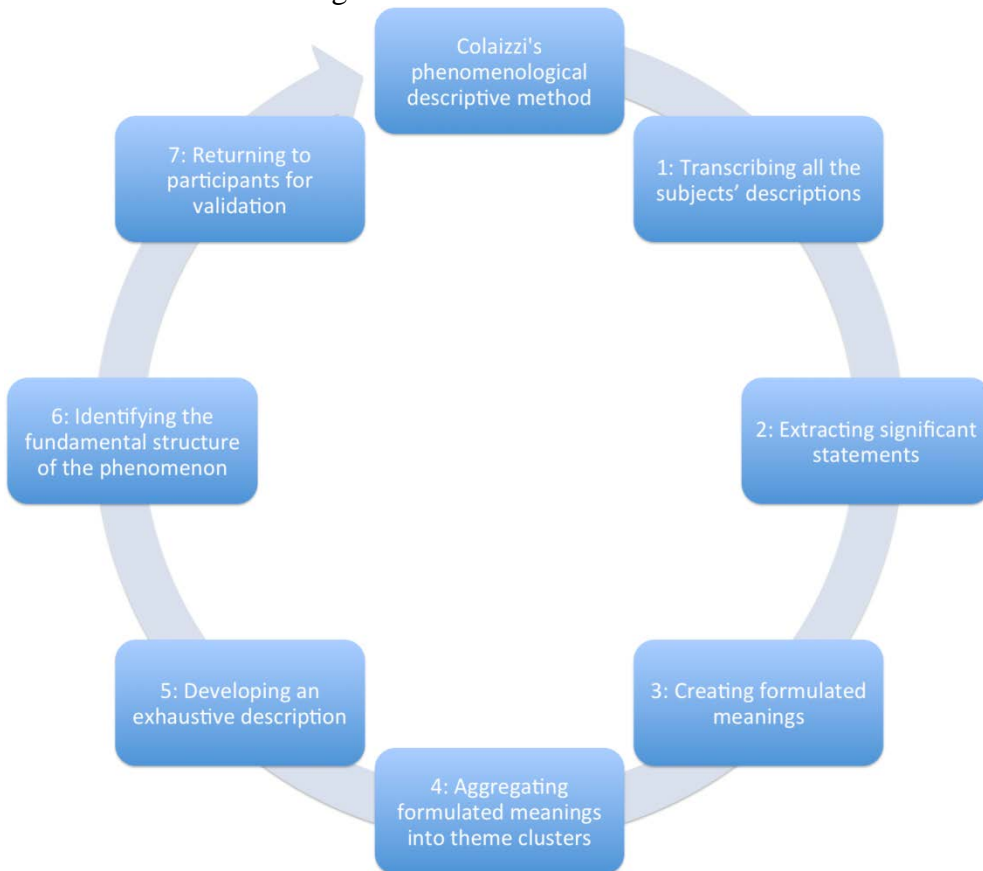

Figure 1. Procedures of Colaizzi's phenomenological descriptive method (Colaizzi, 1978)

Sample and setting

Three graduate students from the Middle East who spent two years in the United States were selected for interviews, two males (25 and 29 year old) and one female (29 year old), all from Saudi Arabia. They were all enrolled as graduate students in the School of Engineering in a large university in New England. All subjects were married and living with their families in the United States during the time of the study. The subjects were recruited in the study by direct invitation by the researcher through social networks of the same university where the researcher belongs. Two

interviews were conducted individually in a quiet room in one of the university building while one interview was conducted over the phone.

General steps

After contacting the proposed subjects, the researcher requested them to sign the consent form after explaining to them that their confidentiality and anonymity will be secured, and that they have the right to leave the study. After that the interviews were set individually in and according to the convenience of the subjects. Interviews were digitally taped after their permission. The subjects filled in demographic info sheets at the beginning of the interview. The opening statement of the interview was: "Please describe to me your lifestyle changes since you started your career as a graduate student in the United States. Share all your thoughts, feelings and perceptions you can recall until you have no more to say about the experience". This was the only question asked to the subjects as per the method guidelines used in this study (Colaizzi, 1978).

Human subjects considerations

The study was approved by the institutional review board for the university and students signed a consent form which has been approved by the IRB to participate in the study. They can end their participation at any time and the information they provided would be reported anonymously. The researcher has completed a required IRB course before conducting the study.

Results

Interviews transcription have been done by the researcher after completing all of the interviews which yielded 38 significant statements which have been extracted from the transcription and transferred into formulated meaning. Then these statements were sorted into 16 themes and then abridged into 9 themes by combining six themes into other similar themes and by deleting one theme. The final 9 themes were: Away from home: homesickness, school is challenging and stressful, it is not cold it is freezing, lack of physical activity, social norms vs. peer pressure, dietary patterns and available options, away from home and arriving to new home, time is money and day to day expenses. The selected themes were relevant to the study purpose and student responses were very descriptive in response to the opening statement of the interview.

