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Roberto Bergami
Editor-in-Chief
December 2010

The Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture
(ISSN: 1949-2774)

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Dear Friends of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture,

This second edition of the *Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture* represents the most outstanding presentations from our ninth annual congress in Rome, Italy. Each manuscript reflects the timeliness and appropriateness of our theme for 2010: “Uniting Cultures Through Education: Case Studies and Classroom Curriculum.” Scholars throughout the world have played a crucial part in the development of both the organization and our publications, which now includes two full-length volumes of practical studies and applications for the classroom.

These particular presentations reveal many new concepts and ideas of education as we seek to teach about other cultures and countries. Clearly, the trend is toward interactive learning, where students can discover for themselves what it means to be living in a global community. Never before have we been so close together (through communication) but so far apart (in the world).

We are confident that the “case studies and classroom curriculum” offered in this journal will enable all of us to become better teachers, professors, learners and persons. As always, we welcome additional participation in our work. For more information, please visit our website.

A sincere thank you to all those who have been involved with the Worldwide Forum during the past 10 years. The next decade holds even greater challenges and we look forward to coming up with new solutions for educators everywhere.

Sincerely,

Bruce C. Swaffield, Ph.D.
Founder and Director,
The Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture
December 2010
Dear Readers of the Journal of the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture,

On behalf of the Editors and the Editorial Board, I present you with the second volume of the Journal.

The Journal is a multi-disciplinary international publication, available online, that accepts manuscripts based on research that is theoretical, practical, empirical, or exploratory.

The authors of the featured titles in this issue come from eight different countries spread across North America, Europe, Middle East, Asia and Australia, a truly global representation. Likewise our Editorial Board features scholars from five countries across three continents.

The collection of works in this edition represents a sample of the academic papers presented at the IX Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture held in Rome on December 1 and 3, 2010. These particular papers were chosen by the Editorial Board, for inclusion in this edition of the Journal, after a double-blind review process involving at least two reviewers.

Much time and effort went into the preparation of this issue of the Journal. From the planning stages, the development of reviewing criteria, to the authors who submitted high calibre papers, to the reviewers who diligently carried out their task of providing valuable feedback, and to the authors again for submitting the final version of their research.

There are too many to thank individually, but I express my gratitude collectively to all who have worked so hard to make the Journal become a reality. I especially acknowledge the contribution and the constant dedication to the Forum by Professor Bruce Swaffield.

I encourage all the readers to consider making their own contributions in future editions of the Journal.

Sincerely,

Roberto Bergami
Editor-in-Chief
December 2010
Negotiating identities in a semiotic landscape: utilizing cinema films in foreign language teacher education

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Abstract

The relation between language, identity and culture in foreign language teaching contexts is becoming more complex and diverse in the era of postmodern globalization where learners confront border crossing experiences even in their local socio-cultural environments. As communication and broadcast technologies dominate the global scene, there is the growing need to involve media studies in any kind of language teaching enterprise. This has serious implications for teacher education as language teachers are faced with the challenge of making intercultural competence and critical media literacy part of their learning and teaching environment. The motive behind this study is to promote valuable practices in pre-service teacher preparation programs which will engender in trainees a deeper understanding of “identity” issue involved in intercultural encounters by enabling their critical interaction with a film scene in a multimodal agenda. In a dialogic approach, the study explores how discourse phenomena and other semiotic systems of meaning making can be investigated to sensitize trainees to an awareness of the ways identities are constructed, negotiated, sometimes disputed or even resisted but almost always dynamically reconstructed in the realm of film discourse. In this frame, the paper reports on a study conducted with student teachers enrolled in pre-service foreign language teacher education program in a Turkish state university and attempts to give voice to their identity and culture sensitive discussions.

Introduction

The rise of trans-national movements in the postmodern era of globalization has necessitated a redefinition of English as a foreign language (EFL) pedagogy which is not only responsive to the socio-cultural needs of the learners and but also sensitive to the relation between language and identity. There is growing expectation from non-native-speaking teachers to be informed on the complexity and variety of identities involved in intercultural encounters although their own intercultural encounters are usually through mediated discourses such as films (Etuș 2008; Pegrum, 2008). This paper explores how an awareness of “culture and identity” can be pursued as a goal in pre-service English language teacher education with reference to classroom work on film discourse carried out in a fourth grade BA course on Applied Linguistics and an MA course on Globalization and English Language Teaching in an ELT Department of a Turkish State University with the participation of 82 BA and 10 MA student teachers.

The study adheres to the socio-constructive view of identity as emerging within discourse with an orientation towards “positioning theory” where both socio-cultural forces and the dynamics of face-to-face interaction operate the scene in the construction of identities (Davies and Harré, 1990; Gee, 1996). The opening scene of the film Spanglish, produced and directed by J. L. Brooks (2004), displays identity negotiation as a process, entailing ‘discursive work’ of characters at a micro-level but also allows for an understanding of macro-social dynamics which influence their subject positions, as reflected by the word coinage in the title. Being inspired by the potential multimodality has to offer as a pedagogic

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1 This study is funded by İstanbul University Scientific Research Projects Unit, UDP 10182.
resource (Jewitt, 2008; The New London Group, 1996), the study builds upon two interacting layers of analysis: first, it addresses to the way social, political and cultural contexts of identity construction inform the underlying dynamics of the unfolding interaction between characters, then it expands the analysis to involve a discussion of how various multi-modal resources are utilized for identity “positioning”, with what effect. Thompson (1995, pp. 83-7) defines the interaction between the media of mass communication and its recipients as “mediated quasi-interaction” which involves some kind of a symbolic exchange between producers and a range of potential recipients. Individuals cannot offer immediate response but establish bonds with what is conveyed to them. This aligns with Finnegan’s (2002) view that “… no medium, from stone pebble to written page, ultimately communicates in its own right, but only as it is used and interpreted by human enactors” (cited in Durant and Lambrou, 2009, p. 190). In this context, the trainees’ film analysis and their consequent views on identity negotiation also provided the grounds for an in depth discussion of how they, as audience, position themselves in response to the world-view “mediated” through film discourse.

**Working on a film scene: *Spanglish***

*Spanglish* offers the story of Flor Moreno, a Mexican single mother who tries to exist in a new culture, essentially a “White American” culture without losing track of her ethnic identity. The scene in focus opens with Flor and her cousin Monica coming to a house to have an interview with the house owner Deborah for the housekeeping position. Their initial communication is through a speaker at the gate and they are asked to join the family at the garden. As the cousins enter the house, the narrator’s voice contextualizes their oncoming intercultural encounter in a particular socio-political frame: “Holding out had helped though. She was no longer intimidated. Working for Anglos now posed no problems. It would just be a job. White America beckoned. She stepped across the cultural divide”. The narrator’s commentary takes an ironic twist as Monica walks into the glass door while trying to reach the garden where the “White American family” is waiting for them. The written commentary which appears on the screen in capital: “FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION” positions the audience to take “crushing into a glass door” as a metaphor revealing the impossibility of removing invisible barriers between cultures in a perhaps uncommonly explicit way. The cultural divide becomes more apparent as Deborah in a panic rushes to offer Monica a frozen bag for her bleeding nose as well as some money for compensation.

The rest of the scene works on the negotiation of multiple identities displayed in the characters language choices, attitude, gestures and behaviors against a backdrop of ethnic identities placed in a “white American” versus “Mexican” dichotomy by the film. The characters’ gender, social class, economic status, personality, and ethnicity pave the way for the negotiation of identities on a multiple axes. Deborah’s rather out-of-place compliments to “Flor” as being “gorgeous”, her woman talk on wearing the same sweater, and her self-representation as an ex-manager who is now a mother of two, defined by her with an emphatic remark such as “gulp!” bring into focus her gender and personal identities. Nevertheless, the main characters’ interaction is above all socially situated, shaped by their social status and their current relation as employer and employee which sets the scene for the negotiation of power. Although Deborah’s interaction with Flor is achieved through translation, Deborah speaks fast, has long turns, uses rather inaccessible words such as “buggo buggo” and fails to give Monica enough time for translation.

The scene builds upon the juxtaposition of two characters; Deborah is shown as a rather unbalanced person causing culture conflicts by failing to assess the consequences of her rush behaviors whereas Flor is portrayed almost as a “diva”, who is beautiful, strong and has the power to assert her identity as a proud Mexican woman. Flor’s stance in having her name...
pronounced accurately by Deborah is only an implicit expression of this. Towards the ending of the scene, culture conflicts culminate as Deborah forces Flor to determine her own salary as, in her world, asking for the correct amount is an indicator of one’s own assessment of self-value. The scene closes with Deborah welcoming Flor to her new family by kissing her on the mouth, which Flor accepts in a shocked but tolerant manner.

**Road Map: studying and researching identity negotiation in films**

In this particular project, a working pedagogic agenda for researching identity by using film scenes is established by means of an interactive model which not only gives the trainees opportunity to utilize the tools of conversation analysis and multi-modal analysis for exploring the dynamics of identity negotiation as filtered through particular perspectives in film making but also encourages them to relate their findings to a general discussion of social, political and cultural issues involved in intercultural communication. The model is shown at Figure 1.

![Figure 1: A pedagogical model for researching identity negotiation in films](image)

In the first phase of instructional design, a certain amount of time was devoted to classroom discussion on certain culture relevant terms such as “values”, “beliefs”, “norms”, “taboos” and on the blurred lines between “intercultural”, “interpersonal”, “international”, “interethnic” communication. The trainees’ comparative perspectives on these notions helped them build up a shared understanding of terminology to be used in their future discussions and written assignments.

The second phase involved further pedagogical input and related discussion on the nonverbal and verbal elements of discourse which contribute to meaning making and in the third phase, the trainees found the opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice by initially attending to the nonverbal elements of the scene which they consider to be salient in terms of intercultural communication. The fourth phase of the instructional design focused on the interplay between the verbal and non-verbal mode in offering a representation of identity negotiation. The classroom discussions were geared towards a socio-constructivist view of identity which is defined as a multilayered, complex and dynamic phenomenon emerging through the unfolding discourse. The trainees started working on the transcript of the scene.
and discussed how various multimodal resources such as “word choice”, “pauses”, “silence”, “turn-taking”, “topic nomination”, “gestures” “stress” “body space” and “terms of addressing” contribute to the construction of identities in what ways. They were asked to relate their analysis to Tracy’s (2002) categorization of identities as master, personal interactional and relational identities for framed discussion. In this context, master identities are defined through demographic categories such as age, gender, nationality or race whereas personal identities are taken as the characteristics and personality traits unique to an individual. The relational and interactional identities are defined as being rather sensitive to the communicative situation where interlocutors constantly define and negotiate who they are to each other by utilizing various interactional resources. In this theoretical framework, the participants managed to develop an understanding of individuals as possessing “a multitude of social identities, many of which can be relevant simultaneously” (Firth and Wagner, 1997, p. 292). They were encouraged to see that researching identity is not a matter of assigning certain pre-existing categories to people but is the exploration of how various aspects of a person’s identity entwine within social interaction. Young’s (2008, p.39) discussion of the notion of “co-construction”, which is inspired by Jacoby and Ochs’s (1995) definition of it, provided the trainees with a theoretical frame for pursuing identity study:

[Co-construction] refers not only to work on the meaning of words but, more generally, to the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally meaningful reality.

The trainees’ structured reflection on the multimodal representations of the scene largely determined the route of the classroom work in the following three phases of the instructional design. Although “forms of addressing” did not emerge as a marked feature of identity negotiation in earlier classroom discussions, this time 59 participants from a total of 74 opted for “terms of addressing” as a significant component of identity negotiation. Trainee responses revolved around two specific incidents: the way the characters introduce themselves in their initial meeting and the way Flor guides Deborah to pronounce her name correctly.

The following two phases of the implementation process entailed personalization of the learning experience. First, participants were asked to pinpoint a critical incident in the scene and narrate it from a particular character’s perspective. Narrating an event always requires a re-f raming of the experience so by being the author and the animator of their texts (Goffman, 1981; Schiffrin, 2006), they developed an awareness of how their own cultural beliefs and attitudes governed their choice of the incident and influenced their reflections on it. This activity has provided the grounds for a discussion of similarities and differences that exist between their home culture and the culture elements portrayed in the film.

One potential danger in using media resources for raising intercultural awareness is that rather than fulfilling that mission, the media texts might lead onto further “otherization” or “stereotyping” if the pedagogical approaches adopted just focus on “similarities” and/or “difference”. Therefore, at the final stage of the model, trainees’ reflective work was driven to a critical discussion of how Spanglish offers cultural representations and from which particular perspectives.

Research methodology and the discussion of the research findings

The model was applied in a period of three weeks, which comprised 6 hours of classroom teaching and a substantial amount of time devoted to out-of-class written assignments. Data was collected from a variety of resources such as written reports, checklists, field notes and short notes kept by the participants on the worksheets. Collection of data from a variety of
resources ranging from checklist to reflective reports enabled the use of qualitative and quantitative tools for analysis. Particular themes recurrently occurring in trainees’ written responses in different phases of the instructional model were identified as “key” concepts and were traced in the whole body of their written works in a cyclical manner. Frequency counts were applied when analyzing data from checklists. The discussion of the research findings gives voice to trainee reflections on “key themes” as offered within separate quotations for different trainee responses and the names are not given to ensure anonymity. It is important to note that participant populations vary with respect to the data collected from different components of the instructional design. Trainees used English in their written work and for research ethics their work was not assessed.

Non-verbal aspects of film discourse: awareness-raising on audience perception

While watching the scene for the first time, the trainees were provided with an open-ended list of non-verbal elements of discourse such as gestures, gaze, personal space, paralanguage features and were asked to tick the ones which they found significant in terms of identity negotiation. They were also asked to add in new entries to the list as needed and take margin notes on the significance of the selected items. The non-verbal aspects of communication found salient by 82 trainees are shown in Figure 2.

One significant finding is the way trainees’ initial encounter with a media text is influenced by their own cultural repertoire. It is not surprising to see that a great majority of students (76) identified “kiss” as a marked feature of the scene, partly because the film explicitly draws attention to this cross-cultural variation but mainly because a woman kissing another woman on her lips even as a sign of intimacy to be displayed among family members is a kind of behavior which would be considered “weird”, “striking”, “shocking” and a “taboo”, “incomprehensible” and “unacceptable” in their own home culture, as elaborated in 46 trainee responses.
A similar attitude can be observed in their focus on “sitting” (48) and “meeting/greeting” (41). Their reasons vary; for some, “sitting around a table” was a sign of “equal status”, “intimacy”, “friendly atmosphere”, reminding them of “a family roundtable meeting” but for others, it caused a negative perception of the initial meeting which is “strange”, “too friendly”, “too informal” and “not taken so seriously”. The contrastive views on the characters’ relative positioning to each other in a film scene indicate that it is the respondents’ own cultural expectations that govern alternative readings of this meeting. As reflected in 33 participants’ comments, Deborah’s inviting her visitors to the garden instead of meeting them at the gate, the family members’ sitting around the table in the garden and just waving hands to the visitors instead of standing up and showing them the way to the garden were some of the behaviors which they think would cause “misunderstandings” and “conflicts” in their home cultures.

The trainees were able to attend to the silent aspects of face-to-face interaction: “eye contact”, (46), “gaze” (23), “smiling” (52) are taken as effective tools for achieving successful communication and creating “a friendly atmosphere” but in some cases they also turn out to be the signs of “miscomprehension” as characters try to compensate for communication gaps.

The trainees’ reflections on the paralinguistic aspects of the characters’ talk such as tone (40), loudness (33), pace (22) and even the absence of speech such as silence (40) raised issues related to culture, identity and power. For some trainees loudness, detected in Deborah’s speech, was a means of exercising “power” and for some others it indicates “interest in the topic” and “excitement”. However, their discussions on “pace” (22) and “silence” (40) revealed a common perspective: Deborah would not change her habit of speaking fast neither for Flor who doesn’t speak English nor for Monica who struggles to translate her long speech in the short time given to her. As one trainee comments, “The American lady expects others to adjust themselves to her culture and language”, while with a very limited corpus of “five Spanish words”, she herself finds it a hard and rather frustrating experience to come up with the correct articulation of “a Mexican woman’s name”. As another respondent discusses, it is the outward expression of her “bossy” attitude and her “social status” which cause “communication problems”.

Negotiation and co-construction of identities: forms of addressing

The trainees’ extensive work on the transcript of the scene brings into focus the role “forms of addressing” plays in identity negotiation and construction. Their reflections revealed an awareness of multiple identities that are available to a character in a specific interactional context and a due focus on various semiotic systems such as word-choice, body movement, gestures, eye-contact, pauses, turn-taking mechanisms in the co-construction of identities.

Person Reference and Identity: “Call me Deborah”

The opening scene of Spanglish gives perspectives on first meetings, the way characters introduce themselves and address to each other constitute an important aspect of their initial identity negotiation. Monica addresses Deborah as “Mrs. Clasky”, as would be expected in the context of a job application where parties meet for the first time. Deborah altercasts the status assigned to her as employer by asking them to call her Deborah. She openly expresses her wish to see the house keeper as part of her family as for her, “it’s all about first names and closeness”.

From 33 respondents who commented on this issue, only 13 subjects interpreted Deborah’s choice to be addressed by her first name as a sign of “informality”, “intimacy”, “
“closeness” or “friendliness”. For the others, this entails “relational identity” only in terms of power relations as she remembers to ask Flor’s name only after minutes of talk and Monica’s name remains unknown throughout the scene. Deborah’s use of deictic mark, “guys” is also interpreted in the context of power relations; for one trainee, “it’s not a suitable word for a job interview”, and for another, it is an indicator of “personal identity”, as being “friendly” and “close” but also builds up “interactional identity”, as she is the one who “determines the sides like ‘I’m the boss’”.

There were also few trainees (6) who related Deborah’s wish to be called out by her first name to her gender identity: it is about her desire to be seen as an “independent woman”, a way of foregrounding her “master identity”, and an attempt to keep up first name which remains “stable”. As the following statement exemplifies, there were also responses which relocated a gender based approach in an ethnic frame of individualism versus collectivism:

She wants to be called by her first name not her husband’s last name (Mrs. Clasky). She is an independent person. She’s making a stand whereas the Mexican lady introduces her cousin by means of her family tie and doesn’t feel it necessary to introduce her with her first name.

Co-constructing identities: saying Florrrrr

According to the participants, the interactional sequence where Flor makes Deborah pronounce her name accurately is a good example of identity negotiation. The unit exemplifies a change of footing, defined by Goffman (1979; 1981) as a change in the roles of interlocutors and their stance to each other, invoking a change in the construction of identities:

Extract 1: From Spanglish

| DEBORAH    | What’s your name † (.) Llamo (.) it’s one of my five Spanish words ‡ |
| FLOR       | Flor Moreno |
| DEBORAH    | (.) Floor |
| FLOR       | Mmm (.) Flor |
| DEBORAH    | Floor † |
| FLOR       | No Florrr |
| DEBORAH    | (0.2) Floooor |
| FLOR       | Floridaaaaa |
| BERNY      | Means flower ↓ right † |
| MONICA     | Yes (.) flower yes |
| DEBORAH    | (. ) FLOOR what I walk on right † |
| FLOR       | Florrr |
| EVELYN     | Florrr |
| EVERYONE   | Florrr |
| DEBORAH    | Was there some school of the ear that I’m flunking out of right now † |

There were 32 commentaries on this interactional unit, 14 trainees discussing it from Flor’s point of view and the remaining 18 elaborating on Deborah’s positioning in talk. The juxtaposition of characters created by the film makers was also evident in trainees’ approach to the analysis of the interaction. This unit is a sign of “resistance” and “courage”, an exercise of “power” on Flor’s part, calling on her “ethnic” identity while also giving clues about her “personal” identity as a “conservative”, “stubborn”, “determined” person who wants to earn “respect”. The following commentary by a trainee reveals the close bond between personal and ethnic identities in intercultural contexts:
Ethnic identity is the invisible side of personality in a way. Name is a very concrete part of our ethnic identity. That’s why it’s very important. In my opinion, this is the main reason why Flor Moreno insists on making sure that they can produce her name correctly. Otherwise, her name just means a simple thing, which is the “floor” you walk on whole day while it means “flower”.

Deborah, on the other hand, is described as a “stubborn”, “inquisitive”, “curious but impatient” person who is “respectful to other cultures” and who is “determined”, “caring”, and “attentive” enough to keep trying till the very end. There were also negative remarks on her being a “relatively obsessed” and “unbalanced” person who is dying to “prove herself to [others]” and “be the center of interest”. Some of the trainees adopted a gender-sensitive perspective in their discussion of this discursive unit as reflected in one statement, “a man wouldn’t bother so much to pronounce the name correctly”.

Researching identity should not be equated with the assignment of certain pre-existing categories to people but rather focus on the construction of identities within social interaction. Trainee commentaries focusing on interactional identities displayed this kind of awareness. As one respondent puts it; “interactional identities are coming out instantly and spontaneously relying on the events or experiences that characters go through”. Respondents addressed to “pauses”, “gestures”, “eye-contact” and “other-initiated repairs”, “movement of the upper body”, “smiling” in discussing the change in the participant roles of the characters. As one trainee observes, negotiation over the correct pronunciation of the name “changes Deborah’s ‘attitudes to the conversation’ and consequently ‘changes the kind of relationship’ they have portrayed so far”. The analysis of the micro elements of discourse enabled the trainees to see identity construction as a jointly accomplished work by the conversation partners. Thus, according to one trainee, only when Deborah starts to act as a willing student, by establishing direct eye-contact, leaning towards Flor with full concentration that Flor finds the ideal ground for invoking her personal and ethnic identities:

[S]he feels relaxed and that interaction has helped her to behave in that way. That sincere interaction has helped her show her true personality and give way to the fact that she will stick to her “national identity” in her insistence on having her name pronounced in the correct way.

Critical media awareness: films as resources for researching identity

Written reports of the respondents at the final stage of the research indicate that a great majority of student-teachers (74 from a total of 80) consider films to be effective tools in gaining intercultural experience. Nevertheless, a critical reflection on how films might influence the way people see the world was still missing in their discussions. Only 22 respondents described films as “representational sources” which might potentially offer “exaggerated”, “subjective”, “stereotypical” representations of different cultures, not to be “over-generalized” or “mistaken for real life”. There were 14 references to the way the film portrays “White American” as “rich” imposed by the visual representation of a big house, a big car, and a back garden with a pool. The most reactionary responses emerged from the trainee commentaries (15) on Deborah’s paying money to Monica after the accident and her acceptance of this money. This was found to be an overgeneralization, giving a negative impression of the cultures depicted in the film. A deconstructive reading of the film was almost totally missing in trainee reflections: there was no reference to the narrative voice and the written commentary assigning ethnic affiliations to the characters.

Nevertheless, the respondents’ extensive work on the discursive elements of identity negotiation enabled them to see the complexities involved in human communication and the need to refrain from early judgments:
The film is about two cultures, two women, two different social roles, two different characters trying to share intercultural communication.