Theme 1: Away from home: homesickness

The lifestyle changes among the interviewed subjects started with cultural shock after arriving from Saudi Arabia to the United States. They have had experienced homesickness at the beginning as they have left their

families and started to live independently away from the their own society. One interviewee has two children, one is in the United States and one is back home with her mother.

> *"I have one child here and one there"*.
>
> *"I had a daughter here 8 months ago and she is with my mother back in Saudi, yeah when I first left her there I used to have a major homesickness"*.

However, they overcame homesickness by calling their families back home on daily basis, they have used video calls as well.

Theme 2: School is challenging and stressful

As they all received their undergraduate degrees from different schools than the current one, they considered the curriculum of the highly ranked school they are attending currently is challenging. One interviewee expressed that by saying:

> *"When I started my program everything was completely different than what I have studied back home, since my university is a research based university so it needs a lot of readings, so I need to read 2 to 3 papers weekly and to do some homework and to do some projects and programming. I spent like two months depressed and shocked because of the new lifestyle and educational system so this depressed me more and more and the problem with me when I am depressed I start gaining weight. This is my way to expelling the depression"*

This educational differences put an extra pressure on them to over study to bridge the gap between their undergraduate and graduate studies. Moreover, two interviewees enrolled in undergraduate classes to fill the gaps in their knowledge or to fulfill some prerequisites.

> *"I am an international students so I have a lot of obstacles, one of them is English, so my English is not like the native American because it is their language, so sometimes I have difficulty in understanding the contents like them. The second obstacle maybe is the education here is better than other countries like the middle east, so you have to work twice as the people here who graduated from the United States maybe this is the reason you are busy all the time and you have to work hard all the time"*

They were faced with a demanding curriculum where they are expected not to only read and work on projects, but to do more of literature reading and critiquing on weekly basis, to submit weekly assignments on top of the final projects and software programming each semester. An interviewee

summarized her experience in one sentence:

> *"I am a full time student and it is very demanding"*

This stressful situation put the students in a position where they devoted their entire time to their studies and ignored other recreational activities like exercise for instance. One subject explained it by stating that:

> *"I never think of going to the gym, the only thing I was thinking about is how to study, how to focus more every second and I think it is a psychological thing. Sometimes I spend 3 to 4 hours during the day without doing anything nor studying, just sitting, maybe watching TV or browsing Facebook or twitter or any social network, the thing is that you are thinking about your study, you are thinking about your work, how to complete your work, how to complete your research, how to complete your project"*

Theme 3: It is not cold, it is freezing

The subjects found it hard for them and their families to get used to the very cold weather when they first arrived to New England. It was frustrating not being able to be outdoors with friends and family and staying indoors instead seeking warmth. They stated that:

> *"When I first came here was like -20 C in the winter so it was very hard for my family and me to get used to the weather"*
>
> *"The northeast is the cold, so I live in a city back home which has a cold weather but of course not like here, it makes me always lazy, I like more to be warm during the study, if I want to study, if I want to focus more I need to stay in my room and to turn on the heater and stay warm"*

Theme 4: Lack of physical activity

Due to the stressful studies, they have limited their physical activities and exercise and started to gain weight as they have expressed in their own words:

> *" I am here for about two years, I gained about 35 to 40 pounds, which is too much, too much, because I have nothing to do as I told you like I am in a tough school and they need a good work and they have deadlines and they want you to work hard"*
>
> *"When I came here I found that I have sleep apnea and I gained 20 kg because I did not do any exercise as I was always studying and 24/7 on the computer which actually made my sleep apnea worse and I had trouble sleeping"*

Theme 5: Social norms vs. peer pressure

The social norms in the United States impacted that as well, as being overweight or obese is acceptable compared to the situation back in Saudi Arabia, where they used to exercise and watch their weight due to peer pressure on top of social norms. Here how one interviewee expressed it:

> *"People in the middle east are thinner and you feel like a strange person among them or a different person among them when you are over weight or obese, but when I came here to the United States it seems no body cares about you and no body asks why you are gaining weight".*

He also mentioned the amount of weight he gained during a short period of time away from home:

> "For less than seven months, seven to eight months, I gained about 25 to 30 pounds and I didn't realize that I gained weight as no body noticed my weight gain"

The same interviewee elaborated his experience with the social networks and their effects on his own lifestyle:

> *"I think lifestyle is affected by the social network, so if you have friends in a small social network and they observe something bad or good in you, they will tell you about it".*

He also stated that:

> *"When I was back home, we were 5 to 6 friend who were always together, going daily to the gym so you feel that you live in a healthy environment and you feel bad when you gain like 2 to 3 pounds, the social network really helps".*

Theme 6: Dietary patterns and available options

All subjects were Muslims, despite the fact that they have some food restrictions due to their religion as they should stick to Halal food, the did not see it a problem when they select their dietary options, as their problem was with the type of food, as they don't cook during the weekdays and eat fast food instead, with all its unhealthy components which they all are aware of. One of the subjects said that everything he used to eat back in his country is not available in the town he is living in currently in the United States, so when he goes back home for a vacation, he brings back with him a stock of food items needed to cook his traditional food and recipes. Another one stated that *"bad/junk"* food is available as well in his country, but in the same time he has the option to have a healthy food, compared to his situation here where he is mostly eating fast food like pizza, burgers and french fries. Due to that, he gained 25-30 lb in 7 months. He is also selective in his meals due to religious restrictions of food items like pork and alcohol. He said:

> *"The food here is very bad compared to my country".*

In two years, he gained 35-40 lbs, his reason was:
> *"I have nothing to do as I told you like I am in a tough school and they need a good work and they have deadlines and they want you to work hard and you have to do twice work".*

Another subject said that:
> *"I don't cook as I used to, I cook usually in the weekends and mostly we eat out, we did not use to eat much outside before coming here".*

She also explained the reason for her food selections by saying:
> *"I try to avoid fatty food, but here it is difficult, and most of my diet is fast food, here it has been difficult, probably hard to avoid this as there is no a lot of places".*

Theme 7: Away from home and arriving to new home

The living conditions were expressed as a lifestyle change, as they started to hold more responsibilities by taking care of their new places and to manage their expenses throughout the month. One subject started to have problems with his neighbor in the condo, as his neighbor downstairs get annoyed every time he or his family member moves around. He states that:
> *"This was the most annoying experience since I came to here, he used to call the police all the times and he nocks from downstairs and freaked my child out".*

Another subject said that she did not feel that things have been changed in her life:
> *"Nothing changed actually as I live with my husband and child, I don't feel there is a lot of change".*

However, she said that responsibilities at home have been increased
> *"It is just me, I used to have help in my country, I don't have it here, now I clean by my self, I do the laundry and wash the dishes and everything".*

Another subject expressed the same:
> *"I feel like when I moved to the new apartment and got married and took the responsibility of my own apartment and my own things I stayed close with everything here like the rent payment. As a husband I also take hospital appointments for my wife".*

One subject complained about winter storms, due to frequent storms, he faced the problem of power outages, so he struggled by visiting to the community center and get water and supplies.

Theme 8: Time is money

The culture in the United States is different than their country as it has

a faster pace and people are more organized and accurately on time. This has an advantage as the subjects focus more on their work and became more organized. One stated that:

> *"I am always in a rush I don't have time, I can make up one day for my family and the rest for my study, this was a major change in my lifestyle, because when I was In my country I can spend like 3 days a week with my family and when I come from work I can go out and do grocery shopping. Here, if you want to go and do grocery shopping it takes like 4 hours and I have to plan for it for the week, and if I want to buy something in the middle of the week it is a little bit hard because the nearest store is about 15 minutes away from my place".*

He added:

> "We started to changed my lifestyle and my child's lifestyle to make him go to bed to sleep at 9 o'clock".

Another subject said that being away from home and family has an advantage as she focuses more on her work:

> *"I feel that I have practical here, since I am away from my parents so I am more focused on my career, this is in general".*

One subject expressed his reaction to this by stating

> *"I think the lifestyle in the United States is organized in case of time and time management, I think like when you live in the United States your daily schedule will be changed and become organized".*

On the other hand, he feels that his lifestyle back home was better than here in the United States:

> *"My lifestyle was better than here in the Unites States in the case of health, in case of exercises in case of my time management. Actually, when I was back home all the thing I was thinking about was my health and how to go to the gym and how to lose weight".*

Theme 9: Day to day expenses

It took them time till they managed their monthly expenses, it took one subject long time to manage his spending as he was afraid of running out of money before the next pay check. This is what he said:

> *"I took time till I managed my salary throughout the month as it differs here than home, it took me long time to manage that. I afraid that by the end of the month I run out of money."*

He also added:

> *"The gas prices are much more expensive than back home."*

The fundamental structure and discussion

An exhaustive description was created from the themes and the formulated meaning was adjusted and validated by the interviewees, then the fundamental structure was developed accordingly. The fundamental structure refers to 'the essence of the experiential phenomenon as it is revealed by explication'. The discussion will follow the fundamental structure as instructed by the method used (Colaizzi, 1978).