In Spanglish the communication between different cultures also brings ideas about interaction of different identities. Sometimes it was their ethnic identity and at other times it was their gender-based identity which was foregrounded. While Deborah’s ethnic identity was more powerful audience might have a negative opinion of her. But when her gender-based identity was foregrounded they may have sympathy for her. In the film by these devices you come close to the characters. You can not make harsh judgments about them.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to help prospective English language teachers develop an awareness of how films conceptualize the negotiation of multiple identities in intercultural encounters by making them research partners in the exploration of different semiotic systems of meaning making. Raising intercultural awareness via films which necessitate a critical perspective on the subjective positions adopted by film makers turns out to be a challenging pedagogical task in the absence of first hand experiences of the target cultures depicted in the film. It not only requires a sensitive awareness of the way the film discourse connects its themes and characterization to the political, social and cultural contexts in the outer world but also necessitate an equal emphasis on how the differing attitudes, identities and cultural reserve of the audience inform the perception and alternative readings of this discourse. To this end, the study proposed a framed pedagogical model which was also flexible enough to give trainees freedom in finding their own route for identity research. The analysis of student teachers’ reflective work revealed that they developed an understanding of the multifaceted and complex nature of identity, which is evasive and subject to change depending on the context of social interaction. Though still limited in scope, the trainees’ critical interaction with the film discourse enabled them to see how their own identities and culture contribute to the co-construction of identities in the realm of films. The following discussion of a student-teacher offers a conclusive remark in that it voices the need for a self-reflective lens in researching identity:

The film, like many other works of art creates innumerable examples of never stable but constantly shifting identities in the mind of the audience. On one hand, Spanglish seems to make use of stereotypical notions of otherization but on the other hand prompts the audience to question his/her own notions of others’ identities, the so called ‘intruders’ willing or unwilling participation in co-constructing other people’s identities. . . . [H]owever unbiased or goody standpoint you might try to have as an onlooker, you will also realize the existence of entrenched cultural barriers between societies already constructed in your understanding of the cross-cultural.

Transcription Conventions

\( \uparrow \) rising intonation
\( \downarrow \) falling intonation
(\( \cdot \)) short pause
(\( \text{sec.} \)) pause in seconds
CAPITOL more volume (loudness)
stress stressed word
References


Globalization and Online Learning: Educating in Transformative Times

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Abstract
This paper describes the leading forces worldwide that are driving change in education, and emphasizes the adult learner focus needed in higher education to support the development of global citizenship and transferable skills for an uncertain future. Evidence of this focus is found in the steady surge in online learning, which has great potential to connect learners, disperse information, and effect global change. Critically conscious educators seeking to provide a holistic curriculum that includes social and moral development may choose to integrate diversity, personal responsibility and civic agency as co-curricular threads, replete with opportunities for self-directed learners to translate thought into action.

Transformative Times
Given the world’s dynamic and evolving political, economic, social and technological changes, it is evident that we face global forces which affect education. Friedman (2006) implies that the trends and technologies that have advanced our abilities to communicate are the same trends and technologies that drive our increasingly flat world, one that is described as the information age and characterized by our need to develop transferable skills related to context, emotional expression, and synthesis, in order to compete in the global market. Essays in Essays in The Leader of the Future (Schein, 2006) echo this emphasis not on technological facility but on critical consciousness. They recommend that today’s learners and leaders develop and cultivate the ability to think like an anthropologist, demonstrate the skills of a family therapist, and apply creative and artistic instincts – all to prepare for an uncertain future that awaits. Learners today are facing a future unlike any other. In fact, as Dailey-Hebert et al. (2008) explain, we no longer follow a script – a script in which we go to school, get a job, start a family, purchase a home, work until retirement with the same company, and then retire. We face an unknown future in which kids out of high school form million-dollar dot.com companies, the retirement system we plan to utilize may not exist at the time we retire, and the skills needed to get and maintain a job change in accordance with new technological advances. Indeed, we now face an unscripted future characterized by:

1. Vast unprecedented social, economic, employment, environmental, technological and global changes affecting citizens and the world.
2. Changes so unique and wide-ranging that researchers may have no data for how to assess their impacts or how to deal with them.
3. Changes that extend beyond the partisan politics.
4. Changes bringing about increased perception of personal and global impact or even risk. (Dailey-Hebert et al., 2008, p. 92)

During such times of massive transformation, adult educators who plan to integrate emergent technologies for learning must evaluate the ways in which online learning can connect learners and experiences for the greater good. Higher education now is offering traditional courses to persons in all stages of lifelong learning, including those in the traditional range of 18-22 years, full-time working professionals who seek education to maintain or advance within their job/career, and an older group of knowledge consumers.
often retired) who want courses to expand their knowledge or skills. Educators and institutions in higher education today must consider alternative ways to reach the various populations of learners to identify ways to address their varying and dynamic needs in a society that continues to change.

Online learning has become a popular modality for learning today and first emerged as a mere tool to support and enhance learning. Yet over the past decade it has matured into a pedagogical/andragogical approach to teaching and learning, not just a modality (Anderson & Elloumi, 2004; Chickering & Ehrmann, 1996; Khan, 1997). As educators recognize that the medium is inextricable from the process of knowledge construction employed by the learner, online learning pedagogies are being used in a variety of mainstream environments, including classroom-based (face-to-face), blended learning, and fully online courses.

Since its introduction to higher education, online learning has continued to advance and develop and to expand the range of potential audiences. It attracts both traditional and non-traditional (adult) learners. In fact, based on a survey of approximately 2500 colleges and universities nationwide in the United States (Allen & Seaman, 2009), over 4.6 million students enrolled in at least one online course during the Fall 2008 term. This 17 percent growth rate (over the previous year) for online enrollments far exceeds the 1.2 percent overall growth of the higher education student population. Presently more than one in four higher education students now take at least one course online (Allen & Seaman, 2009). This growth depicts a new generation of learners who seek flexibility in an open and distributed learning environment (Khan, 2005). In the midst of emergent technologies, a growing population of learners, urgent needs for connection and linkages worldwide and for socially responsible individual and collective action for the common good, now is the time to align these historic phenomena to create significant change in the world of education and thereby improve our global society. Learners no longer seek knowledge from books alone, or from the sage omnipotent professor. Instead they prefer non-linear learning paths through multiple mediums in multiple modalities. Learners today navigate online search engines, create collaborative documents, host videoconferences across oceans, and connect virtually with colleagues and friends by using the palm of their hand and the touch of a button. They collaborate in new ways to co-construct and co-create meaning and context. They no longer wish to receive information passively but prefer to be part of its creation and to attain learning that is relevant to their lives.

With the changing world dynamics and demands placed upon the workforce today, it will become more imperative for all learners to develop a dynamic toolkit with knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are transferable across several disciplines and a succession of careers, rather than a static body of information. Adult learners today, armed with technological advances that shape our world, call for more significant and time-saving ways to connect, collaborate, and create and make meaningful change.

Transferable Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

What are the skills and traits (known to some educators as disposition and attitude) that are considered important in the workplace and society, and which can be integrated into formal education programs? We advocate the development of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate moral and civic agency, and critical consciousness.

Our list, which is a work in progress, includes both cognitive and affective characteristics. Purposefully combined with ample emphasis on reflection, they enable the development of human capital which can be applied in any situation. These qualities are not commonly associated with formal education for adults or online learning. In the sections that follow we
will explain their relevance and offer our suggestions for assimilating them into an adult learner-focused online degree program.

**Critical Consciousness, and Moral & Civic Agency**

The development of moral agency within a person is dependent upon three points of awareness. First, a number of alternative or opposite courses of action must exist. Second, we must know of these alternatives and understand such options. Third, after the existence and knowledge of choices is evident, comes the freedom to choose (Christofferson, 2006). Children begin to acquire moral agency at a very young age, as they are taught right from wrong and experience the consequences of their actions. One’s sense of morality is socially developed, and embedded through repeated formative contacts with family or other caregivers. Schooling also assumes a pivotal role in developing moral agency, as teachers supplement parents in modelling appropriate conduct. Clearly, education involves much more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills. Once the learner discovers and follows an inner moral compass, it becomes possible to contribute meaningfully to one’s community and ultimately to facilitate the transition to a global peaceful society (*One Country*, 2003).

And while moral agency may be introduced in the primary years, it is not until adulthood that moral agency becomes more evident and is a significant part of decision-making related to work, home, life and relationships. The adult learner, in particular, harnesses a unique capacity to integrate moral agency into various aspects of life and learning, and has the opportunity to further define and reflect upon values and beliefs. This capacity strengthens the ability to relate sound moral judgements and decision-making processes to their context in learning, to their ability to understand multiple perspectives, and to their willingness to explore scenarios in which there is not one clear “right” answer. They have the ability to stretch and achieve higher order thinking that analyse, evaluate, and assess ideas in a critical and reflective way. Yet, this innate ability of adult learners is over overlooked in the curriculum and preparation of andragogy, whereas it should serve as one of the cornerstones for the learner’s development and toward creating a more stable globalized society.

Many educators through the years have recognized the potential of Freire’s (1973, 1985) work to foster intercultural peace and harmony as well as moral development. The concept of critical consciousness complements that of civic agency, which Boyte (2007, p. 1) describes as "the capacity to act cooperatively and collectively on common problems across our differences of view." Here a visualized opportunity for progress marries acceptance of personal responsibility for the welfare of all. The concept of civic agency includes a range of capacities such as confidence, self-reliance, creativity, and collective action over new landscapes, without a map – or script (Boyte, 2008).

It would seem that moral agency, in which we heed the counsel of our inner voice, is a necessary precursor to the formation of a more outwardly directed posture, critical consciousness. Having been forced into exile for 15 years following a coup d’etat in 1964, Freire was intimately familiar with social issues including the freedom of expression. He drew an important distinction between mere contacts and relationships, noting:

“To be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world…to experience that world as…capable of being known...Men, unlike animals, are not only in the world but with the world...their relations with the world become impregnated with consequence” (Freire, 1973, p. 3-4).

According to Freire, the evolutionary development of critical awareness occurs through reflection followed by action. Action is essential because it is the process of changing reality, as Freire explains:
“The important thing is to help men (and nations) help themselves, to place them in consciously critical confrontation with their problems, to make them the agents of their own recuperation” (Freire, 1973, p. 16).

The resulting emancipation of the inner person reveals the transformation:

“…man is an open being...as men amplify their power to perceive and to increase their capacity to enter into dialogue not only with other men but with their world, they become ‘transitive’...it leads him to replace his disengagement with existence with almost total engagement” (Freire, 1973, p. 17).

Globalized, Transformed Online Adult Learners

Unlike traditional college students, many adult learners, as a result of life experience and inward personal growth, recognize the need for social responsibility yet they lack the resources, guidance and support for developing and implementing a relevant engagement project. And in today’s globalized society that is closely connected by technology, it is imperative for educators and institutions of higher education to explore and unearth new strategies for integrating these elements of development into the curriculum of adult learners.

We propose the following strategies for engaged, transformative online learning:

1. Topical debates via synchronous or asynchronous means
2. Problem based learning
3. Case study methods in partnerships with organizations that can participate online
4. Service e-learning
5. Virtual communities of learning
6. Utilizing mobile devices to record critical learning incidents real-time at work
7. Videoconferencing to gain multiple viewpoints and co-construct new knowledge
8. Integrative inquiry into issues and questions of global importance
9. Transformative, high-impact educational practices and learning events
10. Ethical, cross-cultural inquiry to exchange perspectives with diverse others
11. Social entrepreneurship projects
12. Blended modalities to combine small and large group efforts
13. Collaborative meaning making using wikis, blogs and live chats
14. Capstones to synthesize and evaluate solutions to complex global problems

Conclusion

Online learning has spawned a new subset of learners and provided access to high quality education for those who have been underrepresented and unserved in the past. With expanding target populations, including students, professionals, and knowledge consumers, online learning will continue to be expanded and deployed to meet the needs of these and other learners. It is the role of those in higher education to identify ways in which online learning can add value to the learning process and promote lifelong learning.

Adult education as a discipline must anticipate and address the needs of learners, and develop appropriate methods to reach them. We must resolve to use technology tools to connect learners and experiences and to create appropriate learning environments that move from structural to transactional to transformational. Although these are lofty goals, the tensions of the transition to a global peaceful society can be mitigated if we look to a more fully articulated model of optimal human development, substantiated through cross-cultural analysis. We must emphasize the fundamental importance of possessing a global vision, for one of the milestones of critical consciousness involves a new framework for moral empowerment in an era of globalization.
References


The Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention—
A Model-UN Simulation Stimulating Students into Action

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Abstract
The following study provides a theoretical discussion of the educational, personal, interpersonal, and intercultural benefits of Model UN simulations before presenting and discussing the qualitative and quantitative results of research carried out among participants of YPAC 2009 and 2010, two parliamentary sessions of the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention, which is made up of seven Alpine nations. It is concluded that such simulations and similar platforms allowing youth participation offer an all-encompassing learning experience which will make a difference in students’ life. Interculturally-relevant findings, which exceed the scope of this paper, would be worth exploring in more detail in a separate study.

Keywords: model UN, youth parliament, simulation, intercultural learning, collaborative learning, civil political discourse

Introduction
The following study will take a closer look at YPAC, the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention, an offshoot of the Alpine Convention, and as such a simulation in the Model United Nations tradition. Originating in the United States in the first half of the 20th century and emulating first the League of Nations and later its successor organization, the United Nations, from which the name derives, Model-UN Assembly sessions and similar platforms like Global Classrooms allow more than half a million adolescents around the world to experience political decision-making processes first-hand, irrespective of whether they attend prestigious first-world colleges or disadvantaged schools in third-world countries.

Ranging from local to international representative bodies, such youth parliaments are, in fact, role-playing simulations in the literal sense, as student delegates take on the roles of ambassadors or members of parliament, debating, and deciding on, issues relevant to the well-being of their communities or the future of our planet.

However, their importance as an experiential, cooperative, and intercultural learning tools renders them much more meaningful from a pedagogical, (inter-) personal, and societal perspective than the terms “play” and “simulation” would suggest. This is precisely what United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged when he addressed Global Classrooms in Los Angeles in 2008:

You are here to step into the shoes of UN Ambassadors—to draft resolutions, to plot strategy, to negotiate with your allies as well as your adversaries. Your goal may be to resolve a conflict, to cope with a natural disaster or to bring nations together on an issue like climate change. You may be playing a role, but you are also preparing for life. You are acting as global citizens.

Following a theoretical discussion outlining the educational value of youth parliaments, a quantitative and qualitative study involving former participants of YPAC will be presented, whose evaluation of the parliamentary session and the additional programme activities which
they attended might provide educators with useful suggestions as to the optimal organization of similar learning experiences.

**YPAC—A cooperative learning environment imparting citizenship skills**

1. **YPAC, the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention**

YPAC, the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention, evolved as a parliamentary simulation from the Alpine Convention. Signed and ratified in the 1990s by the eight Alpine Nations (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia, Switzerland), representing roughly 11 million citizens, and by the European Union as a whole, the Alpine Convention is an agreement “for the overall protection and the sustainable development of the Alps” (CIPRA, 2011). With the majority being members of the European Union, the free movement of goods, capital, and labour across borders has been a fact of life for their citizens for many years now. Yet, they are still distinct nations characterised by their own cultural heritage and languages, whose historical development has left its mark on their political structures and economic infrastructure, and has given rise to a unique set of beliefs, norms, and values. However, the Alps, the biggest mountain range in Europe, while initially perceived as a natural border, along which political frontiers were drawn and accordingly stifled the exchange of people, ideas, and lifestyles, have in the meantime come to be seen as a geographical entity and a "conceptual category shared by several protagonists". Accordingly, collaboration and "shared management" of this mountainous environment which constitutes an "institutional realit[y]" is essential (Rudaz, 2009, pp. 27-31) for its stakeholder communities.

In order to instil a sense in young people of their responsibility as members of these communities, YPAC was founded in 2006 by teachers representing schools in seven Alpine countries with the aim of organising

“parliamentary debates in which young representatives of all member states discuss regional Alpine issues, from the points of view of young people, and decide upon Resolutions. Following this, the results will be handed on to the Committees of the Alpine Convention and will be accompanied by recommendations for action.”

Like similar Model-UN simulations such as the *International Youth Parliament*, a global network of young activists in over 150 countries, the *Youth Parliament: Latin America— Europe—Africa*, encompassing 4,000 students in 10 countries ready to discuss the Millennium Development Goals, or the *European Youth Ecological Parliament*, YPAC offers a platform for 16-19-year-old students to practice active citizenship and engage in meaningful political dialogue resulting in policy recommendations that may actually make a difference and further the interests of their communities. An outline of the topics dealt with in the past—sustainable development and eco-friendly tourism; water and energy resources; or demographic change—shows that these reflect issues which are highly relevant and of pressing concern to young and old alike, with applications in the here and now, and far-reaching implications for today and tomorrow. Accordingly, it is imperative that viable solutions benefiting all be found in a collaborative effort.

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2 *Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention—Handbook*. For details about the organisation and the procedures involved in its annual parliamentary sessions, see [http://www.jugendparlament.tsn.at](http://www.jugendparlament.tsn.at).
2. YPAC and experiential global learning

A perfect example of Rodriguez’ (2004) “world-focused pedagogy” based on the experience of diversity and—often constraining influence—of the interconnectedness of the actors on the world stage, youth parliaments will affect intellectual as well as socio-emotional learning and thus have lasting effects at the behavioural level as a reflection of a heightened “sense of community, altruism” (Cooper & Robinson, 2000, p. 12), and responsibility. Interestingly enough, it is a student parliament’s embeddedness in collaborative processes from beginning to end that creates such awareness in the first place, with the rewards of joining forces rather than opening fronts in turn stimulating future cooperation to achieve individual and group goals.

Apart from providing motivational stimulus in the form of a natural common agenda, i.e. mutual goals, the achievement of which will be beneficial for all, such simulations accordingly provide virtual textbook settings for collaborative learning to take place as they allow for the interaction of several prerequisite factors (Guske & Guske, 2011, pp. 297-298, following Johnson’s 2003 model):

1) positive (goal) interdependence, i.e., awareness that the group’s performance depends on all members’ giving their best and being helped in their efforts, which translates into 2) individual accountability and personal responsibility, i.e., willingness to assume individual as well as shared and overall responsibility; 3) promotive interaction, i.e., enhancing other group members’ performances by sharing knowledge and resources, which requires 4) appropriate use of interpersonal and group skills, e.g., establishing trusting relationships, sharing decision-making processes, or resolving conflict situations; and 5) group processing in the form of (self-) reflection, feedback, and, if necessary, review of interactive processes.

Finally, conflict-management skills will be imparted rather unobtrusively in the first instance precisely because a student parliament is a role-playing simulation. After all, for stepping around in somebody else’s shoes in itself entails seeing things through another person’s eyes, i.e. taking his or her perspective, being open to others’ worldviews, and thus suspending stereotyping and rash value judgments. Just as importantly, however, it has been found that, contrary to appearances, operating in individualistic, competitive—western—cultures, which YPAC’s students are predominantly representative of, may actually result in conflict avoidance, evoking showdown scenarios where winning supersedes all other impulses, or suspension of interpersonal relationships (Tjosvold, 1997, p. 26). Student parliaments, then, through the collective, mutually supportive endeavour of making equitable decisions, which requires addressing the problem fair and square in the first place and then discussing it constructively by thinking through a number of alternative, often controversial, routes to solve it, actually provide a platform for “positive conflict” (p. 25) to arise. For learning to integrate opposing views holds the key to acquiring critical-thinking skills and thus the ability to develop creative problem-solving strategies, as well as to establishing the social cohesion required to achieve individual and mutual success—both desirable outcomes to strive for by tomorrow’s global citizens committed to furthering the common good.

The Study

The study, an extensive evaluation of educational, personal, interpersonal, and intercultural aspects pertaining to a youth parliament, employed quantitative and qualitative methods, i.e. a questionnaire, individual interviews, and notes taken by a participant observer in the field as well as delegates’ entries on the YPAC website and its respective webpages. Of
some 120 students who had taken part either in YPAC 2009 or 2010, 34 (19 females, 15 males) agreed to take part in the survey. They were between 16 and 20 years of age and represented all the seven nations YPAC is made up of. For reasons of space the results will be presented in a way that weaves quantitative data and verbatim quotes together in an explanatory fashion so that the focus in the discussion section can be on elaborating the most important findings.

Results

1. Organisation

a. Selection of delegates

Satisfaction with the selection process was highest (82%) in those countries which run a kind of schoolwide competition requiring interested students to submit a letter of motivation, while the majority of candidates chosen by a teacher of a subject deemed to be relevant, e.g., History and Political Studies in the case of the German team, complained about a “lack of objective criteria”, and hence “transparency” (66%), and thought the exclusion of gifted students majoring in other subjects was unfair (51%) and might be a loss to their team in terms of reasoning and argumentative power (86%). They reasoned that real members of parliament are from all walks of life, representing a variety of academic disciplines and professions, so a youth parliament should also allow for a variety of talent to unfold and “not be limited to students from the humanities.”

b. Make-up of committees

While more than a third of the subjects (36%) conceded that, from an intercultural learning perspective, it made sense to ensure that each committee include delegates from all member countries, 54% objected on the grounds that such a composition was not reflective of real-life parliamentary scenarios. However, only 11% did not feel as comfortable as members of cross-cultural teams as they thought they would have on “national teams” only. The reason they gave was that, especially in the beginning, they were “not quite sure what level of formality or politeness was expected of us” (73%), whether they would have to tread carefully when discussing certain topics (23%), such as poverty levels in a member state, or whether they would be able to express themselves in English in a nuanced way without being able to take recourse to their native language, if need be (19%). However, with the benefit of hindsight, all the respondents mostly attributed the enhancement of their perspective-taking skills to having to find “consensus within a ‘mixed’ team” (70%) and only to a lesser degree to having to accommodate others’ perspectives when defending and revising their draft resolutions (30%).

c. Tasks prior to the session

A small percentage of respondents (14%) reported uncertainty as to how to present themselves in the online portrait required of each candidate, citing difficulties in choosing the right tone/level of formality and the proper topics to address in this snapshot of themselves. While only 2% did not have a social network profile at all, and the rest were very active (27%), active (49%), or regular (24%) Facebook et al. users, all were aware of the need to highlight their academic interests and achievements rather than come forth with too
much personal information, but wanted to avoid coming across as too stilted or nerdy in their profile. So, generally speaking, the delegates provided some personal information in the form of school attended, majors and minors/favourite subjects, siblings, and the like in the beginning, and then tended to give an outline of their interest in the themes/topics on YPAC’s agenda and their relevance for the particular region the students lived in. Finally, they enumerated their hobbies and often concluded by saying that they were looking forward to meeting like-minded people from different cultures.

Researching the topics by way of preparing for the discussions in the committees and the plenary sessions was regarded as a “necessary evil” by the majority (74%), but looking back on the experience after YPAC, 92% said that they would have been lost and “not have been able to contribute to the debate” if they had not acquired some amount of factual knowledge beforehand; so with the benefit of hindsight, they valued the preparatory stage. An interesting finding that could be taken up in a further study was that teacher support in the run-up to the session was either unanimously praised or lamented as “non-existent” in line with delegates’ nationalities, so the culturally determined aspects underlying a more cooperative or collaborative teaching approach might be looked at in more detail in a separate study.

d. Accommodation / Host families

Unlike in 2010, in 2009 not all, but only some 80% of students were hosted in families, the rest stayed in a youth hostel, which was deplored by the majority, i.e. 92%, on the grounds that they lost out on many of the intercultural learning experiences enjoyed by those staying in Italian homes. For example, they regretted not being able to practice their second or third foreign language to the same extent as the others, missing out on “typical dishes”, and generally lacking “the experience of what daily life is like in a typical family in Meran.” Those students billeted with families were either very satisfied (87%) or satisfied (13%) with the arrangement, saying they often understood the Italians’ line of reasoning in the parliamentary debates better once that they knew how they lived and what they valued.

One of the most interesting findings in this section was that prior to their stay in Italy, 73% had expected “the other students to be more or less like us”, which, “on the surface”, they were, but then the respondents found that “differences can actually run very deep”, for instance when witnessing the closeness of the extended family in Italy, which was something many (43%) were not used to in their own homes. Furthermore, as befits such an occasion, many (52%) of those staying in families noted that, on top of being on their best behaviour as individual guests, they “had this strange feeling that I was somehow representing my country and needed to make a good impression.” What a fitting attitude to take for an “ambassador”, indeed.

2. The Parliamentary Sessions

While about one third of students had expected to feel constrained by the dress code, procedural regulations, and the overall formality of the setting and the processes, a few days into YPAC almost two thirds realised that the rules to be observed actually ensured that they “made progress as far as the work to be done was concerned.” Otherwise “we would probably just have interrupted each other, not
waiting for our turn to speak, and we would not have listened properly to what the others had to say, and not taken the time to think our next argument through to the end.” Hence, “respect of/tolerance for others and their right to have and voice an opinion” other than your own figured high on the list of interpersonal skills learned.

Many respondents (69%) said that while they had been aware of the necessity to “come to YPAC well prepared and know my facts”, they only fully realised over the course of the week how important acquisition of information/factual knowledge and thorough understanding of any subject matter can be in real life, where it needs to be applied to solve practical problems, whereas in school they often thought they were “cramming our heads with stuff we only need to ‘regurgitate’ in the next exam”. Stronger motivation to put their shoulders to the wheel as soon as greater awareness of “implications in the here and now” of the topics discussed set in was thus felt by 71% of students as a beneficial effect of such an out-of-classroom learning experience.

An interesting point, which only a few (12%) respondents raised, and subsequently complained about, was that “politics is dirty business”, as one of them put it, describing the act of lobbying and negotiating behind the scenes as an unpleasant “if you wash my back, I’ll wash yours” situation. They all found that despicable and said it might actually “hold me back from seeking a career in politics.”

What many respondents regretted was not having a real debriefing/feedback session following the parliamentary session proper (43%) and the participation in YPAC as a whole (57%), as they believed that their experiences would have been “worthwhile listening to by our teachers”, such as “more teacher input regarding the research phase” (57%), better preparation for the resolution write-up stage (76%), or the imparting of rhetorical skills for the actual presentation and defence of the respective resolutions (37%). That was cited as one of the few areas where they saw room for improvement.

3. Additional Programme Activities

Apparently, both YPAC 2009 and 2010 were a great success in terms of organised activities, be they part of the parliament-related programme or leisure-time oriented. Being welcomed by the respective mayors and hosted for dinner, shown round the host towns, their landmarks, and surroundings, and having experts give “informative” talks on the issues on the agenda was deemed important by 100% of the students, especially on the grounds that they thus received the message that YPAC was more than an exercise in futile role play, and that, much rather, “the work we were doing was taken seriously by adults.” “There was something in it for everybody” was the opinion unanimously (100%) voiced by the respondents as far as spare-time activities such as parties, sightseeing, and sporting events were concerned, but, interestingly, what scored highest (68% approval rate) were activities organised right at the beginning that “had a team-building character” to them, such as climbing exercises.

All in all, the combination of factual learning experiences with informal learning contexts as well as personal, interpersonal, and intercultural skills-building opportunities was judged the second “most rewarding aspect” of the whole YPAC experience.
4. Learning / Skills
   a. Factual/Subject-matter knowledge

   As has already been mentioned in the context of the parliamentary sessions, realising the importance of a firm grounding in any subject matter in order to be able to “hold my own in discussions”, consider alternative scenarios, and arrive at mutually satisfying solutions to a problem, was a surprise finding to only 23% of the respondents, who, prior to the session, had expected to be able “to muddle through somehow”.

   Greater interest in a topic which had more or more readily discernible “real-life applications” than a lot of the content learned in class was seen as underlying more thorough knowledge acquisition and deeper understanding by almost 85% of students.

   A great majority of 93% especially valued the different channels and modalities through which knowledge was imparted and acquired in that particular context, i.e. exploratory research carried out individually prior to YPAC, collaboratively gained in group discussions, and conveyed by professional and academic experts in the form of lectures and workshops.

   By acting on that knowledge when writing, presenting, and defending resolutions, which they furthermore knew to have “real-life consequences”, all respondents (100%) felt they would have a more lasting command over the subject matter than in the case of knowledge acquired in formal classroom contexts. The relevance of the issues under discussion for their own and their communities’ lives was also widely (75%) considered to benefit deeper learning.

   b. Foreign-language skills

   As all the students had studied English as their second or third foreign language for at least 5-6 years in school when taking part in YPAC, 46% said that after a short period of adjustment in which they felt “self-conscious” speaking English with fellow Europeans, they got used to it. 87% noticed that by the end of the week they had got more fluent, feeling much surer of themselves even “when I had to use [the language] when addressing the plenum.” What they found difficult to adapt to, however, was the formal style required for drafting resolutions (63%) as only 23% had been prepared for that by their teachers. In the end, a majority of 78% they felt that both their English writing and speaking skills had improved over the course of the week.

   What many (67%) took pleasure in as a “kind of side-effect” was the welcome opportunity to practice the other foreign languages they had been taught at school when addressing host family members or conversing with their fellow committee members and using French, German, or Italian. So much so that a number of them even agreed to use each other’s native language in the future when posting messages to each other on Facebook (17%).

   Addressing linguistic issues was not part of this study, but a good command of a foreign language naturally is a prerequisite to acquiring intercultural competence, of which intercultural communicative skills are, after all, a major determinant.
c. Personal skills

Although it had not figured in the questionnaire, 36% of respondents said they had not realised beforehand how much of a “team effort” would be required to deal with the problem in hand, and 52% observed that already in the early stages of the committee work they had started feeling responsible for other team members’ performances apart from their own. Recognising when others needed help and trying to provide that help where possible was thus deemed a very important learning experience by 46%. Being able to celebrate a “group victory” rather than an individual achievement and being proud of others came as a surprise to more than half of the respondents, but was then found to be an enriching moment by the same percentage. However, 18% had also felt “let down by my teammates at times when they did not give their best and were just fooling around”, and accordingly said that in the future they would only rely on themselves and not entrust others with responsibility for a common endeavour.

Individually, roughly 55% went home with increased self-confidence regarding their presentation and public speaking skills, as “speaking in a foreign language about a complex subject in front of a large audience of critical listeners” was quite a difficult task to master. Accordingly, being able to overcome their initial shyness (14%) and/or nervousness (92%), and holding their own, or even “winning an argument” by “speaking convincingly” proved an enormous boost to people’s sense of achievement.

“Not to give up before the final votes are cast” was another lesson learnt by more than a third (36%) of respondents, who had learnt not to feel demoralised by criticism of their arguments, but instead seen it as a call to arms to try again in the next discussion round, i.e. after more content-based work on the resolution or after honing their rhetorical skills. Perseverance was thus named as a quality students would not, normally, apply to the same extent in the classroom context, but had come to value as an important trait in real life (36%).

d. Interpersonal/Intercultural skills

Before living in the respective host culture for a week and getting to know students from six other countries, “I had had a lot of stereotypes” about people from other nationalities was what roughly a third of respondents wrote, but “I quickly learned that many of the negative [ones] were not really true.” While Italian hospitality turned out to be as warm as expected, for example, life in Germany was “far less ‘orderly’” than everybody had thought, and German youths were just as good at “partying” and “fun to be with” as “everybody else”. Interestingly enough, while expectations had been running high that “the Germans would be very competitive”, it turned out that “other nationalities” had been better prepared by their teachers, were more strongly bent on excelling, and set greater store by “winning the debates”. While initially, many students (57%) observed the tendency in themselves to “think our way of doing things is best, and the others should follow suit”, over the course of YPAC they learned to be more careful about immediate value judgments and instead sit back and closely “listen to and observe others first” in order to find out whether their approach might not be just as useful or even better. This was also due to increasing awareness of socio-economic,
cultural, and political differences between member countries over the week, which was the first step on the way to developing better perspective-taking abilities and, hence, a better understanding of others’ viewpoints, their lines of reasoning, and the “necessity to make compromises” (70%). Again, the respect for, and tolerance of, “people taking other views than I” was quoted by 38% of the students as one of the most important aspects they had become increasingly aware of during YPAC.

Given such deliberations, it was not surprising to find that a great majority of the respondents felt that YPAC had achieved a lot as far as their consensus-building skills (82%) and their capacity for constructive controversy (77%) were concerned. After all, “it was soon very clear that we would have to find a solution which everybody could agree on, which everybody could pay for or implement, and which everybody would benefit from, not just one town or region.”

5. Overall Experience

All in all, 96% rated the overall experience of attending such a student parliament as very valuable (76%) or valuable (20%), with almost 90% saying they would like to represent their school once more and take part in the following year’s YPAC if they could, while only 4% found it “not really worth my while”, and just over 11% would not want to repeat the experience. Importantly, 47% had been surprised to find that “each of us can make a difference, and together we should”, so this realisation went hand in hand with an increased awareness of “our responsibility to get actively involved in projects, parties, governmental, or non-governmental organisations in order to take our future and the future of our planet into our own hands.”

Discussion

From the selection to the debriefing process, the respondents had a lot of experiences and insights to share, and were very forthcoming with objective facts and personal evaluations, with these often taking the form of extensive narratives, which included many illustrative examples. The fact that they had been chosen by their teachers to represent their schools would, naturally, imply that predominantly students deemed sufficiently eloquent would have been selected, which, in turn, would impact on the way they would often be prepared, and able, to elaborate a point. Those taking part in the study also seemed exceptionally capable of critically reflecting their own and others’ behaviours, approaches, and decisions, which served to enrich the data collected. As many of the results presented already include explanatory passages in the form of the students’ narratives, the following discussion will focus on a few major points only which need to be drawn sufficient attention to.

As far as the organization of such parliaments is concerned, the selection process was sometimes deemed too subjective and not necessarily conducive to selecting the best candidates a school might have to offer, so initiators should make sure that students are chosen on the basis of objective criteria and their overall capabilities, interests, and academic achievement rather than being picked in a haphazard fashion by their teachers on the grounds of a narrow-minded subject-oriented focus.

Grouping students from several countries together in one committee was found to be beneficial as far as honing one’s foreign-language skills was concerned, as in national teams the discussions within the committees would have been conducted in the respective native language only, so that should, accordingly, become the rule. Furthermore, the greatest benefit derived from such a composition was seen to lie in the enhanced perspective-taking and
critical-thinking abilities derived from being forced to step into the shoes of people from other cultural, socio-economic, and political backgrounds, and to reach a consensus in discussions with them first so as to be able to agree on a common resolution.

In order to be able to contribute to such discussions in the first place, having a good command of factual knowledge and being well-versed in rhetorical skills so as to present and defend one’s resolutions successfully was seen as absolutely essential, something which had not been obvious to all the candidates from the start. Accordingly, this was singled out as one area where teachers can—and should—make a difference in the form of a well-structured preparatory stage in which they should direct and oversee efforts to procure the required research documents and learn public speaking and debating skills. After all, the latter were singled out as underlying the team’s success on the one hand, or contributing to feelings of inadequacy on the other, due to not having been given proper instruction or guidance before or during those phases.

Better knowledge retention and deeper understanding of the subject matter than in formal learning contexts was attributed to a number of motivating factors normally not prevalent to the same degree in regular classroom settings, viz. the collaborative efforts and mixed-mode learning underlying knowledge acquisition; the fact that the topics under discussion were relevant for the lives of all the participants and the well-being of their communities; and the realisation that the decisions taken by the committees had the potential to have consequences in real life.

Respect for such rules as dress codes, proper ways of addressing the president and the other members of parliament, speaking and waiting one’s turn, etc. was initially seen as stifling because it created a slightly artificial atmosphere, and was expected to be a constant and unwelcome reminder of the youth parliament being a role-playing simulation, but ultimately came to be valued as the first cornerstone of raising awareness of the need to exercise fairness and civility throughout; let everybody have their say; value their opinion; listen to, and, ultimately, learn from, their criticism—i.e. engage in civil political discourse by respecting the other and tolerate otherness.

The latter aspect was also at the heart of the informal intercultural learning which took place without the students even being aware of it—in the context of living with a host family in a different culture; experiencing different languages and language levels in action, which are, in fact, reflective of different mindsets; deciphering, and adapting to, different behavioural patterns and affective responses; comparing, contrasting, and reconciling different beliefs, norms, and values; and in the process jettisoning stereotypical thinking and refraining from making value judgments. After all, irrespective of what set them apart, only joint effort promised and delivered joint—and just—rewards, and that was one of the most important and valuable lessons learnt in the context of the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention.

Conclusion

With the study yielding largely positive results across personal and interpersonal as well as intercultural competency domains from an educational point of view, international youth parliaments can be seen as valuable experiential learning tools which facilitate the building of deep knowledge structures, thus enhancing knowledge retention. Simultaneously, the personal and group reward structures involved in such cooperative learning contexts will further intellectual/cognitive development in the form of improved perspective-taking skills, and foster personal growth by raising awareness of, and imparting, the affective qualities, behaviours, and skills required by responsible global citizens—respect for, and tolerance of,
diversity, collaboration across and beyond borders, as well as peaceful and constructive handling of controversy.

Hence, laudable efforts to organise student parliaments, which frequently depend on the commitment of a few educators and, likewise, only allow for a relatively small number of students to participate in individual countries or regions should be complemented and supported by institutional initiatives to ensure broader and more even participation of the next generation of political leaders.

The fact that teacher involvement and, hence, team success seemed to differ along national borders in such areas as research or debating skills, follow-up studies focusing on pedagogical paradigms, curricula, and educational practices, which make themselves strongly felt in the context of youth parliaments, should be carried out as their potential to reveal shortcomings that need addressing in individual countries, regions, or schools might be vast.

References


The influence of cyber language on social communication by foreign language studying teenagers: an exploratory study in Italy, Australia and Canada

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Abstract

This paper reports on pilot studies on the influence that cyber language is rapidly gaining on virtual linguistic communities of adolescents via social networks in Australia, Canada and Italy. These studies focus on the use of ‘cyber language’ and how this is responding to new technologies.

Data for this study were gathered by means of voluntary written surveys. An analysis of the data reveals a framework of linguistic strategies that adolescents use via on-line and off-line communications.

The use of this framework allows cross-cultural comparisons of Italian adolescents studying English as a second language (L2) at high school in Italy with their peers in Canada and Australia. The data identify adolescent speech varieties that correlate with existing literature from Europe and North America.

The paper concludes by highlighting the importance of including cyber language in the design of the modern curriculum to ensure it is relevant and of interest to the 21st century language learning student, in the context of classroom teaching and learning.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, foreign language learning, Italian-Canadian adolescent, Italian-Australian adolescent, Italian adolescent, adolescent communication, virtual linguistic communities

Introduction

Secondary school students of Italian as a second language (L2) in Australia and Canada, and English L2 in Italy, appear to be influenced by the ‘internet language’ phenomenon. Although there are number of terms used for internet language, such as: netspeak (Crystal, 2008); net lingo (Danesi, 2008a) and linguanet (Abatabtuono, Navigli and Rocca, 2006), these terms define common elements of on-line communication, that includes Short Messaging Service (SMS) and Twitter as “a micro-blogging service” (Nuessel, 2010b, pp. 3-4). Essentially internet language may be described as a means of communicating in a fast, practical manner with little regard for traditional language conventions and grammatical structures. Instead this language uses abbreviated forms of encoded communication designed to convey meanings and images.

Internet language is widely used on ‘cyberspace hangout’, or virtual social network (VSN) sites, such as Facebook, My Space and Twitter. Internet language is emerging as a new speech variety influencing adolescent social communication styles. Although there is wealth of research related to adolescent communication styles, such as: connotative speech patterns (Aulino, 2005; Aulino & Bergami, 2008; Bergami & Aulino, 2009, 2010; Danesi, 2003a, 2003b, 2008b; Maggisano, 1993); models of verbal communication (Jakobson, 1960); ethnographic research (Mendoza-Denton, 1994, 1997); language of teenagers
linguistic abbreviations (Zipf, 1949; Danesi, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; Nuessel 2010a, 2010b; Bergami & Aulino, 2010); Italian youth speech patterns (Aulino, 2005, 2008; Danesi, 2003b; Nuessel, 1999) and adolescent pop language and culture (Danesi, 2008a; Savan, 2005). Literature on internet language usage has only recently begun to emerge, with research on the teenage language of the internet (Baron, 2008; Crystal, 2006, 2008) and Italian cyber language (Aulino, 2008; Bergami and Aulino, 2010; Nuessel, 2010b; Conrad and Martinez, 2008; Danesi, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c; Marino, 2008; Tavosanis, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Petri and Tavosanis, 2009; Robinson, 2008; Rubin, 2008; Thodal, 2008; Livraghi, 2010; Cilento Ibarra and Galimberti, 2006).

The main purpose of this research was to add to the recent body of literature by investigating whether existing communication patterns could be categorized as a social dialect and, if so, make recommendations about teaching L2 Italian or L2 English in the context of classroom teaching and learning practices. This paper firstly describes the framework of enquiry and the sample used for this study before discussing the findings and reaching a conclusion.

A framework for studying adolescent discourse

Adolescent verbal communication is based on communicative competence, such as different forms of expression-gestures, vocal language, and the need to engage in shared action. Adolescent speech patterns may be classified into three main discourse categories: Emotive Language Discourse (ELD), Connotative Language Discourse (CLD), and Clique-Coded Language Discourse (CCLD). This paper focuses only on CLD, limiting the discussion to cyber phonetics replacements and online compounds and intialsims, in the context of online communication.

The Principle of Least Effort (PLE), more commonly known as Zipf’s Law, is particularly relevant, as it reveals how language evolves, where many phenomena in language could be explained as the result of an inborn tendency in the human species to make the most of its communicative resources with the least expenditure of effort (physical, cognitive, and social) (Zipf, 1949, quoted in Danesi, 2008a, p. 259).

The operation of PLE is evident in language changes in cyberspace, where coinages have become the norm (Danesi, 2008c, p. 69). According to Zipf (1949) “languages tend to evolve economically, making progressively greater use of ‘compression strategy’ as abbreviation, acronymy, and the like” (Danesi 2008a, p. 69, quoted in Nuessel 2010a, p. 16). According to Danesi (2008a) there are five types of miniaturization used in internet language. These are: abbreviations (shortened words); acronyms (forms composed by the first letter of every word within a phrase); phonetic replacements (letters and numbers replacing entire or parts of words), compounding (combination of separate words to make a new shorter word); and symbol replacement (letters or words replaced by symbols). Miniaturization is discussed later in the paper.

Method used to gather data and population sample description

Three separate studies were conducted in Australia, Canada and Italy, as outlined below.

Australia

Secondary school students in Melbourne, Victoria completed a voluntary written questionnaire, in which they were asked to answer questions ranging from listing the most commonly used words online, to their level of interest in VSN, and why they may prefer to
dialogue online. Twenty two responses were received: nine males and thirteen females between the ages of fourteen and sixteen.

Canada

The Australian study was repeated in Canada with twenty five responses received: seven males and sixteen females between the ages of fifteen and eighteen. The school is located in an area of Toronto with the largest Italian population in Ontario (about 88% second and third generation Italian Canadians).

Italy

A similar survey was distributed in Italy, seeking similar information from L2 English students, in Lazio and Abruzzo. Fifty-five responses were received: thirty-six males and nineteen females, between the ages of fifteen and nineteen.

Research findings and discussion

The research finding for each of the studies conducted in Australia, Canada, Italy are respectively presented below, together with a brief discussion of each. The responses in the tables are limited to the top five responses in descending order of popularity.

Italian-Australian survey findings

The cyber phonetics replacements are shown at Table 1. All of the abbreviations listed in Table 1 are used as phonetic replacements by the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Replacement</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G2G</td>
<td>Got to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2day</td>
<td>Today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4n</td>
<td>Bye for now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every1</td>
<td>Everyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cyber phonetic replacements are another type of miniaturization used in internet language. Phonetic replacement is the replacement of certain letters and numbers as substitutes for entire words, or parts of words, to produce a more compact pronunciation (Danesi, 2008a, p. 260; Nuessel, 2010a).

The online compounds and intialisms reported are shown at Table 2. Compounding involves the “combination of separate words, or parts of words, to make a new word” (Nuessel 2010a, p. 16). Initialism is the reduction of words to their initial letter (Crystal 2008, p. 41), an acronym. The Italian-Australian data has elements of compound words such; ‘OMG’ (Oh my God); ‘GF’ (girlfriend), as well as intialisms such as ‘TTYL’ (talk to you later); ‘JC’ (just chiller); and ‘NP’ (no problem). The compounds and intialism in this study are supported by existing literature (Crystal 2006, 2008; Nuessel, 2010a, 2010b).
Table 2: Italian-Australian Online Compounds and Initialisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compounds and initialisms</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OMG</td>
<td>Oh my God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GF</td>
<td>Girlfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTYL</td>
<td>Talk to you later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JC</td>
<td>Just chiller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NP</td>
<td>No problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Italian-Canadian survey findings

The cyber phonetic replacements used by these respondents are shown in Table 3. These abbreviated phonetic replacements are the most commonly used words and expressions among adolescents, and need to be sent in the shortest possible version and the quickest time possible. PLE (Zipf, 1949) is evident in the rapidity by which messages are sent and received. As speed is an important consideration, this is achieved by ensuring that the message is ‘compressed’ through the use of abbreviations. According to Danesi (2008a), PLE means that “the more frequent or necessary a form is for communicative purposes, the more likely it is to be rendered in compressed or economical physical structure” (p. 261). These short messages are spreading through the use of pop language online (Danesi, 2008a).

Table 3: Italian-Canadian Cyber Phonetic Replacements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Replacement</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G2G</td>
<td>Got to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X YOU</td>
<td>For you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR8</td>
<td>Great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l8r</td>
<td>Later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAN2</td>
<td>Want to go?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compounds and initialisms used by respondents are shown at Table 4. Similarities can be noted between the Italian-Canadian responses in Table 4, and the Italian-Australian responses at Table 2, with words such as: ‘GF’ (girlfriend); ‘OMG’ (Oh my God); ‘BRB’ (be right back); and ‘TTYL’ (talk to you later).

Table 4: Italian-Canadian Online Compounds and Initialisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compounds and initialisms</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GF</td>
<td>Girlfriend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFK</td>
<td>Away from keyboard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMG</td>
<td>Oh my God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRB</td>
<td>Be right back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTYL</td>
<td>Talk to you later</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Italian survey findings

The cyber phonetic replacements used by the Italian cohort are shown at Table 5. These data represent alphabetic, numeric, and alphanumeric combinations to represent Italian sounds, and correlate with other studies on the Italian language by Nuessel (2010b) and Danesi (2007).
In Italian, the number 6 is used for ‘sei’, meaning ‘you are’ in English. The number 7 replaces in word ‘sette’ – this is also part of the word for ‘week’ in English that in Italian is ‘settimana’. The number 1 replaces ‘uno (male)/una (female)’ (one) – this abbreviation overcomes the need to differentiate between genders in the Italian language, through the use of o and a, for males and females respectively.