The fundamental structure of the phenomenon:

The lifestyle changes among the interviewed subjects started with cultural shock after arriving from Saudi Arabia to the United States. They have had experienced homesickness at the beginning as they have left their families and started to live independently away from the their own society. However, they overcame homesickness by calling their families back home on daily basis, they have used video calls as well. As they all received their undergraduate degrees from different schools than the current one, they considered the curriculum of the highly ranked school they are attending currently is challenging. The educational differences put extra pressure on them to over study to bridge the gap between their undergraduate and graduate studies. Moreover, two interviewees enrolled in undergraduate classes to fill the gaps in their knowledge or to fulfill some prerequisites. They were faced with a demanding curriculum where they are expected not to only read and work on projects, but to do more of literature reading and critiquing on weekly basis, to submit weekly assignments on top of the final projects and software programming each semester. This stressful situation put the students in a position where they devoted their entire time to their studies and ignored other recreational activities like exercise for instance. The subjects found it hard for them and their families to get used to the very cold weather when they first arrived to New England. It was frustrating not being able to be outdoors with friends and family and staying indoors instead seeking warmth. Due to the stressful studies, they have limited their physical activities and exercise and started to gain weight. The social norms in the United States impacted that as well, as being overweight or obese is acceptable compared to the situation back in Saudi Arabia, where they used to exercise and watch their weight due to peer pressure on top of social norms. Despite the fact that they have some food restrictions due to their religion, the subjects do not see it a problem when they select their dietary options, as their problem was with the type of food, as they don't cook during the weekdays and eat fast food instead, with all its unhealthy components they all are aware of. The living conditions were expressed as a lifestyle change, as they started to hold more responsibilities by taking care of their new places and to manage their expenses throughout the month. The

culture in the United States is different than their country as it has a faster pace and people are more organized and accurately on time. However, this has an advantage as the subjects focus more on their work and became more organized.

Discussion

The nine themes have explored how changes in the culture and environment would affect the behavior and lifestyle of the international students living in the United States. Themes 1, 2 and 3 identified and explored how being away from home and family and moving to a new country where the environment and the weather is extremely different would affect the way students started to live. Moreover, the stress of the challenging curriculum was another burden that made them staying mostly indoors and isolating themselves from the society. These findings are similar to what was reported by Al-Dabal, et al. (2010). This social impact was further explored in themes 4 and 5, where being stressed out by the hard study loads and being away from their social networks facilitated physical inactivity and lack of exercise which ended up in gaining weight in a considerably short periods of time. Weight gain was not only due to limited physical activity and lack of exercise, it was also because of their unhealthy dietary patterns and food selection as was identified and expressed in them 6, where the subjects eat more of unhealthy fast food instead of cooking and preparing their own meals. These findings are similar to those reported by Finlayson, et al. (2012) and by Alzayani and Hamadeh (2011). Themes 7 and 8 explored how living independently away from home affected their way of life as they became more organized and focused on their work, which is similar to what Lee (2004) has reported. They also started to hold more responsibilities, taking care of their own families, cleaning the house and managing their expenses, which was not an easy task as clearly explored in theme 9. These themes would possibly be generalized to students coming from the Middle East as they share the same cultural background. However, it is not necessarily to conform to those coming from other regions in the world or even domestically in the United States.

Conclusion

From this study, we can see that despite changes in culture and environment, students' behavior and lifestyle have been affected in different ways, some were positively affected like being more time efficient and focusing more on work, and some were negatively affected like being under stress, eating unhealthy diet and physical inactivity. Students were aware of the changes in their lifestyle and were always trying to modify them. Students counseling services should be available in the schools for the

international students to help them and their families to handle the changes they face before starting and during their studies in the Unites States.

References:
Al-Dabal, B. K., Koura, M. R., Rasheed, P., Al-Sowielem, L., & Makki, S. M. (2010). A comparative study of perceived stress among female medical and non-medical university students in dammam, saudi arabia. *Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal, 10*(2), 231-240.

Alzayani, S. H., & Hamadeh, R. R. (2011). Use of electronic communication and entertainment devices: A survey of arabian gulf university medical students. *Bahrain Medical Bulletin, 33*(3)

Colaizzi, P. (1978). Psychological research as the phenomenologist's view it. In R. Valle, & M. King (Eds.), *Existential–phenomenological alternatives for psychology* (pp. 48-71). New York: Oxford University Press.