According to Crystal (2008), in Italian texting, the letter ‘k’ is a popular replacement for ‘ch’ or ‘c’ in many common words. As the Italian language does not have the letter ‘k’ in its alphabet, Italian adolescents use ‘k’ as a logogram borrowed from the English language (Crystal 2008, p. 62). Examples of this can be observed in Table 5, with cyber replacements such as ‘Ki’ for ‘Chi’ meaning ‘Who?’ in English and ‘Xke’? for ‘Perche’?’ meaning ‘Why?’ in English. The use of ‘x’ is interesting, as it has universal arithmetical application, itself a replacement for the multiplication. However, in the Italian phonetic cyber replacement context, this is used to substitute part of a word, such as Perche’ – per = x , k = ch and the e’ follows at the end. This is a good example of PLE at work, as we have a six letter word reduced to a three letter word, but in order to achieve this result, the phonetic replacement has also been used.

The data from this study is supported by other studies (Tavosanis, 2006a, 2006b, 2007) and Nuessel (2010b), where the ‘k’ substitution factor was evident, along with endophasic readings, such as the number ‘6’ to indicate the verb ‘sei’ (you are).

### Table 5: Italian Cyber Phonetic Replacements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cyber Italian</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C6?</td>
<td>Ci sei?</td>
<td>Are you there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7mana</td>
<td>Settimana</td>
<td>Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ki?</td>
<td>Chi?</td>
<td>Who?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xke’?</td>
<td>Perche’?</td>
<td>Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 a/o</td>
<td>Uno/Una</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The compounds and intials used by these respondents are shown at Table 6. When comparing the data in Table 6 to the Australian data (Table 2) and the Canadian data (Table 4), it can be observed that a number of compound words and intials are commonly used in all three countries, with terms such as, ‘TTYL’ and ‘OMG’. It appears from these data that the English language has crept into common adolescent discourse, even in non Anglophone countries, and this has largely been attributed to internet communication.

### Table 6: Italian Online Compounds and Initialisms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cyber Italian</th>
<th>Standard Italian</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lingua+ net</td>
<td>linguanet</td>
<td>netlingo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ciber+linguaggio</td>
<td>ciber linguaggio</td>
<td>cyberlanguage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ciber+ caffe’</td>
<td>cibercaffe’</td>
<td>Cybercafe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTYL</td>
<td>Borrowed from cyber English</td>
<td>Talk to you later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMG</td>
<td>Borrowed from cyber English</td>
<td>Oh my God</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Pedagogical Implications

The respondents indicated they find a learning syllabus tailored to their interest of importance, and this is supported by previous studies (Aulino, 2005; Danesi, 1996, 1997; Bergami & Aulino, 2010). Respondents indicated they would more readily embrace a
syllabus that includes internet related activities, such as text-messaging, emails, Short Message Service, epals, and other VSN relevant to their adolescent lives.

Nuessel (2010b) argues for the introduction of a lesson on Italian cyber language into the Italian curriculum, providing a list of topics that should be included (pp. 8-10):

1. Encode and decode messages in Italian cyber language;
2. Appreciate Italian grammar through the entertaining comprehension of new forms of this constantly changing language;
3. Create novel cyber linguistic forms;
4. Communicate effectively and knowledgeably with Italian-speaking e-pals anywhere in the worlds;
5. Acquire a wider knowledge of speech varieties of Italian beyond the traditional textbook Italian.

This does not mean that the L2 adolescent language learner should be trained to dialogue using Italian cyber language alone, rather this should be incorporated into the course syllabus under the rubric of “cultural material” (Aulino 2005, p. 93).

**Conclusion**

The use of online language that adolescents use to dialogue with peers has undergone significant changes. The new language that is emerging may be classified as a ‘specialized language’ (Nuessel, 2010b, p. 13). These new forms of language are having profound impacts on both the linguistic and social dimensions of human interaction (Baron 2008).

From a pedagogic point of view, the addition of cyber language in the L2 curriculum may prove to be contentious. According to Nuessel (2010a), textbooks do not include cyber language as part of the syllabus, as some educators may see such “inventive use of language as a corruption of the standard language” (p. 18). However, this author argues that “the ability to use this specialized language is an important part of writing and reading comprehension ad literacy” (p. 18). Indeed, if the curriculum of L2 target language is to be of relevance and interest to the adolescents studying it, it is difficult to imagine why cyber adolescent language should not be included in the curriculum, given the wide usage of this new social dialect across different continents, as evidenced by the responses in this study.

Additional research is warranted in this area of adolescent communication to gather additional data for more robust analysis. It would also be interesting to widen the scope of enquiry to discover whether the findings in this study have universal applications in Italophone communities in other countries. Additionally, it would be opportune to widen the field of enquiry to other linguistic communities to determine whether the patterns identified in this study have application to other languages.

**References**


Implementing Inquiry Learning: Implications for Instructional Leadership and Teacher Education

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Abstract
For several years now Deira International School (DIS), Dubai, has hosted teacher candidates from Zayed University (ZU) for their third teaching practice experience. Prior to this practicum the trainees undertake a university course revising and applying key learning theories, curriculum design and teaching approaches through simulated teaching experiences. Despite this significant focus on application and reflection, the implementation of inquiry learning strategies is challenging for teacher trainees because the strategies require learners to engage in deeper more meaningful and authentic learning than that expected from direct instruction alone. Similarly many classroom teachers struggle with its implementation because it requires a change in teachers’ and students’ perceptions that learning is something children do for themselves and not what is ‘done to’ them. Instead of teachers setting the goals and assessment, children take ownership of their own learning by establishing their own lines of inquiry. There is also a misconception that inquiry learning means ‘leaving the children to it’ with minimal instruction. Much more needs to be known about what constitutes effective pre-service teacher education and teacher learning in the school context and with this in mind, this article reports on a case study which aimed to systematically evaluate the effectiveness of inquiry learning in a grade 5 classroom and to identify potential implications for teacher education at ZU. This article focuses specifically on successes such as improved student confidence and multiple learning styles and intelligences, and on challenges including the shift in teacher role, the amorphous nature of course planning, the lack of pre-determined assessment rubrics, varying levels of student motivation, pace, and coverage of material and the training and resource needs.

Background
In April 2009, Educational Services Overseas Limited, (ESOL) and DIS management developed a whole school action plan based upon the findings and recommendations of the Council of International Schools Accreditation report and on the 2008-2009 inspection report from the local educational authority. Both reports highlighted a lack of differentiation in teaching and learning.

A coordinator was made responsible for leading the development of learning and teaching pedagogy across the whole school which included assessing the current status and effectiveness of learning and teaching at DIS, coordinating and assisting with teacher supervision and appraisal and implementing measures to maintain and improve school-wide learning and teaching procedures.

The new professional development approach aimed to introduce new ways of thinking about teaching and learning. As a result, grade 5 was the first year group in DIS to pilot a ‘unit of inquiry” (UOI) entitled ‘Healthy Me’ where students researched questions such as: What does it mean to be healthy? How do I know that I am healthy? How can I influence others around me?

The children identified other questions of interest to them, investigated these and designed projects around their learning for 18 hours a week over 6 weeks. During their
inquiry, roles were reversed as children taught each other and other grade 5 teachers and administration staff what they had learned in “Test-Teach-Trade sessions. ‘Open house’ was introduced on a fortnightly basis as an opportunity for children to share their ideas and journals with one another, teachers and administration staff. The UOI culminated in an open house celebration day involving all educational stakeholders.

The grade 5 class comprised 24 children with the majority being Emirati and Indian, none of whom had been previously exposed to inquiry learning. The focus of this paper is three 10 year old students, Maya, Zayan and Areesha, taught by Natasha Higman. Latifa Ghareeb was a candidate teacher doing practicum who Natasha mentored for two days a week over a five week period. Lauren Stephenson was Latifa’s faculty supervisor.

Maya is an Egyptian Muslim, born in the UAE whose first language is Arabic. She is a musical/kinesthetic learner who enjoys making things. She typically uses music and drama to create her own knowledge and understanding.

Zayan is a Pakistani Muslim and English is his second language. Zayan is a linguistic learner who has highly developed auditory skills. He enjoys reading a wide range of books and has an aptitude for ICT.

Areesha is a Hindu of Indian descent, born in Dubai, UAE, whose second language is English. Areesha has an intrapersonal learning style and therefore works better independently. She is self-motivated, strong willed and opinionated.

The researchers chose to focus specifically on the impact of inquiry learning on these children as they progressed through the third term and the implications for Natasha, Latifa and Lauren.

Inquiry Learning

Inquiry learning stems from John Dewey’s (1910; 1916; 1964a; 1964b) experiential education work and advocacy of child-centred learning based on authentic, socially constructed purposeful experiences and contexts. According to Lorsbach and Tobin (1992) constructivism plays a significant role in connecting theoretical learning to inquiry based instruction. Constructivists believe that the student should participate in the learning environment and support the notion that learners gain knowledge as they attempt to make sense of their experiences (Gredler, 2001). As such, learning how to learn is more critical than content acquisition itself. Inquiry learning involves developing in learners the skills and attitudes that enable them to seek answers while they construct new knowledge.

Implementing Inquiry Learning

In contrast to the more traditional content centred approaches, inquiry learning involves learners asking questions about concepts and issues that they deem interesting and important rather than those set by teachers or curricula. Learners pose initial questions and then engage in various modes of investigation such as observation, experimentation, discussion, dialogue, reflection, mathematical construction (which may include extensive interaction with texts) to construct new knowledge and new questions (Bruce and Davidson, 1996). Such knowledge is complex and does not develop in easily predictable ways.

For proponents of inquiry learning the focus is no longer on content knowledge as the ultimate goal but rather content is the means by which learners can work on meaningful problems in real situations to generate questions and solve those problems, thus forming new knowledge. Such involvement in learning leads to improved understanding and application. Furthermore when learners are involved in decision making processes they are better positioned to identify opportunities for their own learning.
Inquiry learning requires careful planning and structure on the part of the teacher in terms of both language learning as well as content. Real world situations and problems are presented as the contexts for acquisition of language and critical knowledge. Teachers who adopt inquiry learning guide learners in the identification and refinement of their authentic questions for ongoing learning opportunities. They then guide the subsequent research, inquiry, and reporting processes. Teachers must also be able to respond appropriately in order for the learners to get the most out of the UOI. As such the teacher typically uses self-directed learning strategies and encourages independent as well as collaboration and team learning to encourage interdisciplinary knowledge acquisition and develop critical thinking, problem solving, leadership and language skills.

A key idea in inquiry learning approaches is that there is a cycle of inquiry. The Grade 5 teachers at DIS drew on the ‘VOYAGE’ model from Opawa Primary School, Christchurch, New Zealand. The ‘VOYAGE’ model has six stages: View (tuning in); Obtain (finding out); Your Plan (sorting out); Action (take action); Go Further (going further); and Evaluate (reflection). ‘VOYAGE’ closely aligns with Murdoch’s (2007) stages of inquiry.

Using such a learning cycle means that traditional roles of instructor and student are switched. Teachers are now facilitators and guides, providing the necessary leadership for the learners to take on more active leadership and learning roles. When learners are active their responsibility and motivation for learning is increased. As learners take increasing ownership for their own work, greater opportunities for language development and critical thinking exist and are reinforced.

Deignan (2009) identifies five advantages of inquiry learning. It is highly adaptable and suitable for all subject areas; it can be better than traditional methods because of the focus on ongoing formative and summative assessment; it produces independent learners with transferable skills and is a collaborative and valuable experience. For Wilson and Murdoch (2003), it also allows for the interconnectedness and development of content knowledge, skills and values. Students improve in confidence levels and self esteem. Learning is revitalized and creativity is developed resulting in feelings of accomplishment, a sense of responsibility, greater accessibility and inclusivity. According to McKenzie and McKinnon (2009) an inquiry approach supports the development of critical thinking skills and literacy skills because students are engaged in purposeful reading, writing, talking and listening using multiple genres in a variety of contexts.

However, several challenges to the successful implementation of inquiry learning have been identified. Edelson, Gordin and Pea (1999) name five of the most significant challenges as motivation, accessibility of investigative techniques, background knowledge, management of extended activities and the practical constraints of the learning context.

Wilson and Murdoch (2003) identify one significant challenge as the shift in teacher role from traditional transmission style teaching to facilitating child centred learning, developing student responsibility for learning and valuing student self-questioning. In addition, teachers using inquiry must be well-organized, rigorous and draw on thoughtful methodologies that lend themselves to the ability level and nature of the learner. Flexibility is another essential element and teachers need effective communication and negotiation skills to challenge their learners. Inquiry learning also requires on-going assessment for maximum effectiveness which is also challenging for teachers. Teachers also initially struggle with resourcing the curriculum until they begin to draw more on other people and electronic materials (Wilson and Murdoch, 2003).

Edelson et al. (1999) suggest a variety of technological and curricular design strategies are needed. These include meaningful problems for students. Tasks need to be accessible and grounded in a child’s own experience (Edelson et al., 1999). Students’ previous knowledge determines how accessible and meaningful an activity will be and thus it is essential that
teachers consider the role of individual learners in activities and the composition of groups, to ensure that each individual is equally engaged and challenged (Murdoch, 2004).

Methodology

The study was designed as an ongoing longitudinal case study. The research sample consisted of the teacher, Natasha, 3 children and their parents in a grade 5 class of 24 students. These participants were involved, to varying degrees, in the planning and implementation of an Inquiry Learning Unit that would run for one semester. Because the researchers were interested in the understanding and improvement of practice in the Grade 5 classroom context, we used an action research cycle of planning, taking action, monitoring, reflecting, recommending and identifying next steps. Senior administrators from the school also participated in the study by providing feedback on the successes and challenges of the grade 5 UOI pilot. The participants from Zayed University were the beginning teacher, Latifa, and the practicum faculty supervisor, Lauren.

A range of data collection methods were used including:

- **Journals:** These were kept by the students to record their experiences, and by the class teacher, trainee teacher and faculty supervisor, to record significant events, successes, challenges and questions as they arose
- **Parent comments:** Parents provided feedback about the project and its impact on their child’s learning.
- **Dialogue:** Participants engaged in both formal and informal dialogue about their learning over the course of the project.
- **Observations:** The faculty supervisor observed several classes during the pilot to assess the impact of the new approach.
- **Documents:** A range of documents were analyzed (e.g. teachers’ plans and programs, checklists of interactions and classroom practices, examples of assessment rubrics, and children’s journals)

These data were then analyzed using an inductive process of identifying themes. A cyclical process was used to allow for analysis and interpretation based on questions of meaning and local significance as well as thematic categories constructed directly from the data. Once themes, commonalities and differences were identified, we reflected on them and developed concepts and categories for interpreting data as we continued to collect data. In keeping with a qualitative approach the data analysis technique involved impressionistic, informal pattern and thematic recognition.

Findings

Data from the implementation of inquiry learning indicated successes including improved student confidence, and its appeal to multiple learning styles and intelligences. The challenges identified included the shift in teacher role, the amorphous nature of course planning, the lack of pre-determined assessment rubrics, varying levels of student motivation, pace, and coverage of material and the training and resource needs.

Greater confidence and improved self esteem

Throughout the UOI Areesha, Zayan and Maya embraced the opportunities for choice, responsibility and creativity. They shared their developing knowledge with pride, both verbally and through their journals. Their journals contained specific examples of a variety of written genres including newspaper articles, poems, a health diary, questions, mind maps, charts, graphs and tables, project proposals, presentation plans, questionnaires, note taking, spelling quizzes, signs, letters, emails, surveys, observation notes, reflections, action plans,
feedback on performances, films and guest speakers, assessment rubrics and parents’ comments. They coped easily with the teacher’s new facilitative role. They acquired confidence as they became partners in the learning process, communicating confidently with parents, teachers, administration, staff and other children (Natasha).

Parental comments also suggested they had observed improved confidence and self esteem in their children together with distinct improvements in their levels of motivation, independence, communication and language development.

**Appeal to multiple learning styles and intelligences**

Latifa commented several times on the way inquiry learning enabled the teacher to consider multiple learning styles and intelligences in the classes. Natasha also commented on the creative opportunities an inquiry learning approach enabled (e.g. demonstrating and capturing the effect exercise has on the heart). The language used in the children’s portfolios also demonstrates their developing creativity with vocabulary and text types.

**Shift in teacher role**

The transition from expert teacher to facilitator and coach is a difficult transition for teachers who are used to more traditional teaching styles. For the children as well, it can be a struggle to take risks as they explore greater freedoms offered by inquiry learning. Natasha commented on this in her journal:

Most of the children at the start wanted me to spoon feed them and it was a real challenge to step back and facilitate. I continue to try to demonstrate the skills so that they can become self sufficient (Natasha).

Latifa also observed this. However Natasha observed that Areesha, Zayan and Maya coped better than the other children in many ways:

They seem to be thriving on the newfound freedom and responsibility. They share their knowledge with pride through their journals. They appear confident and more willing to communicate with parents, teachers, the principal and other children (Natasha).

Yet there were significant behavioral and learning management challenges to deal with, for example when Areesha’s group made frozen smoothies in the cafeteria to sell to year 4 students:

The smoothies were squeezed by hand and the group discovered, only after peeling 20 apples, apples didn’t create enough juice. So much mess and the smells! … It was a great success but we had four blenders on the go in the classroom, clearing up the mess … Admin came over and commented on the need for order…It was a challenge to keep cool, let them figure it out for themselves and still have some semblance of order… (Natasha).

**Amorphous nature of course planning and the lack of pre-determined assessment rubrics**

Both Natasha and Latifa needed to have a high tolerance level for ambiguity due to differences in using inquiry learning. Latifa realized that the somewhat amorphous nature of planning for a UOI was very different to what she had observed in the government schools and in other private schools. The planning documents were created by the Grade 5 teachers a week in advance of instruction. However, as inquiry learning follows the learners’ areas of interest it is critical that the teacher be flexible with the teaching, learning and assessment process. It is more difficult for teachers to develop common criteria for achievement across classes and grade levels without resorting to over-generalized examples. Natasha designed an assessment rubric outline which, with support, the children filled in with their own success criteria. This enabled the children to “share [their] expectations and made them a part of the
assessments.” However, there were some parents who expressed concerns about what appeared to be a lack of structure or alignment with external summative assessments.

**Student motivation, pace, and coverage of material**

Despite the newness of inquiry learning for the parents were excited by the learning that they had observed in their children as the term progressed. Areesha’s mother commented on Areesha’s learning:

> This knowledge learnt by kids will not be forgotten because it’s not just book study but learnt for themselves. This only proves that she has well understood the exercise but also enjoyed learning it and explaining it to me – even the questions asked and answered by the speakers invited to school!

Whilst inquiry learning was motivating for the majority of the children some children were not motivated and had no interest in the subject matter. Therefore Natasha tried to find something that did interest them:

I tried to find a medium they would enjoy presenting in, for example the group of boys with weak literacy skills did a comic book and achieved the outcomes and demonstrated their understanding of the UOI while at the same time developing their literacy skills (Natasha).

Even with a variety of ways to engage all children, some children required more challenging tasks to keep them engaged. Dealing with the extended time on a particular UOI theme was also a challenge for Natasha and Latifa:

> If they’re not self motivated they can get bored. At times I needed to refocus and had the children produce action plans so they could organize their own time and they were held accountable (Natasha).

The principal also stressed the importance of time for coverage of all material. If children had had more time to reflect on the learning process in meaningful ways the reflections may have identified areas for redirection and refocus:

> I needed to spend more time on modeling good reflective practice for them and I just couldn’t fit that in too (Natasha).

**Training and resource needs**

Natasha and the DIS leadership and management team identified training challenges faced in the Year 5 UOI trial. Inquiry learning needed to be a whole school approach. Natasha also recognized that greater support and resources were necessary due to the media children chose to use for their projects.

**Discussion**

The discussion of the findings is presented as a fictitious learning conversation (Cotton, 2005). The format aims to capture the socially led, storied lives and perspectives of the teacher and teacher educator (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990). The focus is on moving individual practice and learning to new levels as the authors challenge their own and each other’s thinking, assumptions, values and beliefs about the nature of inquiry learning, its implementation and the implications for teacher education.

The conversation is set in the DIS training room on a Wednesday morning when the Grade 5 class has a double period of Art. The key learnings that shaped the authors’ experiences of inquiry learning are shared and the key themes that emerged are woven through the conversation. Initially Lauren and Natasha comment on the positive outcomes related to the learning of the novice teacher and students. These included growth in confidence and the appeal to multiple intelligences. In keeping with natural spoken discourse
this initial discussion leads to a fluid conversational style where ideas build upon each other and act as a catalyst for reflection and clarification of other important challenges such as student motivation, the shift in teacher’s role, course planning, assessment, resources and implications for teacher education.

“This study is of significance for a variety of reasons. As a result of using inquiry, I observed so many positives in terms of the children’s learning and my own teaching. Zayan, Maya and Areesha’s confidence and self esteem really developed and they thought more deeply about what they were learning and made more connections across content areas,” Natasha reflected.

“Yes and it was wonderful for Latifa to observe the children actively engaging with content through such a wide variety of interactive and personally meaningful activities through the inquiry cycle (Murdoch, 2007),” Lauren added. “Remember Zayan’s rap rendition during Latifa’s observed lesson? He had become so confident he was singing and rapping the ways someone should look after their teeth. I couldn’t believe it,” Lauren smiled recalling the event. “I also clearly remember Latifa’s surprise as she struggled with strategies for managing his and the other children’s excitement.”

Natasha smiled too, remembering. “Given the choice and freedom to explore a topic they were more motivated and engaged, took on greater responsibility and learned better (Wilson and Murdoch, 2003). I tried to choose units that involved problematic questions and issues and asked that children gather information from direct experience and stories that appealed to their own learning styles. As a result they developed a set of positive attitudes through the inquiry process … confidence, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, empathy, enthusiasm, independence, integrity, respect, appreciation, commitment and tolerance. The whole experience became an interchange where learners shared their opinions, research and experience in order to achieve an end result,” Natasha.

“What about the skills they demonstrated as a result of appealing to their different learning styles and intelligences?” Lauren asked.

“Well, they certainly developed deeper understandings. We all saw this in their responses throughout the unit and in their final open house displays. Similarly to McKenzie and McKinnon (2009) the children were exposed to a range of thinking tools that assisted them to organize and direct their learning,” Natasha said.

“Through the UOI we could see how learning became so much more relevant to the real world. It was no longer confined within the boundaries of the traditional subject areas. I know this significantly influenced Latifa,” Lauren reflected.

“For me now I’m trying to come to terms with how I can help the teacher candidates in my course, prior to their third practicum at DIS, prepare for inquiry learning,” Lauren continued. “With inquiry approaches, planning is driven by the understandings children seek and the teachers’ knowledge of those understandings (Murdoch and Wilson, 2003). Inquiry learning is implemented in a variety of different ways with the teacher’s role changing as the students engage in more open ended inquiry. At times I know Latifa was daunted by the amorphous planning and the spontaneity and flexibility that that required. She also struggled with the transition in roles from expert to tutor, coach, facilitator and model.”

Natasha nodded and said, “Yes, interestingly Latifa’s initial reaction to inquiry teaching was not too dissimilar to mine. She found it difficult to comprehend the job of being a ‘facilitator’ rather than a ‘teacher’ and her perceived lack of planning and the unpredictability made her anxious. Latifa was enthusiastic in her delivery; her lessons were always ambitious and showed a good understanding of the content. However she didn’t quite grasp that it is the children that direct/lead the learning not her. She became uncomfortable if the children went off on a tangent or her lesson didn’t go the way she had intended, something which you have to have the confidence to facilitate when using inquiry learning. It was clear that Latifa was
struggling with the implementation of inquiry learning. For example, she would often confuse and treat learner enthusiasm as if it was a behavioral problem. The lessons she taught were interactive and relevant but the independent tasks weren’t sufficiently open ended and didn’t cater for all learning styles. What Latifa needed at that stage was more practice in the foundation skills of teaching and assessment before she could begin to progress to the more advanced teaching skills required to implement inquiry learning successfully.”

“The perceived lack of structure made Latifa feel anxious and as such she resorted to teaching in ways that she had been taught herself,” Lauren said. “I guess what I would say to teacher candidates is that inquiry learning is an excellent approach, but should not necessarily serve as the only instructional strategy. They will continue to need more professional learning/support in order to effectively implement inquiry learning at these early stages of their teaching. Having said that, there are now many excellent resources that exist for teachers beginning inquiry containing systematic and appropriate lessons based on previous positive experiences appropriate for real life innovative problem solving,” Lauren said.

“Mmm, I agree but even with those as Murdock (2004, para. 8) says “Great inquiry units work towards a goal. Students do something with what they learn—and that action can, in itself, make a real difference.” We needed more of that at DIS,” Natasha said.

“As a result of leading a unit of inquiry, how have your perspectives changed?” Lauren asked.

“My philosophy has changed. Teaching is not about providing a child with an answer to a problem but rather it is demonstrating techniques that the children can use to find the answer for themselves. That way they become better able to think about the mechanics of learning. This unit of inquiry has given me the confidence to make informed judgments, balance pressure, and take risks. I have an even greater commitment to finding ways to inspire children to become independent learners, something which will be a part of my teaching forever. As a teacher candidate mentor and instructional leader, I now better equipped to support and demonstrate the skills needed to implement inquiry. I have lived the challenges a novice teacher or a teacher new to inquiry learning may face and now know better how to overcome them.” Natasha paused.

“Another really important issue is the issue of student assessment. There’s a big difference in how students are generally assessed using a traditional approach compared to assessment in inquiry learning. There is no question that what is assessed is a key factor in determining what is taught and learned, something which is vital when reporting back to parents. Student assessment is heavily oriented toward content mastery - mastery of "what we know." While this is important, other outcomes of inquiry learning include conceptual understandings, skills development, and nurturing habits of mind - things that are difficult to assess by traditional paper-pencil type instruments. As a teacher, I realised it was vital for me to give as much consideration on how to teach as what to teach. So I tried out different assessment strategies. I’m curious as to how the study has impacted what you do in your ZU teacher education courses, Lauren?” Natasha asked.

“Well, now I focus much more on problem based learning and inquiry approaches using technology and multimedia. Not only do we talk about the theoretical concepts underpinning them but we apply the approaches in microteaching sessions. The teacher candidates plan, deliver and reflect on co-taught lessons where their peers act as children in DIS classes. Several peers are asked to take on roles where they must act in specific ways related to the challenges of implementing inquiry learning. Teacher candidates then must do their best to respond to these unexpected events and then reflect on how well the lesson was planned and executed,” Lauren explained.

“You know that’s another great thing about this whole process, Natasha said, “It enabled us to really think about what we were doing in the classroom and why we were doing it. The
questions you and Latifa asked me really encouraged me to think more critically and analytically about the teaching, learning and assessment process. No really, it was a great experience,” Natasha smiled.

“Latifa also commented on the value of ongoing discussion and reflection through the practicum experience,” Lauren added.

“So the UOI clearly demonstrated that a partnership between those at the school (teachers, children, administration staff) and the wider community (parents, teacher educators, student-teachers) substantially benefits the institutions involved and if those stakeholders share the same vision and expectations then ‘lifelong learning for all’ is achievable. Our study is of interest because of the need to integrate teacher preparation programs with actual practice in schools.” Natasha said.

As they looked up, there were two teacher candidates waiting at the door hoping to discuss their upcoming plans for lessons with Grade 5 the following week. Natasha and Lauren put down their notes and invited the teacher candidates to come and sit down to ask their questions and discuss their ideas. The partnering was clearly a positive thing for teacher, teacher educator and teacher candidates.

**Conclusion**

Inquiry learning encourages students, teachers, parents, administrators and teacher educators to consider the teaching and learning process from the perspective of discovery and collaboration. As traditional curricula and approaches make way for more student centered methodologies many more opportunities exist for the development of general inquiry abilities, the acquisition of specific investigation skills, the development of language abilities, and the understanding of disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and the application of that knowledge. As a result of the school-university partnership, through collaborative action research into the strengths and challenges of inquiry learning, countless opportunities for teacher professional learning and teacher leadership occurred. The study demonstrated that the community of practice (CoP) members consisting of teacher, candidate teacher and teacher educator benefited from more embedded learning experiences in developing the language, habits, and behaviors of professional educators. Providing varied and extensive opportunities for the teacher candidate to connect what she learned with the challenges of using it, while under the expert tutelage of skilled clinical and teacher educators was highly valued because the candidate was able to blend practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge as she learned by doing and reflected in action. CoP members were able to change their practice in the light of new knowledge acquired and data gathered about whether their students were learning.

The ZU teacher education course prior to the third practicum was also modified to incorporate more clinical practice with academic content and as such was significantly enriched. As a result of the CoP experiences the ZU prerequisite teacher education course became even more practically oriented, inquiry focused and incorporated a stronger focus on technology in order to support the teacher candidates’ needs as they continue to engage in work experience opportunities at DIS. Partners such as DIS will play a stronger role in designing and implementing teacher education programs, selecting candidates for placement in their schools, and assessing candidate performance and progress. For example, suggestions were made to move towards using blocks of courses to allow greater flexibility in the kind of field experiences ZU students have the opportunity to engage in so that candidates have the continued benefit of greater opportunities to work alongside a mentor teacher and with a classroom group of students.
References


Imploding Animals: The Emergence of Neoliberal Corporate Discourse in Zoological Parks

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Abstract
This paper applies the lens of critical discourse analysis and the perspectives of post-structural critical theory to an analysis of the presence of corporate sponsorships and ethical and values systems in zoo graphics and education programs. One of the goals of this analysis was to model the use of an early historical method of sign analysis that emerged associated to the Frankfurt School. Unfortunately, this method, as a pragmatic concern, has been overshadowed by the frequently semantic and verbal hermeneutics of contemporary critical theory writing. Working with primary data (photographic) associated to corporate visibility and values systems on zoo and museum sites, the paper evolves toward the use of Jean Baudrillard’s conceptions of death as symbolic of cultural transformation as it considers the impact of zoo and museum gift shops on both visitors at these facilities and on the cultural and heritage artefacts, living and non-living, displayed in the facilities. The author ultimately concludes that there is value in the critical method that preceded contemporary critical theory, and in this approach, there is substantive and serious cultural analysis work yet undone in museum and zoo organizations.

Zoological parks as cultural organizations
The historic zoological park was an exhibitionary organization, created initially to display animals received as gifts by monarchs from other kingdoms, or as spoils from expeditions and wars. Incidentally, these displays became locations for human interactions and observations of the animals—and locations of great cruelty between the human and animal species emerging from the scientific illiteracy and moral deviance of humankind. In early years, the animals, the objects on display, were grouped in isolation or as groups of similar species in cages. No attention was paid to the enclosures themselves, in content, size, or relationship to the natural environments from which the animals were drawn. The goals of zoos could be categorized as the display of animals as “symbols of power and prestige, as luxury and diplomatic gifts, as objects of personal pleasure, for recreational use, for educational purposes, to increase zoological knowledge, and [later] for conservation purposes” (Kisling, p. i, 2001). Under these display categories, the animal as object had intrinsic value (sign) as it consumed one or more of these roles. Use value of the animal was irrelevant, and exchange value—to adopt the common parlance of Marxist economic theory—increased proportionally with the exotic availability of the organism, or to its localization in geo- or socio-political terms.

Later, from the early 1900s on, and in response to the emerging conceptualizations of biological habitat and environment, the enclosures at zoos were increasingly designed to present the habitats of the animals, and consequently the animals were presented in living dioramas—animals, plants, geological formations, water features, trees. The earliest recognized habitat exhibit opened in 1907 in Germany. The infamous zookeeper and designer Hallenbeck began to mix species in enclosures designed to mimic those biological communities normally observed in geographic space. This shift in zoo technology, architecture, and philosophy accompanied the emergence of the constructs of the food chain,
the food web, and the founding of ecology as a field of scientific inquiry (Hanson, 2004; Rothfels, 2002).

Only rarely, because of social tensions associated to religious mores or scientific misconceptions, were human intersections with animals and the environment presented honestly and openly. When humans and animals were depicted together, the animal assumed a utilitarian role, foregrounding the use value and fixing the subject-object dialectic of man to animal firmly in the direction of human supremacy and dominance. Exceptions to this informal rule most usually were based on human anthropological work that marginalized the cultures of indigenous peoples from Africa and the Pacific Rim countries, and presented these men, women and even children as “lesser species” to modern European men, such as the 1906 exhibit at the Bronx Zoo in New York City, which hired African people to stand around inside enclosures with African animals—in “authentic” village scenes that were more likely to represent highly distorted beliefs about village life and less likely to capture or model actual life in villages in Africa (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier, 2002; Hancocks, 2001; and Hanson, 2002). The aesthetic values of exhibit design were, until the early 1900s, invisible, subsumed, or non-existent.

Recent decades have seen the emergence full-bore of a transition from animals as objects in zoo exhibitry toward the presentation of holistic environmental systems—animals, plants, geology, and human archeological, sociological, and anthropological considerations. As such, the modern zoo is as much or more socio-cultural display as biological. Increasingly, zoos are being reconceptualized in their professional literature (Zimmerman, Hatchwell, Dickie, and West, 2007). Downplaying the exhibitionary role, modern zoos describe themselves or are described as agents of regional and global conservation, as community leaders in creating an ethic of stewardship and conservation through outreach and education programs, as scientific leaders concerned with the protection and preservation of species, and as scientific and cultural organizations of the most consequential sort. In this conception, the zoo transcends to a position of seated authority, with humans depicted as more or less environmentally aware, sensitive, and engaged. Animals are presented as victims of human society and in need of defense, or are, as I shall argue below, stripped of significance (designified) altogether.

Critical theory as method

Across this modern and late-modern transition of the role, function, and conceptualization of zoos, there has been a philosophical transition in the conceptualization of the display organization as well. The implosion of the animal-as-object of an anthropocentric discourse, and the subsequent emergence of humans as objects of cultural discourse and consumption in zoo spaces, has created an opportunity for dialectical analysis in and about the zoo as an institution of cultural transmission, as a place of embedded signs and consumer systems, and as an example of antecedent systems of human culture and citizenship consumed by neoliberal and transnational corporate hegemonies. In previous papers, I described the centralization of consumer models of environmental stewardship located out of ubiquitous gift shops on zoo grounds, many times themed to the animals on exhibit (Walters, 2010 and 2011). The power of modern capitalism as a driving force behind a consumer value system as environmental ethic continues to warrant exploration and thought. Following the early Baudrillard (1976/1981, Simulacres et simulation and Le systeme des objets), I have traced the emergence of a hyperreal experience within the zoo grounds: from humans as subjects of exploration and discovery, to humans as the object of focused didactic and discursive programming, and finally to the individual human as the object of a consumer system that requires the purchase of themed merchandise to memorialize the visit to the zoo as a sign of
transcendence into a social system—the emergence of Baudrillard’s system of code. This purchase completes a transaction, symbolizing agreement—even subconsciously—with a consumer economy and materialistic system that has first consumed the zoo, and through the zoo now consumes the visitor and the nation, and thus has imploded, in Baudrillardian terms, the identity and authentic aura (noting Walter Benjamin) of the animals themselves.

In this construction, there are no longer animals in zoos. There are only humans to be consumed by a denationalized global system of material economy. Humans purchasing stuffed animals to memorialize living animals. The gift shop as mortuary and cemetery. Children’s toys as reliquaries. Exhibit panels as obituaries for living animals that exist only when purchased in the simulacra of the gift shop. Existence through economic transaction. Animals that exist only in hyperreality or memory. In this way, there is parallelism with my observations (Walters, 2010) of human experience consumed as a memorializing economic transaction. My visit to the zoo, my experience and memory are redacted and reduced to an object purchased in a gift shop or a memorializing photograph. Memory as media. Media as truth. The human-subject-now-object in the system of code.

My favorite quote and inspiration, “every aspect of humanity’s relationship with nature can be perceived through the bars of the zoological garden….to tour the cages of the zoo is to understand the society that erected them (Baratay and Hardouin-Fugier, p. 13), continues to motivate my mental explorations of zoos, and continues to be proved true. I have traced this idea through visits and photographic data from numerous zoos, public aquariums, and science museums across the country and around the world. As I have reviewed and studied the photographic evidence, another discourse emerges, tracing another feature of these institutions in the modern world: the zoo as a locus for increasingly neoliberal corporate consumption. The zoo as a front for the global corporation that, having consumed the zoo and imploded its animals as display objects, now re-creates the zoo as a neoliberal environmental exhibit, housing and objectifying the human inhabitants of the simulated space. A simulacra masquerading as authentic cultural space. The authentic and natural world subsumed by a corporate simulation that consumes nature, and authenticates material consumption of simulated animals. Humans as the new animals of the neoliberal zoo, housed comfortably in an ecosystem of consumption, blinded to any other natural world. Humans unaware of their dislocation from subject to object, destined to memorializing faux authentic experiences that were systematized and totalized before humans were introduced into the zoo environment. Humans consumed by the signs of modernity and consuming, in turn, the signs of postmodernity—the global marketing and media system.

In this sense, the zoo is transformed into a shopping experience, and environmental values such as conservation, preservation, and stewardship are transposed into a system of neoliberal consumption that empties the natural world, in truth, of signification. An economic system predicated on professed conservation values which are in fact coring or hollowing out authentic nature by signifying its opposite. This is the model gone predatory. The higher level simulacra: the model removed from its original, which now deconstructs and consumes its authentic forbear.

In The Birth of the Museum (2007), Tony Bennett brings critical theory to bear on the exhibitionary organization, drawing from the work of Foucault and others. Bennett argues that such organizations serve multiple power systems and embed a variety of discourses “from nationalism to colonialism, to conceptions of civic identity and social behavior, into their various texts.” These texts include speech, art, architecture, lighting, signage, object selection and arrangement, and rule-setting as paths of cultural communication. Bennett takes an expansive view of culture in museums and its relationship to visitors:

Each of these institutions is involved in the practice of ‘showing and telling’: that is, of exhibiting artefacts and/or persons in a manner calculated to embody and
communicate specific cultural meanings and values. They are also institutions which, in being open to all-comers, have shown a similar concern to devise ways of regulating the conduct of their visitors, and to do so, ideally, in ways that are both unobtrusive and self-perpetuating. Finally, in their recognition of the fact that their visitors’ experiences are realized via their physical movement through an exhibitionary space…these institutions have a shared concern to regulate the performative aspects of their visitors’ conduct (p. 6).

From their inception, zoos, public aquariums, and science museums/display institutions were harnessed to the social task of creation of social norms and shared virtues and values—the creation of shared culture. I have argued in previous work, that zoos continue to reflect this purpose, but that these shared cultural norms are increasingly derived from a global perspective shaped by environmentalism and scientism. As this culture has pushed past the national geographies of the nation-state toward the amorphous boundaries of biological habitats, the denationalized citizen as a member of a social group concerned with environmental conservation has had numerous effects. From the practical issue of maps drawn to reflect biological zones without national borders, to international conservation agreements under UNESCO governance, the picture of the world is increasingly one of unity around environmental values and one of a shared, global citizenship. I applaud this movement toward a unified global system, particularly as it is superficially grounded on preservation and conservation instead of consumption. Nevertheless, critical questions must be centered on the degree to which this laudable value system has ever existed, and if so, has it been co-opted by neoliberal and transnational corporate actors to perpetuate capitalistic materialism? And in this conceptualization, how compatible are these competing value systems, what are the disparate visions of citizenship which emerge from each, and are there ethical considerations that emerge which should guide the management structures of zoos and other such organizations? It seems clear also that concerns for human freedom in hegemonic systems of neoliberal corporate control require critical inquiry into the hyperreality of modern zoos and similar cultural organizations.

The struggle of critical theory

The grand promise of critical theory, the development of thought systems and analytic tools to bring order to the process of social criticism, to critique the totalizing tendency of control systems, and so to engender democratic idealism through the identification of counter-forces (revolutionaries) to this end, remains an ideal worthy of pursuit. Unfortunately, as anyone who has read across any temporal cross-selection of readings from this approach has seen, over time the critical theorists have frequently abandoned any pretense at a theory of language that foregrounds accessibility. This is not, however, reason to abandon the pursuit, nor are all theorists equally guilty of this nihilism of method. In his critical comparison of the post-modern analytical approaches of Jean Baudrillard and Guy Debord, Steven Best (1994) emphasizes these grand terms: “At stake is nothing less than the nature of contemporary society and the possibility of radical social transformation” (p.54). Seen through this perspective, the role and function of cultural education in the modern zoo can be seen as a conflict of truly portentous proportions. The reconstruction of social and global norms, the re-definition and denationalization of citizenship, the deconstruction of the nation-state, the dehumanization of humanity and implosion of nature by neoliberal corporate agents are all constituent terrains of the hyperreality of the modern zoo space.

As we seek to identify, organize and decompose the signs of the zoo system, Best (p. 57) reminds us that “signs do not simply move in their own signifying orbit….They are historically produced and circulated and while they many not translucently refer to some
originating world, they none the less can be socio-historically contextualized, interpreted, and critiqued.” To this end, Debord (1970) posits the development of a critical, semiological hermeneutics “to uncover the repressed or mystified social content and social relations (p.23)” hidden within the signs, signifiers, and signified. He notes “the spectacle is not just a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images” (p. 4). Best, describing the development of this critical hermeneutic, suggests this process will unmask the “surface appearance of things…to reveal not the ‘real’ itself, which remains a dialectically mediated category, but the social forces behind these appearances, the actors, groups, policy-makers, agendas, and institutions still identifiable and subject to a critically informed resistance” (p. 58). Thus, remaining with Best, “critical mapping of the social terrain” becomes a key concern of the analyst and a key problem for the methodologist. So, moving from theoretical abstraction, semiology becomes a practical method: to deconstruct the signs, both signifiers and signified, within the social space of the modern zoo, and thus, as Jean-Luc Godard suggested, “to trace them back to their sources.” The ends of this analysis would be, at least, beneficial in arming visitors to such spaces against the re-objectification of themselves as consumers over against free citizens.

The corporate presence at the zoo

The first act in deconstructing the signs of the zoo space is to localize them, label them, and strip them of sign value. In my work within these spaces, I rely on photography to re-objectify the signs. Designifying through objective reduction and decontextualization. I strip the sign of its meaning by excising the context, thereby framing the label as a hermeneutic device. By photographing exhibits, graphic panels, interactive features, animal enclosures, walkways, light and water features, and so forth, the images become helpful for deconstruction of the meaning, and thus freeing the hermeneutic for reappropriation to narrative inquiry. As Foucault and others have described, the exhibitionary organization from its inception has concerned itself with the management of human movement and behavior. Thus, the modern zoo functions under these same lines of practice. Constraining physical movement consequently constrains mental movement along pre-composed mental and ideological pathways constructed from signs. The human is thus objectified physically: constrained in movement along physical pathways, and objectified mentally, socially, and culturally: constrained in thought along cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural pathways constructed in discourse. Painted in ideologically and idiomatic brush strokes. Thus language and image become signifiers of embedded discourses, and are potentially coercive actors to enliven didactic speech forms. Pushing contra-historically beyond Baudrillard and Debord to an earlier semiology after Barthes and Eco (although not to neglect Baudrillard’s approach in Le Systeme de Objets) provides traction for a practical critical hermeneutics.

Through the camera lens, one focuses immediately on the presence of the neoliberal corporation: Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, National City Bank, Huntington Bank, US Bank, Southwest Airlines, Kodak, Budweiser, Chevrolet. The names and corporate logos brand the walkways, snack bars, exhibits and graphic panels, and even children’s playgrounds in zoo spaces. Toddlers, children too young to read, happily climb and jump on play-structures branded under the corporate logo of regional, national, and transnational economic interests. Resting at a table, a young family takes solace from the day’s heat under a Pepsi-labeled umbrella, near a convenient window where an ice cold Pepsi can be purchased with a Bob Evans sausage and a Ben and Jerry’s ice cream. Berman (2006) notes that the average American child is exposed to 10,000 advertisements annually—and the zoo grounds provide no respite from the heat of consumption and the objectification of the young. The assimilation of humanity into consumer groups organized for their purchasing power.
Economics as ethnography as demography. Zoo exhibits branded as marketing tools for corporate-driven signs. Ideologies of consumption floating in inescapable clusters of influence and control. The weapon systems of the modern world—advertisements; the targets of the modern economy—children; the language of the modern world—material consumption. Inconspicuous victim of the modern economy—the animals themselves. Imploded under the weight of signs.

**Not guilty by association: values transmutation**

I wander the spaces at a major American zoo as theme park, Disney’s Animal Kingdom in Orlando, Florida. The Coca Cola signs are ubiquitous. Walking through the gates of Sea World Park in San Diego, California, the Pepsi signs are inescapable. Entire buildings given by Southwest Airlines at another exhibitionary organization. A science museum in Chicago encourages guests to purchase carbon offset credits, on a sign at the museum entrance sponsored by Exelon, one of America’s largest nuclear power corporations. The Asian Exhibit at an Ohio zoo funded in part by Huntington Bank, “a bank invested in people” the sign reads. From the Paris Zoo to the zoos of Rome, Istanbul, and Mexico City—Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, Kodak Film, Bancomat and Citibank.

Why the zoo? What draws banks and soft drink manufacturers and airlines and photographic film manufacturers to these exhibitionary spaces? At a cursory level, certainly advertising and marketing plays an important role in substantiating these investments. In The Consumer Society (1970, 1998) and in For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign (1972, 1981) Baudrillard traces the emergence of the consumer society in what, for the former reference, was the peak and most consistently Marxist of his analyses. The commodification of culture shifted the energy of the economy from labor and production to sign. The emergence of modern communication techniques totalized the system, subsuming material culture, eventually and ultimately, to the digital code of the sign, and stripping the aura of authenticity from objects as surely as simulacra stripped meaning from objects and transmuted that meaning to the signs and symbols of the new consumptive symbological superstructure (although Baudrillard, as he eventually broke with Marx, would dispute the language of superstructure.) And so the premise is born: as meaning is stripped from objects and transmuted to their sign referents—and noting that the object now refers the sign and not vice versa, just as the signifier and signified are merged for Baudrillard—so the embedded meaning, values, and naturalistic authenticity promised in the exhibitionary organization vis a vis the authentic cultural and natural artifact, the animal, is now transmuted to the neoliberal corporation. The animals, now imploded, serve only to market the corporate logos and symbols. Come one, come all; step right up and see the Coca Cola sign, brought to you by the gorilla in the cage to the left. See the National City Bank logo, brought to you by endangered tigers. Step right up and see the Kodak corporate symbol, brought to you by an elephant, long separated from its natural environment, where it wandered free with its family on the wide spaces of the African savannah.

**On the backs of dead elephants**

David Hancocks has served in a variety of capacities in zoos over his distinguished career and has contributed a moving and important history of zoos to the literature (2001). In a 2005 article in the Seattle Times newspaper, Hancocks describes the tragic lives of elephants held in human captivity.

The history of elephants in zoos is full of mental and physical pain. Wild elephants astonishingly intelligent, perceptive and complex beings, live in caring and secure extended
families that stay intact for life. But zoo elephants have traditionally been lonely, shipped around indiscriminately, bored, cramped, chained and beaten. In the wild they enjoy an incredibly positive and loving social environment. Different attitudes prevail in many zoos, where dominance and control are paramount, even for babies (p.1).