Deluca, E. K. (2005). Crossing cultures: The lived experience of jordanian graduate students in nursing: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Nursing Studies, 42*(6), 657-663. doi: 10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2004.09.017

Edward, K. L., & Welch, T. (2011). The extension of Colaizzi's method of phenomenological enquiry. *Contemporary Nurse, 39*(2), 163-171. doi: 10.5172/conu.2011.163

Finlayson, G., Cecil, J., Higgs, S., Hill, A., & Hetherington, M. (2012). Susceptibility to weight gain. eating behaviour traits and physical activity as predictors of weight gain during the first year of university. *Appetite, 58*(3), 1091-1098. doi: 10.1016/j.appet.2012.03.003

Kohl, H. W.,3rd, Craig, C. L., Lambert, E. V., Inoue, S., Alkandari, J. R., Leetongin, G., . . . Lancet Physical Activity Series Working Group. (2012). The pandemic of physical inactivity: Global action for public health. *Lancet, 380*(9838), 294-305. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(12)60898-8

Lee, N. J. (2004). The impact of international experience on student nurses' personal and professional development. *International Nursing Review, 51*(2), 113-122. doi: 10.1111/j.1466-7657.2003.00200.x

Supranowicz, P. (2011). Evaluation of usefulness of summarised and weighted scale of negative life events to examine the determinants of adolescent health. [Porownanie przydatnosci sumarycznej i wazonej skali negatywnych zdarzen zyciowych do badania uwarunkowan zdrowia mlodziezy] *Roczniki Panstwowego Zakladu Higieny, 62*(3), 307-314.

PHILOSOPHY AND STRUCTURE OF THE ACADEMIC TEACHING IN PEDAGOGY TO PREVENT DROP OUT BY STUDENTS

Sandra Chistolini, PhD
Università degli Studi Roma Tre, Italy

Abstract
The mortality of university students requires actions in order to contrast this phenomenon and increase the attractiveness of the higher study. Pedagogy is one of the subject under siege in the sense that a considerable number of students tend to avoid or postpone the exam. After an empirical study conducted in 2006, contents and methodology of teaching were changed with the intend to meet the cultural expectations of the students. The article is critical report of this new experience of teaching in that subject in the context of university education of teachers. The main purpose is to demonstrate why and how the permanent and positive communication between teacher and students is the most important factor to implement the right to study and to divulgate knowledge. The structure of the teaching and learning process includes study of classics and scientific research with the aim to link theory and praxis. Conclusion underlines the urgency of modernisation of teaching as pivotal to lead young people to be responsible persons in the design of their future, in tune with the most recent European recommendations.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Higher education, Modernisation, Communication, Philosophy of teaching

Introduction
The Education of teachers at the Università degli Studi Roma Tre (Italy) lasts five years and includes General Pedagogy and Intercultural and Citizenship Education, as basic disciplines. General Pedagogy must be studied at the first year and Intercultural and Citizenship Education at the third year.

During the academic year 2006-2007 a fact was quite clear: students were not interested in General Pedagogy and the exam was postponed even though it was compulsory at the first year of the curriculum. A survey was conducted in order to understand how to change teaching and how to

encounter the expectations of the students. It was also necessary to prevent the same critical situation for the third year.

A new structure of teaching of General Pedagogy has progressively been introduced with this characteristics: a) explanation of the aims of the entire process of study; b) interactive methodology; c) permanent use of the teacher's website; d) frequent appreciations of the results achieved by the students; d) renovation of the content of the curriculum; e) immediate feedback for each section of the programme; f) international exchange; e) balance between pedagogic theory and educational practices; g) development of the curriculum with imagination and creativity. Teaching became more organic and it combined humanistic studies with the active participation of students, tutors and colleagues. The whole philosophy was to consider the student a life member of the process and to encourage motivated interaction. It was important to discuss step by step of the curriculum and to be flexible and change again in case of the insurgent obsolescence of contents and tools. Students could evaluate teaching vision and perspective of learning and they were not just a passive target of the curriculum.

At the present, communication is constant and updated on the website, where there are teaching and workshops programmes in Italian and English, the teaching methodology is presented, and where also appear power point publications of lessons and international meetings with colleagues, who are invited to participate in academic lessons and interact with the students. Daily information for the semester remains available and it is then replaced by new information. The website is continuously update, keeping with current needs, hereby attempting to reach, above all, those students who cannot attend classes and would be isolated without that tool off communication. Also published in the personal site of the teacher are the results of written tests. Each academic year 300 students of General Pedagogy and 300 students of Intercultural and Citizenship Education follow the whole system of teaching and learning. To avoid dispersion an identifying number is assigned to each student, this allows to publish the data relative to the individual performance and to communicate in the respect of the legal rule about privacy. Students feel that teacher is caring for each of them, as person, and the result of that caring environment is their success with the increasing interest for the discipline.

Sharing knowledge with classics and research

The theory regarding the study of the classics of Pedagogy concerns the implementation of theoretical principles along the lines of national, European and international approaches towards education. Each student is required to study a classic which must be borrowed from the library and

must to become familiar with the library system, moreover learns how to use this cultural resource in autonomy.