Hancocks begins his earlier history (2001) with a moving account of a captive elephant which achieved near-global fame over the course of its life. Jumbo was captured around 1861 in Ethiopia and sold through a series of animal traders and zoos, finally arriving at the London Zoo in 1865. He grew to be the largest elephant in captivity, reaching eleven feet at the shoulder by 1880. So well known was he, that the name, Jumbo, continues to connote anything that is overly or unusually large. Jumbo began to demonstrate serious behavior problems (which were determined to be the result of pain from impacted molars, but not until over a hundred years later in 1991) which led to him being sold to the American P.T. Barnum of the famous circus. Arriving in America in 1882, the animal sparked a marketing obsession:

Jumbo cigars, fans, hats, jars of peanut butter, pies, and all manner of goods that benefited from being marketed as oversized. The Philadelphia Evening Star informed its fashion-conscious readers that the new shade of gray that spring was called “jumbo.” No other animal’s name has become so deeply embedded in our language (Hancocks, p.4).

Jumbo was killed on September 15, 1885, in St. Thomas, Ontario. He was hit by a runaway freight train. Was it suicide, perhaps? Or genocide: one elephant killed on the tracks of the modern technocracy as a sacrificial offering to assuage the god of consumerism. Nevertheless,

The train was derailed. Jumbo was dead. Barnum squeezed every bit of publicity from the tragedy. He sold the elephant’s heart and bones to the highest bidders, respectively Cornell University and the American Museum of Natural History, and arranged for Jumbo’s hide to be stuffed. Instructed by Barnum to show the animal “like a mountain” the young naturalist and taxidermist Carl Akeley stretched and overstuffed the elephant’s skin to increase his already prodigious height by one foot (Hancocks, pp. 4-5).

Jean Baudrillard had a special fixation on death and its significance to the critical relationship between signs, and between signifiers and the signified. In his book Symbolic Exchange and Death (1993), Baudrillard had reached a near desperate stage of analysis. The symbolic system, in his writing and thought, was pervasive. Any attempt to define or describe a world as physicality and an economy in terms of labor, production, capital, and consumption was overtaken by the panopticon of sign. Reality had been subsumed under hyperreality. Signs had replaced the real. The symbolic world was totaled and inescapable. Individuality was a surreal, having been consumed by the sign systems of modern communications and media. Poster (1994) writes that “he [Baudrillard] was searching desperately for a source of radicalism that challenges the absorptive capacities of a system with no fixed determinations, a world where anything can be anything else, where everything is both equivalent to, and indifferent to, everything else, a society, in short, dominated by the digital logic of the code” (p.80).

In a conclusion either nihilist or fatalist—certainly Nietzschean—Baudrillard concludes that only death can escape the symbolic code. Only death is an act that avoids a sign exchange. Death is a truly symbolic act that defies the world of simulacra, models, and codes. There is no emergent hyperreality that consumes death. It is. There is no simulacra which models death. It is. In the act of dying, Jumbo, for all time, escaped the symbolic power of the market. He was free from control, from being sold. Elephant prostitution. Animals as auto-erotic tools for human gratification.

You cannot sell death. There is no market for dead elephants. Barnum tried. He deconstructed the physicality of the elephant. A heart sold here. Bones sold there. The
hulking remains stretched out of proportion. Exaggerated for effect. Physical attempt to create a simulacrum. The dead elephant, imploded of meaning and identity, is exploded. Stuffed as an oversized sign of human power and control. But ultimately dead. Death as the end of referentiality. Death as the end of social dominance.

All men sleep peacefully in the grave. They are beyond the hegemony of neoliberal corporate dominance. They are beyond the consuming power of advertising and media. No one speaks beyond the grave to dead men’s ears. Death consumes, finally, those consuming—all-consuming—signs of modernity. The stuffed toy elephants in the gift shop are not dead. They are anti-living. They are not first order simulacra, representing the animals across the zoo grounds in the cages. They are fourth order simulacra, representing only the signs of neoliberal corporate marketing and consumption. They are the sign that the animals in the zoo are neither dead nor alive. They are, simply, no longer.

Conclusions and Final Thoughts

For Baudrillard, as expressed finally in Symbolic Exchange and Death (1993), the break between modernism and postmodernism was essentially a break with Marxist conceptions of production, commodities, and labor. It was the end of language as an expression of thought. An end of economy as an expression of material exchange. Of individuality as an expression of humanity. Nothing, save death, was unmarked by sign. Everything was consumed. Beyond the bounds of physicality, Baudrillard described a metaphysics of sign and symbol; and for this, he is often underappreciated. Extending semiology beyond the material world, Baudrillard described the implosion of the material into an amalgam of reality and ideas, politics, sociology, culture, and communications; media and meaning merged and became indistinct.

Capturing the early methodology of both Baudrillard and Debord, where they were very similar for a time, and constructing a critical hermeneutic method to frame an analysis of human culture through the lens of the modern zoological garden, I have been able to identify structural trends in the formation of transnational and global culture. These trends foreground the neoliberal corporation, consistent with Marx, Baudrillard, and Debord, as an agent of power. In this economy, sign is the unit of exchange. Following Baudrillard and the later critical theorists, I see a break or disruption at the transition from modern to postmodern that can be construed as the break between materiality and sign. Consumption is then, not of physical space, but metaphysical. Economy becomes reciprocal exchange of sign. Culture becomes, in this conception, fungible and referential of message. And finally, message and power, culture and position merge. On the backs of dead elephants becomes metaphor for the consumption of the zoo as cultural organization, and its subsumption to the ideologies of its corporate sponsors.

References


What Does Not Change? - Some Thoughts How to Make Sense of Internet’s Future and Competence Needs

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Abstract

Internet is a part of everyday life in the knowledge society. Society can’t function efficiently without it and we take it for granted (i.a. Miller, 1997). My paper aims to give some ideas about how to make sense of Internet’s development. I will introduce some developments that are likely to continue during next decades and then I will outline few implications what this could mean for competence needs. Currently it has been discussed much about ongoing changes and complexity and it has ignored things that remain constant or changes only a little bit. The model of chronotope space classifies changes into linear, visionary and disruptive categories. In linear situations, relations between causes and effects are clear. In visionary situations, changes of Internet have multiple causes and multiple effects and it is not possible to know how they are going to change. In disruptive situations causes and effects are not recognizable because these situations are too complex (Aaltonen, 2007). I argue that we should start anticipating the future by identifying linear situations which are discoverable. Stability is still a part of development but we tend to forget that because we are change orientated. By identifying linear situations we can outline specific competency needs. These competence needs are profession-based and therefore linear situations make specialization possible. Internet’s visionary and disruptive situations are more difficult and even impossible to manage. In those situations we just have to have general competences like ability to change our own working methods. From that point of view general competences and generalization makes possible that we can adapt to visionary and disruptive situations.

Keywords: Internet Infrastructure, Chronotope Space, Competence Needs

Introduction

Internet has rearranged, changed and refreshed our ways of living and working during its relatively short history. Just two decades ago Internet’s popular use expanded rapidly and Internet studies became a field of science (Mowery & Simcoe, 2002). Back then Internet was seen as a “computer-supported social network” where people with technological knowledge could be connected to each other despite of time and space boundaries. This worldwide connectivity enabled people to connect and interact in the Internet- but just in there. In other words it was technological tool which enabled computer practitioners to connect better. This era is the first phase of Internet studies which is characterized by technologically motivated research topics. (Wellman, 2004). It is a parallel universe (Loescher, Schroeder & Thomas, 2000). From this technological point of view, Internet is a network of computers which provide different applications like WWW which is a system of interlinked hypertexts is one of the most know of these applications. Together these two generate general purpose technologies which disseminate information globally (Mowery & Simcoe).

At the second phase of Internet studies (from 1998 to 2004) Internet was not used by computer experts but ordinary people as well. For this reason the focus of research shifted from Internet technology to Internet users. Many studies aimed to explore what kind socio-economical backgrounds Internet users had and what were the purposes of their Internet use. (Wellman, 2004). From this societal point of view, Internet is the platform of inequality.
Internet is kind of river where ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ take place. For those who have internet access and ability to use it efficiently, river will pulp and one will utilize it even more. On the other hand, those who don’t have the river, are totally outsiders (Loescher et al. 2000). These differences include various possibilities in Internet access and abilities to use it efficiently (Norris 2001). Recently there has been a debate whether Internet decrease or increase worldwide inequality. Moral warming scenario claims that Internet makes inequalities visible and as a consequence ethical (business) solutions are needed (Outsights, 2004). On the contrary, Internet’s flow of information enables that people don’t realize or remember these inequalities and therefore inequality continues. This is called as cognitive saturation. (Gaudin, 2008, p. 29-31) - as Godet (2001) mentions, “Internet: A Computerized Dumpster” (p. 10).

Third phase of Internet studies (since 2004) the research focus has been individualized network instead of Internet technology or Internet users. Internet has become a social network software which allows people and organization to use it to one’s own purposes (Wellman, 2004). Herewith defining Internet as a tool would be oversimplified and misleading. Tools are meant for a specific purpose and infrastructure therefore is usually taken for granted and it can be used in different contexts. (Star & Ruhleder, 1996). Thus I define Internet as an infrastructure. This infrastructure includes all technological, social and policy aspects of Internet (Miller, 1997). In other words, it includes perspectives of all three Internet studies phases.

My paper aims to give some ideas about how to make sense of Internet’s future developments. This paper should be understood as sense-making for further studies. At first, I will introduce some various developments and then I outline few implications what they could mean for competence needs. The concept of competences is widely used in colloquial language which means inflation of this concept. According to Savanevičienė, Stukaitė and Šilingienė (2008) competences are combination of knowledge, skills, and behavior used to improve performance. According to Garud (1997) knowledge includes explanations for the phenomenon (know-how), characters of the phenomenon (know-what) and general principles which makes the phenomenon possible. According to knowledge, also skills are usually understood as synonyms for competences. Nevertheless, skills are one’s learned capacity to carry out pre-determined results (Gimzauskiene & Staliuniene, 2010) meanwhile competence could and should be used to create unexpected results.

This paper connects at least three different fields of science: futures studies, Internet studies and education. Thus it provides a novel perspective on how to understand Internet’s future. In addition Internet’s future and competence needs assessment are topic of interest both for practitioners and academics. I attempt to introduce novel angle to this widely discussed and studied phenomenon. Instead of tracking how Internet is going to change at next decades I argue we should start sense-making by defining what is not going to change. Even if ongoing complex changes are huge part of Internet’s future, continuity and stability play also a central role.

From Change Orientation to Situation Orientation

The research of Internet’s future area has tended to focus on changes rather than things that won’t change. Many studies aim to track changes and impacts and driving forces of those changes. For example, there have been done significant holistic megatrend studies, where Internet has been studied as a part of the whole global landscape (Cetron & Davies, 2008; Gaudin, 2008, Outsights, 2004; Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World). In those studies, changes in Internet’s privacy, possibilities of the networked economy, future virtual learning environments, and e-consumerism and e-healthcare transformations have been topics of interest. However, a little attention has been paid for studying those Internet-related topics.
which are not changing that radically. Still, according to realist science philosophy, these things are the part of Internet’s future. Describing the phenomenon includes also describing things that won’t change. Ignoring these things does not make them vanish.

We see the changes - but just them. And in some situations we don’t even see the changes as the way they appear. According to Kahn and Wiener (1967, 3-4) it is very difficult to avoid overestimation and underestimations of new developments. Like writer Marchel Proust stated: “The only thing that does not change is that at any and every time it appears that there have been ‘great changes”. Brown and Humbleys (2003) state that these collective narratives set limits for our thinking because when we build and rebuild them we don’t see outside of them. In these situations “changes” refers to mental models instead of characters of real environment. When we build and rebuild collective narratives about changing future we can’t see stability and continuum. They are not part of those narratives we made. It is justified to ask why we don’t create new collective narratives.

I state that we are too change orientated. This change orientation ignores parts of Internet’s future where stability and continuum takes place. I argue that if it is necessary both for practitioners and academics to explore whole reality – including things that won’t change. Therefore I argue we should be situation orientated instead of change orientated. Situation orientation includes also things that won’t change in addition to possible changes. I use a model of chronotope space (Aaltonen 2007; 2009; 2010) to describe various situations. It is a framework of my theoretical thinking. This model classifies changes in linear, visionary and disruptive categories. In linear situations there are one or few causes have one effect. In visionary ontology relationship between causes and effects are more complex: one cause could have many different effects and many different causes can have one common effect. These changes take place usually in long-term future and they are separated from time and space. In disruptive situations relation between cause and effect is not discoverable and therefore changes are coherent after the change or they are not coherent at all (Aaltonen 2007; 2009; 2010).

**Linear Internet’s Developments**

Internet’s linear situations are those that won’t change at near-term future. This still does not mean just stability; moreover some specific development is going to continue. For example we have already faced the trend of online advertising. Traditional advertising media are losing their power meanwhile digital advertising is growing rapidly. At least in the United Kingdom Internet is already the biggest advertising sector (Internet Advertising Bureau 2009) and this trend will likely achieve many other countries as well. For instance the whole digital share of advertisement will be major by 2020 (Myers 2010). In these situations just one or few causes have known outcomes and therefore these developments are discoverable and repeatable (Aaltonen, 2010, p. 29). In other words, the development is linear. It continues by direct phases and therefore it is quite easy to identify how online advertising is going to grow.

Linear changes usually refer to accurate, predictable, steady and constant developments. I prefer the concept of linear development or situation because change would be misleading. Like Kahn and Wiener (1967) state continuum does not mean change. Even if online advertising is growing exponentially it does not mean it is changing. Moreover the change from traditional advertising to online advertising is continuing. Continuum is still part of every change (Kahn & Wiener, 1967). In fact, continuum is necessary in order to create the change. We wouldn’t able to say that advertising has faced the shift from traditional advertising to digital advertising if there has not been continuum of traditional advertising. In other words, when continuum ends, change begins. Executives of trend exploration states that when we are identifying linear developments we should explore history in order to know future. Memory, historical patterns and current trends help to outline future continuities.
Molitor (1998) adds that continuum has played significant role in history and therefore any huge transformations don’t exist.

I argue that sense-making of these linear situations enables identifying professional-based competences. Because linear developments are predictable and certain, it is possible also discover what they mean for particular profession. Some authors are speaking about substance competency (Helakorpi 2005) or professional competences (Savanevičienė et al., 2008) to describe professional know-how. I use concept of professional-based competences because professional competences would refer to traditional landscape where line between working life and family was clear. In fact, this dichotomy is vanishing: working time is also one’s own time and one’s own needs are similar in business life and in their free time (Jensen, 1999, p. 169-175). The one has moreover his own life with full of different projects which all will help one to gain more competences in general. In a networked economy the person is able to create formal and informal connections to achieve more connections. This networking is based on differentiation: people have different specific professional-based competences which they share. (Cetron & Davies, 2008). Developments are continuing and the only challenge for us is to outline profession’s best practices.

**Visionary Internet’s Developments**

In some situations professional best practices are not enough because things really are changing. In these visionary situations one cause can have multiple effects and one effect can be a consequence from multiple causes (Aaltonen 2007: 2009; 2010). Developments really are changing and there are few possibilities how. Challenge of these situations is to identify which possibility is the most relevant one. In futures studies researchers use the concept of scenarios to refer these roads. Scenarios are diverse descriptions of alternative and possible futures which have logical plot (Godet, 1995, 20-21). For example the future of privacy has various scenarios. In general, there has been a broader discussion of global regulation, transparency, privacy and freedom to speech. Especially Wikileaks have generated many points of view in this discussion. One scenario suggests that transparency, extended democracy and freedom to speech will take place in future landscape. On the contrary, other scenario suggests that even this collective freedom to speech demands some regulations. (Gaudin, 2008).

People, organizations and functions have very different possibilities in these different scenarios and therefore both practitioners and academics have been enthusiastic to know what will really happen in the future. They want to know which route takes them to the “right” future. Unfortunately, uncertainty makes it impossible for a futurist to give certain predictions. Moreover, futurists are able to classify these diverse scenarios by how desirable and probable they are (Godet, 2001). The challenge is to realize that on the other hand there are many possible futures and on the other hand we create these futures. Internet itself is simultaneously managed by nobody and anybody.

In linear situations, developments were specific and therefore identifying these developments enable identify specific competence needs as well. In visionary situations things really are changing and therefore basic professional-based competences are not enough. Moreover, in these situations, it is possible to outline more general competences like social and conceptual competences. Social competences means ability to communicate with work and people and conceptual competence means ability to use systematic thinking in order to model different situations (Heyse and Erbenbeck (2004) quoted in Savanevičienė et al., 2008). Some authors are referring this phenomenon with the concept of the networked society where economy is based on specialization (Cetron & Davies, 2008). People have expertise in some specific field and in order to create more holistic knowledge of some specific phenomenon they are forced to cooperate with other experts. In education field
authors are speaking about shared expertise. All participants have different knowledge and they create new knowledge together (Hakkarainen, Lonka & Lipponen, 2002). In this process of shared expertise we might be able to create scenarios to describe possible futures. In order to do so, they need social and conceptual competences.

**Disruptive Internet’s Developments**

So far, I have described linear and visionary situations in which there was even possibility to outline some possible futures for Internet. In disruptive situations there are no relation between cause and effect or this relation is impossible to discover (Aaltonen 2009). Things are changing but no one knows how. Usually, these situations are impossible to predict before but when they happen it is impossible not to see them. For example, internet itself was disruptive change. It was invented in 1960s for US army and 30 years after that public use of Internet became general and this development has continued since then. (Mowery & Simcoe, 2002.) Nowadays, practices of virtual learning, long-distance health care, medical tourism and teleworking are part of our everyday life. During the next decades line between real and virtual is blurring even more than nowadays. Already many virtual environments like second life and MySpace are as complex as real world. (Gaudin, 2008).

Infrastructure of society really changed even if futurists of 1950s weren’t able to see that. In futures studies these wild cards are sudden, unexpected and improbable events which still have very meaningful consequences (Mendonça, Pina e Cunha, Kaivo-oja & Ruff, 2004). These wild cards have usually meaningful consequences and therefore public has interest to identify these changes before they happen. However this is not possible because doing so, the one would try to transform these situations to linear situations. Authors have discussed whether it is possible to anticipate these kinds of developments. After all, they are by definition unexpected. For instance, Petersen (1999) argues that it is possible to prepare to these kinds of events. For example approaches of chaos theory (Fractals, 1992) and complexity theory (e.g. Mitleton-Kelly, 2003) attempt to find tools for anticipating these nonlinear and random changes. Snowden and Boone (2007) distinguish complex and chaotic contexts. They argue that in complex contexts these situations can be understood afterwards but in chaotic contexts there are no patterns or right way to act. Like Aaltonen (2010) states disruptive changes are retrospectively coherent or they are not coherent at all.

It is justified to ask, if we even need to anticipate these disruptive changes. After all, why don’t we just anticipate those linear and visionary situations because they are at least partly discoverable? The reason, why I consider also these disruptive situations, is clear. Disruptive situations are part of current and becoming landscape and therefore they also create some competence needs. Anticipation for these disruptive situations means getting dynamic capabilities which are needed in disruptive situations. Dynamic capabilities are “firms ability to integrate, build, and reconfigure internal and external competences to address rapidly changing environments” (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997, p. 516). I argue that this concept can be expanded to include individual’s abilities to integrate, build and reconfigure both professional and social and conceptual competences they have in order to meet demands of novel landscape. These competences are both needed and demanded in disruptive situations. Even if we are not able to know exactly what kind of future Internet has, we are able to cope due to their dynamic capabilities. For example model of problem-based learning enables students to go beyond their comfort zone and therefore create new competences in order to solve the problem (Lindholm-Ylänne & Iivanainen, 2003).
Conclusion

Figure 1 illustrates my key statements. I have brought different competences needs into spatio-temporal context. In linear situations continuity, clear causal effects and predictability makes possible to outline professional best practices. Developments are continuing and therefore we can find best ways to the future. Outlining specific professional-based competences is possible in linear situations in contrast with visionary situations. In those situations discontinuity and unclear causal relations take place (Aaltonen 2007; 2009; 2010). Developments are changing and there are few possibilities how. In these situations more general competences are needed. We can speak about social and conceptual competences. Disruptive situations are more complex than visionary and linear situations. Relation between cause and effect is unclear and even impossible to track (Aaltonen, 2009). Dynamic capabilities are crucial in these unexpected situations. The only way to anticipate in these events is to be able to create novel competences. These new competences are based on creative way of integrating both professional-based competences and social and conceptual competences together.

Figure 1: Competences in the spatio-temporal context

![Figure 1: Competences in the spatio-temporal context](image)

Figure 2 presents how these competences are related to each other. One has to have professional-based competences in order to survive. Those competences makes possible to co-operate and create novel ways of thinking and acting. In other words, social and conceptual competences demand professional-based competences. Additionally, dynamic...
Capabilities demands both professional-based and social and conceptual competences. In other words, dynamic capabilities are based on idea that the one has competences which she can integrate in novel way. I argue that we need all these competences in order to cope with different situations. Still, like Snowden and Boone (2007, p. 75) notes, actions should be in line with context.

Figure 2: Relationship between spatio-temporal competences

I argue that we should start anticipating the future by identifying linear situations. Stability is still a part of development but we tend to forget that because we are change orientated. These competence needs are profession-based and therefore linear situations make specialization possible. Internet’s visionary and disruptive situations are more difficult and even impossible to manage. In those situations we just have to have general competences like ability to change our own working methods. From that point of view general competences and generalization makes possible that we can adapt to visionary and disruptive situations.

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Immigration and Intercultural Education in Portugal: a Portuguese Case Study

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Abstract
Intercultural education is about answering the challenge of diversity in a global world. In earlier decades, two models of managing cultural diversity seemed to function: Assimilationism (French model) assumed that members of minority communities would assimilate to a prevailing majority ethos (‘republican values’). Multiculturalism (United Kingdom and Dutch model), by contrast, sought to give official recognition to minority communities, understood as homogeneous ‘cultures’. The assimilation model went into crisis because members of minority communities felt excluded from the mainstream (Wilson, 2008).

Portuguese option regarding cultural diversity anchors on the principle of Interculturality: within the framework of mutual respect we claim the value and richness of diversity and dialogue. This intercultural approach is embedded in the paradigm of an equal value of all cultures and cultural miscegenation, moving thus far beyond multicultural coexistence’s statement. It supposes more than simply accepting the “other”, it implies “hosting” the “other” within us and accepts being transformed within that encounter.

Intercultural Education is part of Citizenship Education, which is since 2001, a transversal and compulsory dimension in all the curricula of the Portuguese educational system. This paper analyses a Portuguese case study - ACIDI - on inclusion of immigrants and on intercultural Education.

Key-words: inclusion of immigrants; interculturality; intercultural education

Portuguese Option Regarding Cultural Diversity
Because their country was small, the Portuguese crossed the Atlantic in search of the unknown, with a particular way of colonising (Guilherme, 2002). As Robin Wilson explains, in earlier decades, two models of managing cultural diversity seemed to function: Assimilationism (French model) assumed that members of minority communities would assimilate to a prevailing majority ethos (‘republican values’). Multiculturalism (United Kingdom and Dutch model), by contrast, sought to give official recognition to minority communities, understood as homogeneous ‘cultures’. The assimilation model went into crisis because members of minority communities felt excluded from the mainstream (Wilson, 2008).

As it is clearly stated in an official document, the National Strategy for European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, Portuguese option regarding cultural diversity anchors on the principle of Interculturality: within the framework of mutual respect we claim the value and richness of diversity and dialogue. This intercultural approach is embedded in the paradigm of an equal value of all cultures and cultural miscegenation, moving thus far beyond multicultural coexistence’s statement. It supposes more than simply accepting the “other”, it implies “hosting” the “other” within us and accepts being transformed within that encounter.

From having been a country with a large-scale emigration, since the last decades became also a hosting country for immigrants. Portugal only became a migration destination in the
1970s, with the independence of its former colonies. There has been a reverse emigration from the ex-colonies to Portugal, changing a racially homogenous population to a multiracial one, mainly in the Lisbon area (Guilherme, 2002).

**Figure 1: Map of Foreign-born naturalised citizens in Portugal in 2001 by country**

Since the late 1990s, the geography of immigration to Portugal has undergone truly profound changes. Today, different communities, from which one can highlight Brazilian, Ukrainian and Cape-Verdean immigrants, now make up 5% of the population resident in Portugal (more than 500,000 legal immigrants) and about 10% of the active population come from diverse nationalities and diverse cultural backgrounds. Massive increase of immigration from Eastern Europe to Portugal has prompted a great debate about immigration policy. Immigration increased 400% in fifteen years (ACIDI, 2009).

Recently, in 2006, a National Plan for the Hosting and Integration of Immigrants, based on a holistic approach and on the participation of the different entities that are responsible for the implementation of the corresponding policies. Comprising 122 measures, it involved 13 ministries, with an implementation deadline of two years. It considered sector-based areas (e.g. Employment, Health, Housing, Solidarity and Social Security, Education), and cross-cutting themes (e.g. welcoming immigrants, descendents of immigrants, family reunification, and racism and discrimination). This plan adopted for the first time a holistic approach to integration, and served as a reference point for both the state and for civil society. In 2007, a new Law of Nationality was approved with wide political and social consensus.

**Acidi: a Case Study**

ACIDI - the High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue, I.P. - is a Public Institute launched in 2006. It was created by Decree-Law no. 202/2006 of 27 October. It has as its fundamental attribute, among others, the promotion of the welcoming and integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Portugal. It is endowed with a board of personnel specialized in all the dimensions involving hosting, reception, support and integration of immigrants. It works in partnership with the immigrant associations. ACIDI policy of welcoming and integrating immigrants in Portugal is based around seven key principles that directly influence the concrete programmes and actions in the service of immigrants.

1 – Equality- Recognising and guaranteeing the same rights and opportunities
2 – Dialogue - Promoting effective communication
3 – Citizenship - Promoting active participation in the exercising of rights and duties
4 – Hospitality - knowing how to welcome diversity
5 – Interculturalism - Enrichment in encountering difference
6 – Proximity - Shortening distances in order to get to know and respond better
7 – Initiative - Attention and the capacity for anticipation

These are seven mobilising principles both for the State and for civil society. Portuguese government considers that it is essential to reinforce the alliance with bodies from civil society through empowering their generous, flexible and, normally, more efficient intervention (ACIDI, 2010).

ACIDI priorities at the service of Immigrants are three: the first priority is to make the State the principle source of help for the integration of immigrants. Immigrants need to be legally registered in order to obtain work, as well as their social rights.

The second priority is to combat the social exclusion of the most vulnerable. Vulnerability requires a response which leads to protection and the defence of human dignity. Amongst those who suffer the consequences of this vulnerability are the children and young offspring of immigrants who are searching for a place in this society. Access to full citizenship, which the alterations to the Nationality Law enable placement within an inclusive school, fight against situations of inequality.

The third priority is the sensibilisation of public opinion towards a spirit of welcoming and tolerance. The context of economic crisis and worries about security arising from international terrorism have made this task even more urgent, using the media and interpersonal contact, in a spirit of co-responsibility with the NGOs and Immigrant Associations, which protect the specific rights and interests of immigrants and of their descendants resident in Portugal, to enjoy dignity and equal opportunities (ACIDI, 2010).

In 2007, as part of a commitment in the Government’s Plan for Immigrant Integration, ACIDI and the Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) established a network of twenty-five job centres specifically for immigrants, formed through partnerships with local organisations – principally immigrant associations. All these policies and measures, among others, justify a recent quotation from MIPEX:

Portugal has witnessed decreases in migration for work and slight rises for study and family reunion. Newcomers, the majority of whom are female, originate mainly from former Portuguese colonies and Central and Eastern Europe. Non-EU migrants are slightly more likely to be employed than Portuguese citizens. Portugal witnessed a flurry of debate and legislative activity on migration and integration. Proposed new immigration and nationality laws have aimed to simplify and facilitate access to family reunion, long-term residence, and nationality for legally-resident third-country-nationals (hereafter ‘migrants’) and their children born in Portugal. A relatively new country of immigration, Portugal has put in place a legal framework on integration composed of favourable policies and best practice. Portugal does not have far to go to improve labour market access, family reunion, and anti-discrimination which all score 2nd out of the 28 MIPEX countries. Slightly favourable policies on long-term residence rank fourth in the EU-25, while access to nationality policies rank third. ‘A relatively new country of immigration, Portugal has put in place a legal framework on integration composed of favourable policies and best practice. Portugal does not have far to go to improve labour market access, family reunion, and anti-discrimination which all score 2nd out of the 28 MIPEX countries’ (Niessen et al., 2007).
Inclusion and Intercultural Education

The Council of Europe White Paper understands intercultural dialogue as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself, as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. It contributes to the cohesion of culturally diverse societies, fostering equality, and human dignity. It aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse worldviews and practices, to increase co-operation and participation and to promote tolerance and respect for the other. Intercultural education starts from recognition that our identity is what makes each of us unique and stresses the importance of dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008).

According to UNESCO Guidelines on Intercultural Education, there are three basic principles on Intercultural Education: the first of them, it respects the cultural identity of the learner through the provision of culturally appropriate and responsive quality education for all. The second one stays that Intercultural Education provides every learner with the cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to achieve active and full participation in society. And the third principle stays that Intercultural Education provides all learners with cultural knowledge, attitudes and skills that enable them to contribute to respect, understanding and solidarity among individuals, ethnic, social, cultural and religious groups and nations (UNESCO, 2006).

As the National Strategy for European Year of Intercultural Dialogue explained in 2008, Portuguese schools are multicultural: the previous homogeneous school population is today characterized by ethnic diversity, all over the country, particularly in the urban centres. This issue has been leading to promote the teaching of Portuguese has a second language and to reinforce teacher education in the field of interculturalism.
According to the *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, Intercultural Education is part of Citizenship Education (Council of Europe, 2008). Citizenship Education is since 2001, a transversal and compulsory dimension in all the curricula of the Portuguese educational system. A large number of schools are developing projects related to intercultural dialogue issues. Some of these projects involve only a group of pupils, some the whole school and some others groups of schools. There are some national programs open to schools all over the country, involving students attending all grades, for instance the contest ‘My school fights discrimination’, developed in 2007.

**Intercultural Education: ‘Between Cultures’**

Inclusion in education and intercultural education were recognised in the framework of the political educational policies through the creation, in 1991 (Dispatch 63/ME/91, March 13, 1991) of the *Entreculturas* –‘Between Cultures’ Board –, a Multicultural Education Programs coordinator organism. According to this document, ‘Between Cultures’ aims to promote an education that values the human condition, multiplies the opportunities for social, personal and educational success; widens the field of initial and in-service teacher training, mobilises society to civic and democratic education, by promoting it, and finally opens new areas of cooperation and reinforcement of the international community. More specifically, this department intends to stimulate citizenship, which is specifically concerned with and focused on ‘multicultural education’ and to contribute to a climate of acceptance of, solidarity towards, tolerance of and respect for the right to Difference. As it was analysed in a recent study about Intercultural Active Citizenship Education - INTERACT -, among a high number of strategies, it is relevant to mention, for example, the need to cooperate with higher education institutions in order to develop contents regarding intercultural education and to promote their inclusion in teacher initial and in-service training; to develop multiple projects dealing with specific communities, such as East-Timorese, Gypsies and Cape-Verdian children; to include the intercultural dimension in two important projects, namely ‘Education for All’ and the Inter-Ministerial Programme on Educational Success. And to identify problematic schools in terms of racial conflicts and tensions. A more recent strategy that is important to intercultural education has been proposed in the 2001 reform when Portuguese as second language was offered to students with a different mother tongue (Guilherme et al, 2007).
‘Choices’ Programme

‘Choices’ Programme (Escolhas) is a葡萄牙政府的社会包容计划，旨在帮助6到24岁的年轻人，来自最不发达国家的社会经济背景的移民和少数民族的后裔。该计划寻求促进机会的平等和加强社会凝聚力。它于2001年1月创立，并已经经历了三个发展阶段。在第一个实施阶段（2001-2003），这是一个犯罪预防和青年融合计划；在此期间，有50个项目被实施。

现在，‘Choices’ Programme 带来了大约770个机构，遍布全国。每个项目涉及一个协调机构和各种合作伙伴，如学校、训练中心、协会、公民社会组织等，他们共同组成一个联盟。每个联盟开发和实施活动在四个互补的领域：学校融合和非正式教育、职业、培训和就业能力、公民和社区参与和数字包容。

这个计划已经收到了欧洲犯罪预防奖（2003年）荣誉提名（联合国）和社会包容最佳实践的手册（欧洲委员会2007年）。2007年底，它覆盖了大约47,300人的目标群体。

Trainers on interculturality

Interculturality is not only resolved in the various organs of power. It arises from democracy and learning about and experiencing it. It needs to be learned in the same way as democracy. The process of learning about the Other, about how to know the Other, about how to build things with the Other, whilst always safeguarding what is strange, different and frequently unavoidable and unchangeable between different cultural, social and economic groups. Since 2006 a team of 25 trainers were trained, at a national level, to develop training sessions, among other areas, on interculturality. Any private or public institution can apply to this team to develop training sessions. There is a high demand by diverse institutions, more and more aware of the importance of reflecting about interculturalism in their projects.

In 2008 different partnerships were established in order to equip schools with intercultural education pedagogical materials, to promote best practices awards and programs valuing educational projects approaches. Students from university and professional training courses were also involved (ACIDI, 2010).

Involving the scientific community: the Immigration Observatory

ACIDI integrates also an Immigration Observatory, in order to deepen knowledge about the reality of immigration in Portugal and to specify, carry out and evaluate efficacious policies regarding the integration of immigrants. In order to achieve this objective, it acts in a network, through cooperation with universities, research centres and other institutions. This network is composed of ten research centres. It is considered a way to fulfil the aim of privilege actions capable to generate sustainability, involving the scientific community for the development of the research in the areas of intercultural education and dialogue.

The publishing undertakings of the Immigration Observatory currently include, among other significant public activities, the following projects: four separate series of publications, comprising more than 40 published academic works – OI Studies Series, Communities Series, Theses Series and Intercultural Portugal Series -; the OI Newsletter, eight issues of which have been published, together with the respective thematic files. The Website of the
Immigration Observatory provides a regular and up-to-date source of information and access to the many tens of thousands of interested people who consult it regularly (ACIDI, 2010).

**Intercultural Education: a Gap between Public Policies and Actual Practices?**

Immigrants are now major parts of the social Portuguese system. They contribute to the renewal of the population, to the economic development and to revitalizing of cultural and social behaviours. National laws have been created or developed in order to accommodate them. But still there is a journey to do (Antunes, 2009). And precisely a big part of ‘this journey to do’ regards Intercultural Education, as we will now consider.

The international study on Intercultural Active Citizenship Education already mentioned - INTERACT -, after conducting a considerable number of interviews, noticed that in Portugal, ‘European recommendations on ‘intercultural education’ are given great attention by policy-makers (...). However, there is a gap between public rhetoric and actual practice’ (Guilherme et al., 2007, p.100-101). Data gathered noted a general lack of theoretical knowledge on this issue, among teachers. Most of them did not show a structured knowledge of the official European and national recommendations and with regard to teacher education, they had not taken any preservice or in-service teacher development courses directly related to the intercultural dimension of citizenship education. The urge to acquire more education in this area comes from the consciousness some teachers have that they are not prepared to deal with the growing number of students from ethnic minorities:

There seems to be a general concern about immigrants, but no well-structured school strategy to facilitate their introduction and integration in school life, except for some Portuguese language support classes. Interculturality only becomes an issue, if there is in fact cultural diversity in their schools and classrooms (Guilherme et al., 2007, p. 92).

This study reveals that some schools consider that intercultural exchange can be promoted by organizing events, in which some aspects of foreign and national cultures are exhibited, which is not a sufficient strategy (Banks, 1995). The teachers interviewed in this study who had collaborated with the Entreculturas Department acknowledged their teacher education model as the best they had come across as related to intercultural education, mainly due to a strong emphasis on the relationship between theoretical input, with protocols made with higher education departments and research centres, and practice, mainly through project work carried out in their schools and with their students (Guilherme et al., 2007). As it was already explained, in the early 90s, the Ministry of Education created a working group to study and to promote intercultural education. The ‘Board of Intercultural Education’ aimed to develop particular strategies and activities in schools with a high rate of pupils from immigrant background and high levels of school failure.

However, the initial aim of broadening the intercultural approach to education to the whole country and curriculum was never accomplished, remaining confined to projects in pilot-schools. Constant organisational change within the Ministry of Education prevented the consolidation of policies on intercultural education initiated. The ‘Between Cultures’ Department has been more and more pushed into a corner area related basically to immigrant and minority children. This became more evident when it was moved away from the Ministry of Education into the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities: ‘This dislocation culminated in a bigger gap between Intercultural Education (Entreculturas) and Citizenship Education (Ministry of Education)’ (Guilherme et al., 2007, p. 98).
Conclusion

Immigrants are now major parts of the social Portuguese system. They contribute to the renewal of the population, to the economic development and to revitalizing of cultural and social behaviours. National laws have been created or developed in order to accommodate them. But still there is a journey to do (Antunes, 2009). And precisely a big part of ‘this journey to do’ regards Intercultural Education. Anyway, I really agree with Roberto Carneiro, Coordinator of the Immigration Observatory and former Ministry of Education, when he says that ‘The memory of the Portuguese is clearly intercultural. The future can hardly cease to be’ (Costa & Lacerda, 2007, p. 9).

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Traditional vs. Modern Values: Investigating Compliments and Compliment Responses amongst the Malays

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Abstract
Compliments are common speech acts that occur naturally in our daily conversations. They serve many functions such as to maintain solidarity and good relationships among friends and relatives. As we are culture-bound beings with certain cultural values and traditions, we tend to perceive compliments differently, and act and behave based on the values and traditions we observe.

This paper will present the findings of a research study conducted a year ago which seeks to investigate how compliments and compliment responses occur in Malay society. It will also discuss findings on how Malay adults and teenagers differ in the way they pay and accept compliments, and the diverse strategies of giving and receiving compliments between Malay men and women. Three research tools were employed: the recordings of natural daily conversations, classroom oral simulations, as well as a questionnaire. The sample comprised a total of 302 Malay participants.

One of the significant findings is that the younger generation of Malays do not subscribe to Malay traditional values any longer in giving and receiving compliments. Western cultural elements are now prevalent in some of the Malay participants’ compliment responses. The findings showed that the younger Malays nowadays have acquired new communication patterns and norms of interaction and no longer prescribe to traditional values of modesty and indirectness in accepting compliments.

Introduction
The Brown and Levinson’s Politeness Model
Brown and Levinson (1987) model of politeness can be seen as one of the most dominant concepts in offering us a theoretical background when dealing with politeness behavior. The gist of their model lies in the notion of our language model is naturally face-threatening, in the sense that people apply different forms of linguistic strategies just to protect and maintain each other’s face. Face is “something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction” (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61). Stemmed on Goffman’s concept of ‘face’, Brown and Levinson expand this idea by proposing that ‘face as a public self–image consists of two specific face wants or desires: negative and positive face.’

“Negative face is defined as the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others while positive face is described as the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others”(Brown and Levinson, 1987:62). Positive face, which is derived from the concept of positive politeness, is natural expressions that is less obvious and contains hidden desire. It includes the internal desire to be ratified, understood,
approved of, liked or admired by others, which normally reflects in one’s patterns of interaction.

Politeness strategies can be summarized as those speech acts that occur when the speaker has an intention to protect the other’s face, as well as to maintain good relationship between one another. As face refers to a value, esteem or certain reputation that one keeps towards himself, maintaining it in front of the others while having a conversation is always very essential. It is normal for a speaker to take this aspect into consideration in every conversation that he takes part or join, by trying not to embarrass or create any feelings of discomfort to the hearer.

The Traditional Cultural Values: Malays Early Days

As opposed to the concept of positive face offered by Brown and Levinson (1987), the Malays who practise traditional values seem to employ different communication strategies. Internal desire to be approved, liked or admired is not taken into consideration in their conversations. As traditional values stress on the attitude of indirectness, to address one’s good quality or for a person to admit his own possession of certain great qualities might be seen as inappropriate behavior amongst Malay society. This somehow depicts some contrast in the values and perceptions of people from certain Western societies where directness is appreciated in oral interactions.

In traditional Malay life, Malay children were trained “to be seen and not to be heard” (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). “They were taught to speak to elders only when spoken to…They should cast down their eyes or look slightly askance, as this was considered good breeding that came with humility and knowing one’s place…To complete the well bred gesture, their verbalization should not have any indication of directness (Shanmuganathan, 2003:137). In other words, the Malays who observed traditional values are bounded with the attitude of indirectness in most of their conversations. In normal and daily communication within community members or others, they always reflect this natural attitude of self-closeness. Things will be expressed in an indirect manner in order to protect one’s face and as a mark of respect to the other’s opinion. They are not used to reveal their real feelings or expressions, direct to the face of the speaker, especially in situations that are concerned with the negative response that they have to imply. They were trained to speak with low and polite intonation since children, and have a very strong sense of sensitivity and a feeling of shame. Asmah Haji Omar (1992) states that “learning to feel shame is the first step towards being mature as the phrase “He knows no shame”, is the sharpest criticism for a Malay which can be “a strong motivational tool for him to behave politely and show good manners ”(Asmah Haji Omar, 1996: 20).

Due to this feeling of shame, which has been practiced and passed over generations, accepting a compliment by agreeing to it portrays an image of arrogance and shameless among the traditional Malays. As one is not supposed to show off his good qualities to the others, the traditional Malays opt to be in denial in whatever compliments being offered to them. It is also unusual for Malays who practice traditional values to give compliments straight into the face of the receivers (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992). Praise is always made indirectly. Modesty is always being expressed through the rejection of compliments as they believe that it is important to maintain the attitude of ‘down to earth’ by not accepting any compliments being given to them. To accept or to agree to a compliment that they receive will portray a negative image of a boastful person.

“Contradiction serves to suppress one’s self-pride or feeling of self-importance, because such attitudes are not condoned by society as they are contrary to the teachings of Islam. Contradictions of this nature can be seen when someone or
someone’s kind or belonging is praised. Contradicting is when the person nullifies the cause of the praise” (Asmah Haji Omar, 1992: 182).

If ‘thank you’ is a very common compliment response in Western culture (see Essman, 2007; Leech, 1983; Holmes, 1987; Manes and Wolfson, 1980, 1981; Creese, 1991; Lorenzo dus, 2001; Pomerantz, 1978; Herbert, 1986, 1988, 1998; Golato, 2005; Ishihara, 2003, 2004), the earlier generation of Malays respond to the compliment by neutralizing it, or by saying something contradicts to the praise, as a sign of modesty.

However, over the years, researchers have discovered some changes in these patterns of humans’ communication, precisely in their acts of giving and accepting compliments. With a huge of exposure that people are receiving from the media and various communication platforms that offer unlimited access of building a global social network, it is assumed that the modern societies nowadays are acquiring an international culture that is dominated by the westerners. Researchers found some similar patterns of interaction being employed by people from these two different corners of the world (the East and the West), which signifies the acceptance and adaptations of foreign values that used to be perceived as negative values in by their ancestors.

Review of Literature

When East Meets West: A New Perspective of Compliments and Compliment Responses in Asian Modern Societies

In a comparative study between 6 Malay movies and 6 American-English movies, Marlyna Maros (1998) reveals that most of the compliments (65.3%) given by Malays are direct compliments. Her finding shows that compliments are quite rare in the Malay culture, but when the speaker feels the need to do so, it is always being expressed direct to the face of the receivers. It contradicts Asmah Haji Omar’s (1992) findings, which reveal that it is very uncommon for the Malays to compliment straight to the face of the person, as indirectness is very important in the Malay culture.

Another research by Shanmuganathan (2003) shows the same interesting results. Modern Malays, especially those who live in urban area accepts the compliments by saying “thank you” and not rejecting the compliment. Shanmuganathan (2003) proposed that “it is essential to acknowledge that Western culture has somewhat influence the way in which the different ethnic groups respond to compliment” (Shanmuganathan, 2003:129). She believes that the influence may occur through varied ways, such as after years of studying and living abroad as well as an exposure from internet or other channels of electronic and mass media. As the practice of some important traditional values are still being emphasized in most Modern Malay’s family nowadays, the fact that Malays have been receiving great exposure of Western culture and norms through various forms of media is always undeniable (Marlyna Maros, 1998).

Some contrast results however can be seen in Daikuhara’s (1986) findings. Daikuhara (1986) carried out a comparative study of compliments behavior among Japanese, and compared her findings with Manes and Wolfson’s (1980) work on compliments in American English. Her findings show that there are three differences in the aspects of “linguistic patterning, praised characteristic or feature, order of frequency, functions and responses.” The largest difference between Japanese and American English compliment responses is that 95% of the Japanese reject the compliments, trying to avoid the compliment by simply saying “No” or “That’s not true”.

Maya Khemlani David (2002) agrees that it is important for each of us to understand the differences of values and cultural norms carried by each community, in order to have
effective communications and maintain harmony and solidarity in a multiracial country like Malaysia. The compliment “You look good” was given in a very naturalistic situation towards 176 Malaysians and their responses were recorded. Her findings reveal that 20% of the subjects accepted the compliments by saying a simple “Thank You” or elaborated it by adding “Yes, I like it too”, and 18.7% of the samples believe that it is necessary to provide a reason after accepting the compliment. David (2002) found that another favourite pattern of compliment responses among the Malaysians is to joke while responding to the compliment.

However, rejection of compliments is also common among Malaysians, as many of David’s (2002) respondents rejected the compliment by inserting direct disagreement like “I don’t think so” and some even downplaying the compliments given. Some respondents rejected by showing their feeling of uncertainty or disbelief towards the compliment such as ‘really?’ and ‘Are you sure?’. David (2002) suggests that: “Humility and modesty, supposedly part of Asian cultural norms, are reflected in such denials and negation of compliments. 50% of the total respondents who rejected the compliment were Malays, and this indicates that Malay ethnic group was most likely to reject the compliment” (Maya Khemlani David, 2002: 115-116).

As those researchers clearly demonstrate, Modern Easterners may not necessarily respond to compliments in the same way as the prescriptive norms of their culture expect them to be. With various findings that go parallel and in contrast with one another, one apparent remark that can be made here is that, regardless of English Language acquisition-impacts or media-exposure, the acceptance of western cultures in people’s norms of communication is something undeniable. With the rapid improvement of Information and Communication Technology, it provides unlimited and great accessibility for people to get to know other languages and cultures. Some of the Malays nowadays should have received this great exposure and new experience that might somehow transform their ideologies and behaviour. This may influence their perceptions towards many different things such as the concept of politeness in communication patterns and ways of carrying certain manners in communication, thus led to the change of ideology and some shifts in their communication strategies and interpretations of certain important values such as modesty.