Three hundred students study authors of literature on teaching and make a power point presentation of it to the entire class. Teaching programmes are organised to permit the shared enrichment of theoretical validation through qualitative and quantitative research carried out within international teams. Participating in the research are university colleagues, students and active primary and secondary school teachers.   At the conclusion of each research, the results are presented in a conference. The European dimension of teaching is constant as regards the Erasmus mobility, the European network of CiCe Children's Identity and Citizenship in Europe, and CiCea Children's Identity and Citizenship European Association. An example of this teaching + workshop + research + international exchange is the seminar programme carried out with Seton Hall University (USA). A university cooperation agreement was signed and the following activities were combined:

- teaching and workshop concerning pedagogy, interculture and citizenship;
- Daphne III, European research on children exposed to violence against their mother;
- training courses with teachers and students who participated in the Daphne III research PhD;
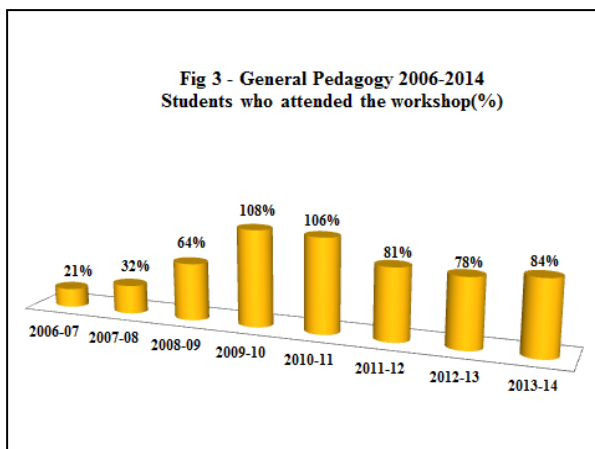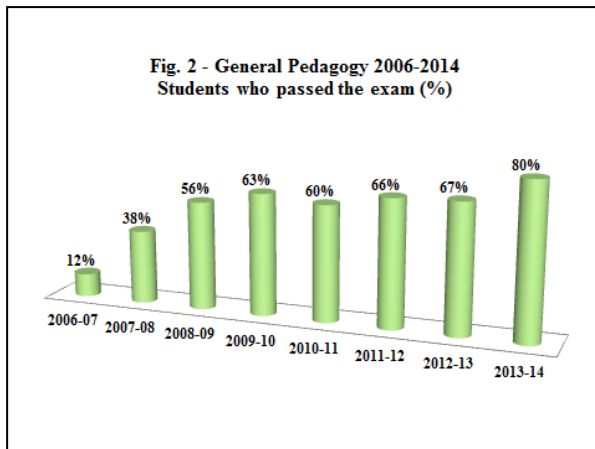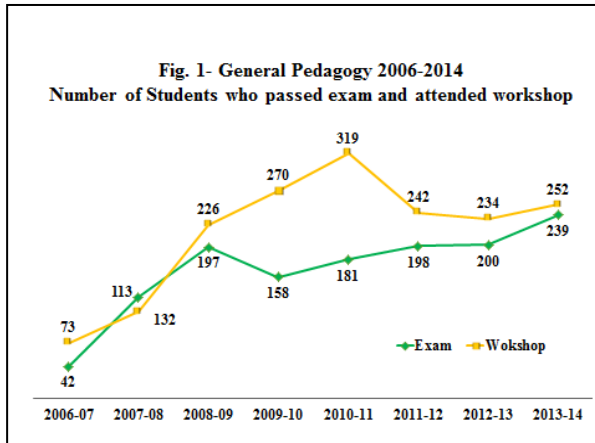- Master's in Education.

Participating in the seminar were: Italian and U.S. university students; public school teachers and principals; PhD and Master's students.

The methodology created in this teaching experience is defined as *M.I.T.E Multiple Interaction Team Learning* a composite development of knowledge.

Concrete examples of what teacher has accomplished and learned

Through ongoing and joint scientific research, teacher has learned to define problems and search for agreement with the students about the best methods for meeting their learning needs and expectations of human, social, cultural and professional growth.

Each year steadily increased the number of students who passed exam and followed workshops in General Pedagogy, as can be seen in figures from 1 to 3.

Fig. 1- General Pedagogy 2006-2014
Number of Students who passed exam and attended workshop

Fig. 2 - General Pedagogy 2006-2014
Students who passed the exam (%)

Fig 3 - General Pedagogy 2006-2014
Students who attended the workshop(%)

Concrete examples of what has been accomplished are also the creation of the *Fondo Birmingham*, foundation for intercultural education, and the *Fondo Pizzigoni* for the study of children's production according to experimental Renewed School of Giuseppina Pizzigoni, pedagogist contemporary of Maria Montessori. The material gathered is digitalised, catalogued and on-line. It has been learned how to systematise research and set up a concept of museum. Original video on educational ethnomethodology were realized with colleagues from Germany and France.

The school-university links created between Italy and Europe are still available in the multimedia section of the website.

Approaches to teaching and philosophy of teaching

The philosophy of teaching is humanistic, personalistic, active and interactive. The roots of theoretical teaching refer to Authors such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, Giambattista Vico, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Emmanuel Mounier; as regards methodology, it follows the path of modern historicism (Benedetto Croce, Giuseppe Lombardo Radice and Wilhelm Dilthey), active school (Maria Montessori and Giuseppina Pizzigoni) and symbolic interactionism (John Dewey, Jerome S. Bruner, Herbert Blumer and Norman K. Denzin). From the past to the present time the red line is drawn by the freedom of learning in a meaningful context of teaching governed by interest and by curiosity for knowing. The discovery of the freedom of knowing leads to mastery of oneself. In this active process are essential interpersonal relationship and attention to situations of real life.

The main purpose of teaching is to *render the university an environment of knowledge, research and innovation.* Task of each student is also to write an own Manual of General Pedagogy (MGP), which relates his/her enrichment through study, research, workshop and knowledge. The students describe their personal courses of study, interaction with the teachers and fellow students and with the learning environments. They outline the knowledge achieved and that will be useful from an educational point of view as persons and teachers. The MGP is unique and remains the property of the student. It is presented in class prior to the oral exam and forms part of the final evaluation.

In 2013-2014 the classroom presentation in front of the class started with the Humanism of Erasmus of Rotterdam. We noted how the reasons for peace education are related with the intercultural issue. Value training, such as mutual respect, is a democratic reply to everyone's human needs and, more specifically, a reply to situations in which possible conflicts are detected as a result of the difference between the wish for active participation and the real possibilities of becoming part of a community, the integration into which sometimes requires a long time for acceptance. The meeting of different cultures is created through the communication of values that find

the right ambience for manifesting themselves in school; children are introduced to knowledge about the personal and group histories through which behaviours of mutual respect, attention to others and education to human solidarity are fostered. Teachers who have experiences of interculture and international education within their university training and combine this experience with the methodological innovation offered by the course teacher show a higher degree of satisfaction in their studies, participate with enthusiasm and steer their learning towards preparation for the teaching role at school. The appreciation of studying increases when students participate in methodological decisions, know the course route and are successful in the test evaluations.

In order to know at what point intercultural education in Italian primary schools stands today, a short survey has been taken jointly with university students attending the degree course in Primary Education Sciences. Some students are following both the first-year course on general Pedagogy and the third-year course on Intercultural Pedagogy and citizenship. The course on general Pedagogy is dedicated to the subject of peace education, with an exam on educational theory and actions for prevention and resolving conflicts at school. The course on intercultural education and citizenship has been dedicated to defining interculture in relation to matters of human rights, the migratory phenomenon, prejudice and re-conceptualisation of the meaning of interculture from the post-second-war period to date, with specific reference to placing interculture in the discipline of international comparative studies.

Objectives to improve the professional competence

The survey had ten objectives combining professional culture and preparation to work in schools as teachers.

Using research elements to achieve excellence in teaching

- In the first place, topics were presented in the classroom, hereby encouraging the opening up of dialogue with the world outside the university, specifically national situations, with respect to which intercultural questions must necessarily be faced. For example, the landing of children at Lampedusa and their placement in the island schools has had to be confronted. This objective forms part of the theory that examines the school-world relationship, according to the *experimental method of education of Pizzigoni's Renewed School.*

Combining theory and practice, relevance and scholarly excellence

- In the second place, an endeavour was made to present the topics in the classroom, encouraging the opening up of dialogue with the world outside the university, specifically international situations. Colleagues from other institutions of higher learning and universities in Cyprus and Portugal

were invited to present concepts and practices of interculture in their countries. This objective forms part of the theory that examines the preparation of courses of *international pedagogy at university*.

- In the third place, the possibility was offered to integrate theoretical studies with field experience, by submitting a short, open-response questionnaire to those teachers willing to collaborate. This objective forms part of the theory that examines the relationship of *theory and practices in teaching and learning processes.*

- In the fourth place, it is deemed important to have students come into direct contact with the intercultural experienced at school and related by the teachers, hereby supporting the exchange between school and university, and between active teachers and teachers in training. This objective forms part of the theory that examines the *professional and intergenerational communication* among teachers.

    Applying innovative teaching methods

- In the fifth place, positive interaction was developed within the group both inside and outside the classroom hereby applying the M.I.T.E. method - Multiple Interaction Team Education. This objective forms part of the theory that examines *symbolic interactionism* as a time of learning significant, cultural symbols.

- In the sixth place, the students were given the chance to directly experience the qualitative research methodology, in both an initial and exploratory stage of application. This objective forms part of the theory that examines the one that Dewey calls inquiry-based learning and *learning by doing*.

    Applying problem-based/problem-oriented

- In the seventh place, debate in the classroom was encouraged before, during and after the interviews with the teachers. The replies were compared to what could be deduced from a relevant, widespread part of the literature on intercultural education in Italy during the period of 1992-2013. This objective forms part of the comparative theory of *problem approach*.

    Achievements in encouragement of critical thinking

- In the eighth place, the plan was to steer the study and research towards the intersection of peace and intercultural topics and organise the contents of the teachers' responses; understood from the first surveys was how they were combining educational actions in the commitment of schools to encourage education based on building up a society in which people can live together well. This objective forms part of the theory of training to *critical thinking*.

    Sustained commitment to teaching excellence, rather than one-off

- The ninth objective was to organise the entire itinerary within a *logical thought structure,* by articulating pedagogical theory and methodology of research.
- The tenth objective was to produce a written text, both autonomous and personal, where the matter studied and the results of the survey were stated. This objective forms part of the theory of the *development of personal creativity.*

Future goals for teaching in higher education

The next goals I wish to reach concern the quality of teaching and learning. A systematic agenda for achieving these goals is as follows:
- Modernise higher educational teaching in agreement with European recommendations (Vassiliou, 2013)
- Combine the knowledge of theoretical and practical pedagogy with on-line platforms in Italian and in English
- Form mind-sets favourable to teaching and humanistic studies through research and action
- Reduce drop outs and school-leaving through forms of attraction to studying and support the physically challenged by monitoring their needs and expectations
- Offer opportunities of communication and cooperation between schools and universities
- Promote international meetings
- Presentation of the results of the work methodology in international conference.

Conclusion

The modern challenge to academic teaching is to contrast drop out by students. Due to demotivation and lack of cultural interest a reasonable number of students cannot follow the pace of the study. As result of this fact some disciplines tend to be left behind especially discipline with moral and ethical aims such as Pedagogy. Having experimented the situation at the University of Rome Three, Italy, the change of teaching was the best way to motivate students to complete their curriculum in due time. During the academic years which run from 2006 to 2014 a good balance of study of classics, clear methodology of work, interactive relationship between teacher and students, low interference of external factors, concentration of interest, live understanding of education, precise schedule of work allowed students to reach the goal of the exams and to increase the attractiveness for the discipline. The success of the students in their academic performance is one of the most consistent with the recommendations of European efforts to

broaden young people's participation in the knowledge society by providing them with the tools and skills for social and professional life.

References:
Blumer, H., Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. New Jersey: Englewoood Cliffs, 1969
Bruner, J. S., In Search of Mind. Essays in Autobiography, New York: Harper and Row,1983
Croce, B., Intorno all'idealismo attuale, Firenze: Libreria della Voce, 1914
Denzin, N. K., Denzin N. K., "Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnomethodology", in Douglas J. D. (ed.), Understanding Everyday Life. Toward the Reconstruction of Sociological Knowledge, Chicago: Aldine, 1970, pp. 259-284
Dewey, J., Logic, the Theory of Inquiry, New York: Holt, 1938
Dilthey W., "Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften", III/2, iv, in Gesammelte Schriften, VII, Leipzig, Teubner, 1914
Erasmus, D., Querela pacis undique gentium eiectae profligataeque, Basil.: apud I. Frobenium, 1517
Lombardo Radice, G., Educazione e diseducazione, Roma-Firenze: Associazione per il Mezzogiorno e Bemporad, Marzocco, 1929
Montessori, M., The Montessori method : scientific pedagogy as applied to child education in "The children's houses", with additions and revisions by the author, translated from the Italian by Anne E. George; with an introduction by Henry W. Holmes, New York: Stokes, 1912
Mounier, E., Manifeste au service du personnalisme, Paris: F. Aubier, 1936
Pestalozzi, J. H., Schwanengesang, Stuttgart: Cotta,1826
Pizzigoni, G., Scuola nuova maestro nuovo scolaro nuovo, Milano: Opera Pizzigoni, 1937
Vassiliou, A., et al. (Eds.), European Commission, High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education. Report to the European Commission on Improving the quality of teaching and learning in Europe's higher education institutions, June. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2013. Retrieved December 27, 2013, from
http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20130618_en.htm
Vico, G., Il metodo degli studi del nostro tempo, a cura di Biagio Loré, Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1993