The Study

The research study involved a corpus of 143 compliments and 156 compliment responses made by 282 Malay participants through the use of two research tools, the recordings of actual conversation and classroom oral simulation activities. Recordings of actual conversation were chosen in order to record how the speakers gave and responded to compliments in actual time and real life settings. The method involved audio taping of spontaneous and actual daily conversations. Data were collected through researchers’ meticulous observations as these Malay adults and teenagers were freely involved in discussions or interactions within natural settings of the college, such as the staff rooms, hostels, cafeterias, and even through the corridors while walking to the lecture halls or tutorial rooms. Participants were generally informed that the researchers were carrying a research on humans’ patterns of communication. It is possibly the most significant method in gathering natural and spontaneous pieces of conversations and to provide the researcher a set of valid and most pertinent data for the research. As Golato (2005:21) states, “if one is interested in how speakers are using language to create meaning, or in how certain speech events (such as compliments) are organized in their natural settings, then one’s data should as closely as possible correspond to naturally occurring interactional environments which seem to be the natural, primordial home for language use”. All possible settings were taken into consideration as a compliment is an unplanned speech act that occurs spontaneously.
Altogether, 74 compliments were recorded over a time of two months in different settings in the college, involving 144 participants. Out of 144 participants, 108 of them are adults, comprising the lecturers and administrative staff. The other group of Malay participants that was involved in the first research tool are 36 students aged around 18 to 19 years old. Both groups consisted of male and female Malay speakers who come from different parts of the country.

The second research tool employed was classroom oral simulation activities or role play among the students. Kasper and Dahl (1991) suggest that if compared to other methods of data elicitation, role plays may offer more ‘naturalistic’ data as “they represent oral production, full operation of the turn taking mechanism, impromptu planning decisions contingent on interlocutor input, and hence negotiating of global and local goals” (Kasper and Dahl, 1991:228). In this method, teenage students were paired and assigned to give compliments and responded to one another as part of the classroom simulation activities. The oral simulations were impromptu and spontaneous, in the sense that they were not given any time to prepare for the speech act, and required to behave as naturally as possible. Pairs were called and perform the speech act, without having an early idea of the task given. An instruction of: “Please compliment your friend on any subject or topic” was given to student A and another instruction of: “Please show how you respond to your friend’s compliment” was given to student B, before they perform the task. 136 Malay teenagers took part in this activity and the conversations were recorded in entirety.

Apart from that, questionnaires were distributed to 100 respondents from the same group of participants, in order to provide triangulation for the data. With an overall of 302 Malay participants involved in the three research tools, this study managed to get some significant data of the use of compliments among this new generation of Malays. The prominent features and characteristics of compliments among the Modern Malays found in this study are discussed according to the following themes or variables.

Conversational Analysis (CA) and Frequency Count are two methods used to interpret both qualitative and quantitative data in this research. Conversational Analysis facilitates us to analyze the natural language structure that people perform in their daily lives, in real settings and real time settings Golato (2005). It deals with very natural, genuine and authentic data, in the sense that there is no controlled situation and no task to perform. However, it is undeniable that one limitation of this method lies in the fact that, it is slightly difficult to gather a large quantity of data that consists of the same speech act being investigated within a short period of time.

**Findings**

The following section is an analysis of the distribution of compliments among the Malays, based on a corpus of 72 compliments occurred in their actual conversations. 54 of them are the compliments made by 108 male and female adults, while the other 18 compliments are made by 36 female Malay teenagers in their daily conversation. Discussions of findings are made according to several themes and variables offered by the researchers.

**Adaptations of Different Values and Cultures: a Mark of Language and Cultural Transformations in Modern Malays’ Compliment Strategies.**
Table 1: The Indirectness strategies in giving compliments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Indirect Compliments</th>
<th>Direct Compliments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency/Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency/Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay adults</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay teenagers</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above findings reveal that 88.898% of the Malay-adults participants give compliments directly, using a variety of syntactic patterns and adjectives. Compliments are made in a straightforward manner and this is a contrast to the values of traditional Malay culture. These direct patterns of compliments are fairly uncommon among the Malays who practise traditional cultural values that place emphasis on the quality of modesty, humility and indirectness.

Table 2: Malays’ attitudes and feelings towards compliments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Disagree Frequency (Percentage)</th>
<th>Agree Frequency (Percentage)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male Adult</td>
<td>Female Adult</td>
<td>Male Teen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I compliment people because I want to maintain solidarity between them.</td>
<td>2/2.9%</td>
<td>8/11.4%</td>
<td>4/5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I give compliments to others, I’m really sincere about it.</td>
<td>1/1.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2/3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brown and Levinson (1978) propose that compliments can be classified as one of the positive politeness strategies employed by a speaker in order to maintain solidarity. As politeness strategies involved those speech acts that occur when the speaker has an intention of protecting the other’s face, building a good rapport, showing concerns and fulfilling one’s needs to be noticed and approved, a compliment is considered as one of the positive politeness strategies as it carries all of the above functions. As Holmes (1998) truly believes that compliment functions as a positive politeness strategy that portrays kindness and contributes to harmony and solidarity.

More than half of the Malay participants seem to agree with Holmes’s (1998) idea as 74.3% of them perceive compliment as a speech act that offers and maintain solidarity between one another. The following table illustrates such findings:
Table 3: Strategies of giving compliments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Disagree Frequency (Percentage)</th>
<th>Agree Frequency (Percentage)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Adults</td>
<td>11/15.5%</td>
<td>6/8.5%</td>
<td>71/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Adults</td>
<td>17/23.9%</td>
<td>1/1.41%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Teens</td>
<td>12/16.9%</td>
<td>6/8.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Teens</td>
<td>11/15.5%</td>
<td>7/9.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Adults</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>17/30.9%</td>
<td>55/100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Adults</td>
<td>0/0</td>
<td>15/27.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Teens</td>
<td>6/10.9%</td>
<td>7/12.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Teens</td>
<td>3/5.5%</td>
<td>7/12.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the strategies of giving compliments among the Malays, one of the most evident finding is that the Malays nowadays are less concerned about the indirectness style of communication. As 92.7% of the respondents disagree with the statement, “If I want to give compliments, I’d rather say it indirectly” and none of the Malay adults disagree with the statement of “I give compliments and I say it straight to the face of the speaker”, it can be assumed that most of the Malays nowadays no longer place great emphasis on indirectness when complimenting others, as the majority of them stated that they prefer to say things straight to the face of the receiver. This finding however is slightly different from the finding gained through the recordings of naturally occurring compliments in their daily conversations. There are a small number of the female adult participants however, who still use indirectness in their communication, especially in offering compliments.

One conclusion that can be made here is that, the Malays nowadays are not restricted to certain complimenting strategies in their conversations. They are neither entirely bounded with their traditional cultural values that stress on the indirect ways of saying things, nor totally absorbed with other cultures that employ different styles and patterns of conversations. The Malays nowadays could have employed various ways of communication in conveying their message, and tune these different styles of interactions according to the different situations, settings, purposes and participants involved in one particular interaction.

The next significant finding illustrates the various functions of compliments engaged by the Malays in their actual conversations. The findings reveal that 18.5% of compliments among the adults show a remarkable structure of a greeting as compliments turned out to be the first thing that they say when meeting each other in the morning. My own observations while recording the actual conversations among the Malay adults in a time of two months period reveal that, compliments among these are very seldom heard in the afternoon, unless for a very noticeable style, striking appearance or remarkable achievements. Most of these adult participants however, do not extend the compliments into a longer discussion or make it...
as a topic of their conversation. This finding is supported with Golato (2006) who points out that compliments can “strengthen or replace other speech act formulas such as apologies, thanks and greetings” (Golato, 2006:131). Compliments also function as a result and a comment on the speaker’s assessments and observations towards the receiver. Apart from that, compliments satisfy the others’ need to be noticed and approved in certain ways such as physical appearances, styles and performance.

Wolfson (1983) points out that compliments are frequently used to soften criticism in Western culture. Findings reveal that compliments perform as a positive comments and subtle ways of making criticisms in many situations. It can be assumed that the Modern Malays seem to adapt and become accustomed to this new communication strategy. As the English language is always being used in their conversations, the new generation of Malays is assumed to be more open in accepting different values and cultures that suit their new and modern way of life and perceive things from different perspectives. The fact that compliments among the Malays also occur in both English and Malay language that involved the phenomenon of code switching from Malay to English language and English to Malay language in Malay daily conversations already show a different scenario.

If traditional Malays use indirectness strategies to protect one’s face and show respect, Malays nowadays employ indirectness for different purposes and reasons. The Malays may still preserve the indirectness strategy, but for other communication purposes such as criticizing others, through compliments. Compliments serve as a tool in softening criticisms and protecting the receiver’s ‘face’ from being humiliated. By maintaining the indirectness strategies in giving negative criticisms and blending it with a direct approach of giving compliments, the new Malays are undergoing certain process of cultural transformations that result in the modifications of their communication patterns and behaviours. And this is noticeable when they perform a speech act like giving a compliment. It can be assumed that the Malays nowadays have acquired a changing identity, since they are utilizing a new communication patterns and norms of interaction.

Another significant finding reveals that the Malays, when giving compliments in their own mother tongue, employ various syntactic patterns and lexical items. Compliments in Malay Language are not formulaic or restricted to certain dominant syntactic patterns and words. 56 different adjectives in 18 prominent syntactic patterns were found in the patterns of compliments among the respondents. If Holmes (1998) has proven English native speakers are not creative in doing compliments as their compliments are remarkably formulaic and restricted to limited number of lexical items and narrow sentence patterns, the Malays on the other hand, have contrast attitudes. The finding suggests that the Malays, when doing compliments in their own mother tongue, are more creative in performing it. They are more flexible in the styles and the selection of words, and sometimes even cross the borderline of their own cultural values and principles such as by becoming more straightforward and direct speakers.

However, these Malay participants, especially the teenagers, have shown different attitudes with the adults, when doing compliments in the oral simulation activities. These compliments, which entirely occurred in English language, are remarkably formulaic and limited to certain syntactic patterns. One assumption that could be made for this finding is due to the limitation of language. These Malay participants might have faced certain constraints such as the limitation of vocabularies and a few syntactic patterns of compliments that they are familiar with. The findings also suggest that the Malay student-teenagers might have considered these patterns as the model of standard compliments in English that need to be followed. This is due to the fact that compliments are significantly limited in its syntactic patterns among the native speakers themselves, as proven by Holmes (1998) and Wolfson (1984) in their studies. Another obvious finding that distinguishes compliments that occurred
in Malay language and English language is the usage of intensifiers that exist in almost all English-language compliments but significantly rare in the Malay-language compliments.

Again, the finding also leads to the assumption that there could be an influence of other cultures that resulted in these differences of communication styles performed by the Malays when operating in two different languages. These Malay participants might feel the need to follow what is being prescribed in the culture of the language that they are speaking. They may learn certain appropriate attitudes when conversing in one particular language and how to perform certain speech acts according to the norms of the language. As a result, when communicating in the target language, they make an effort to sound like the native speaker as much as possible in order to achieve the sociolinguistic competence.

**Compliments as a Mark of Ideology Transformation and the New Perspective of Politeness Strategy**

Table 4: Strategies of accepting compliments among the Malays in their daily natural conversations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies:</th>
<th>Adult participants (Frequency/Percentage)</th>
<th>Teenage participants (Frequency/Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accepting by saying thank you</td>
<td>15 23.44%</td>
<td>3 16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Accepting by saying thank you</td>
<td>7 10.94%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and elaborating about the object</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>being complimented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Accepting by saying thank you</td>
<td>3 4.69%</td>
<td>3 16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and downplaying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Accepting and Joking</td>
<td>7 10.94%</td>
<td>1 5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Non verbal response</td>
<td>10 15.63%</td>
<td>2 11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Smiling/laughing or by showing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no expression)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Rejecting or denying the</td>
<td>4 6.25%</td>
<td>3 16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compliments by saying ‘No’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Downplaying the compliments</td>
<td>18 28.13%</td>
<td>3 16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Showing uncertainty or</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5 27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable expressions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Accepting and returning the</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 5.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compliment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64 100%</td>
<td>18 100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the most significant findings reveal that the majority of the Malays responded to the compliments by saying ‘thank you’, a pattern of compliment response that used to be very unusual among the Malays who practice the traditional culture. The research found that 40.11% of the respondents responded to the compliments by just saying ‘thank you’, with some others blended the word ‘thank you’ with a simple joke or downplaying it. Asmah Haji Omar (1992) stresses that the traditional Malays used to reject, neutralize or downplay the compliments; saying thank you however, is regarded as a very common response among the English native speakers. This is supported by early researchers (Marlyna Maros, 1998; David, 2002; Shanmuganathan, 2003) who found the same patterns in their studies of compliments. It is concluded that the Malays could have been influenced by the Western culture in...
responding to compliments. Another finding of this research is the combination of Malay and Western cultural values in some of the Malay participants’ compliment responses. These Malays responded to the compliments by saying thank you, and downplayed the compliments right before or after the gratitude utterances.

However, the most striking finding is the code switching phenomenon that took place in almost all compliment responses that involved with the word ‘thank you’. Almost all the speakers switched to ‘thank you’, instead of saying ‘terima kasih’ (which means ‘Thank You’ in the Malay Language), and this trend is significantly relevant with “the qualities of directness and neutrality in English are appealing as it allowed speakers to express their innermost feelings...Knowing English allows them to express these feelings in that particular language and frees them from the ‘cultural load’ then if they were to express themselves in their native language” (Lee Su Kim, 2007:7). The findings suggest that the Malays, tend to convey their feeling of appreciation in English as they feel more comfortable to do so. As accepting compliments by saying thank you is very odd in the traditional Malay culture and implies an attitude of pride and conceit, expressing appreciation in English would portray a different interpretation from the others especially in conversations that involved participants from different cultures. At the same time, it could avoid misinterpretation and they will not be viewed as being snobbish. Therefore, code switching into English is seen as the easiest way to express their feelings and real intentions.

The contrast in interpretations of ‘modesty’ and ‘humility’ is very obvious among the Malay participants in this research study compared with the traditional Malays described in Asmah Haji Omar’s study (1992). The majority of the Malay participants in this study agreed that responding to compliments by saying thank you, will deliberately reflect an attitude of modesty and being humble. Therefore, the finding suggests that the Malays have gone through some transformations of ideology, and perceive the concept of politeness from the perspectives of both Malay and Western cultures.

In their effort to adapt themselves with the modern community that is neutral from any cultural binding, the Malays seem to accept other languages such as English as their second language, and are no longer solely restricted to their mother tongue. By demonstrating a sense of humility through accepting compliment with the words ‘thank you’, these Malay participants show a contrasting attitude from what is prescribed in their traditional norms and values. As the findings clearly demonstrate how these Malay participants seem to have different definitions of ‘modesty’ and ‘humility’ and express these values in English, it can be concluded that the English language has became a platform for them to achieve certain purposes in communications. It supports Lee Su Kim (2003) as she found that, “participants reported that knowledge of English brings along with it an exposure to alternative views and ideas, and facilitates a more reflective and critical attitude towards one’s own culture” (Lee Su Kim, 2003: 149).


Leech (2005) focuses on one major criticism of Brown and Levinson Politeness Theory states, “it has been objected that Brown and Levinson’s model has a western, or even ‘Anglo’, bias, and therefore cannot claim to present a universal theory applicable to all languages and cultures” (Leech, 2005:2). In the researcher’s attempt to investigate whether there is a concept of politeness that underpins the strategies compliments among both Malay adults and teenagers, the finding reveals the following results. The research findings suggest that there are certain concepts of ‘face’ and strategies of positive politeness in Brown and Levinson (1978) that are related to, and equivalent with the Malays’ complimenting
strategies. The finding reveals that the Malays’ complimenting behaviour employ five different strategies as outlined in the Brown and Levinson Politeness Theory.

These strategies are “notice, attend to hearer, the usage of exaggerate intonations, in-group identity markers, presuppose hearer’s knowledge and joke” (Brown and Levinson, 1978). “Notice, attend to hearer” appeared to be the most popular strategy employed by all participants, regardless of age groups and genders. This strategy involved the receivers revealing their hidden desires or intentions in order to be noticed and approved in certain ways. A compliment in this situation serves as a tool of expressing solidarity that fulfils a person’s wants or needs. As this strategy totally contradicts with the Malay traditional values of modesty and humility, the findings therefore support Leech (2005) who postulates that, “There is no absolute divide between East and West in politeness as all polite communication implies that the speaker is taking account of both individual group values” (Leech, 2005:3).

Some further general assumptions can be derived from these findings. One assumption that could be made from this finding is the effect from language that they use in this particular conversation, in this case, the English language. As the majority of the Malay participants who employed these strategies performed their compliments in English, it can be concluded that these Malays tend to modify their norms of interactions according to the language that they are speaking. They adopt certain Western values that do not exist in their own culture and express these values through English language and even feel more comfortable and suitable to do so. This shows that the Malays are influenced by hybrid cultures and multiple linguistic identities. As Lee, Su Kim (2001) states, “knowing English affects identity in non-interactive ways: it offers the user a certain ‘neutrality’ as it frees the user from the cultural and moral stance of the one’s native tongues, and allows the user a means of direct self-expression other than the mother tongue” (Lee, Su Kim, 2001-2003: 74). In other words, after so many years of English language has become a medium or a gateway for these speakers to escape from certain values which are encapsulated in the Malay language.

**Conclusion**

The research has clearly demonstrated some transformation in the Malays’ identity, which is very much reflected in their patterns of interactions. One of the factors that may have contributed to this transformation of attitudes is the existence of the English language in their society that has resulted in the internalization of western values and norms into their interactions. Language and culture are always attached together in bringing certain influence in one’s personal experience and learning process. Language is interconnected with the culture of its speakers and cannot be seen as two separate entities. A process of learning a new language, therefore, will open a door to another dimension of ideas, for the learners to perceive things from different point of views. The existence of the English language in the country for more than five decades has had some impact in shaping the peoples’ identity and culture, and this is an undeniable reality. Lee Su Kim (2003) points out that an acquisition of the English language has empowered the learners’ learning experience in the sense that the English language provides some freedom for the speakers to express feelings that are intensely uncomfortable or considered as improper in their own culture.

The fact that English language has brought certain influences towards the Malays is no longer a new issue as it has been proven by many researchers in their studies. This research however, has provided insights into Malays’ communication behavior, precisely, in their compliments and compliment responses and how their perceptions, attitudes and feelings towards it, are reflected in the strategies that they used in performing these speech acts. As compliments form a tiny part of one’s areas of conversation that is always being overlooked,
the fact that discussions on this speech act are always painted with a broad brush although some aspects are described in a little more detail than the others.

This research however, has proven the Malay speakers actually have various attitudes and perceptions in performing this speech act. Not only that, the findings reveal a new trend in Malays’ communication patterns and behavior are a result of the fading of their own traditional norms, culture, and values. Supported by findings from many other early studies, the research also proves that the Malay community nowadays seems to have accepted many foreign values and blended them with some of their own traditional values. One implication that could be made is that the phenomenon would be a positive sign of a reshaping and a remolding process of identity among the Malays in adapting themselves with the global community that accept different languages, linguistics identities and cultures. As this could be apart of the acquisition process of global culture among the Malays, it is believed that this research has opened up other possible avenues of research in investigating the shift of cultural values in people’s communication among the society. This research has also shown some infiltration of Western culture in Malays’ communication styles; it might be useful if more studies are conducted in analyzing to what extent this influence has spread into the Malay society, not just in giving and accepting compliments, but also in many other components of speech acts and communication behaviours. Another aspect that could be highlighted in future research would be the relationship between language choice and one’s perceptions towards the culture of the chosen language. In other words, whether these bilingual speakers are aware of this influence of foreign values into their daily communication, and whether they acquire the language with or without the purpose of acquiring the culture.

Since English has been established as an international language, with some even perceive the language as their own language, use in their daily conversations, the attachment that they have with the language will certainly bring huge changes and alterations in their attitudes and personalities which mirrored in their communication styles and behaviors. It can be concluded that the establishment of the English language in Malaysia not only has brought certain changes towards language choice in both formal and informal communication settings, but also in one’s psychological and emotional adaptations with the Western culture. Looking at the positive side of this phenomenon, these changes bring some advantages in the society. As we are living in an era of internationalization and modernization, the development of a Malaysian society that is able to adapt and compete with the global society is crucially needed. By adopting some foreign values in our culture, we will be able to obtain our membership in this global community through building good rapport and relationship with the others. Therefore, it is hoped that this research has provided meaningful insights into the issue, and provide a platform for other researchers to expand and conduct more studies on compliments in larger contexts and perspectives.

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Once upon a time in a classroom ...: Exploring cultures and experiences through fairytales

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Abstract
Through stories we both make sense of experience, and forge community with others (Wajnryb, 2003). Fairytales in particular, through symbolic representations of shared or universal experiences, help us to explore anxieties and to understand that they can be overcome (Bettelheim, 1978). This paper presents a collaborative project which brought together adult English language learners from five countries, and British school children, through the analysis, creation and telling of fairytales.

After a brief course in narrative structure, symbols in stories and in pictures, and the interplay of text and images in young children’s literature, groups of adult learners used fairytales, which they created together and illustrated in PowerPoint® presentations, to explore and to share their experiences as learners abroad in a foreign country. Meanwhile, their stories were directed at a class of British children, and provided means – through the symbols contained in the stories – to explore and overcome potential anxieties around their imminent transition from infant school to the contrasting environment and culture of junior school.

For the adult learners, the objectives of the project were to develop intercultural communication through exploration and comparison of varied cultural traditions in storytelling and symbolism, and to develop language skills through the creation of original multimodal texts. For the children, these texts (original stories created by the adult learners) played a part in their school’s ‘Philosophy for Children’ curriculum, to develop speaking and listening, literacy, thinking abilities and emotional awareness, and had the specific purpose of offering reassurance prior to their change of school.

Introduction: of stories, heroes and difficulties overcome
This article will tell a story, of twelve adult students who came from abroad, who wrote stories for young children who lived in the country they were visiting.

Already what this story means to you will differ from what it means to me, or from another reader. Our pictures differ, of students, of abroad, of telling stories, of children – as will how these elements combine and connect with our varied experiences and associations. There is a notional fact of the matter, the historical event which this article narrates – but what we take from the narrative are meanings of our own, meanings which may be true to ourselves without being true for other people. The more meaningful the personal or private truth that the narrative touches upon, the more it may differ from other people’s understandings and responses.

But the tale itself (which may be any tale, of course) bridges these divergent understandings. Stories inspire ‘compassion and humanity, the marvellous ability of a human being to be disturbed by another's misfortune, to feel joy at another's happiness, to experience others’ lives as one’s own’ (Chukovsky, 1965, p. 171). They offer ‘an infinite well of vicarious experience with the capacity to transport the reader/hearer beyond all boundaries of time, space, language, ethnicity, class or gender’ (Wajnryb, 2003, p. 4). Snow White will mean different things to a five-year-old and a thirteen-year-old (Bettelheim, 1978, p. 16) but
it is through the story that these different children’s worlds and experiences can meet. Without stories to bridge these worlds – and all our worlds – perhaps they cannot meet.

Fortunately, we tell stories all the time. However trivial it may seem to recount the trek to work, a battle of wits with a computer, or a quest for a cup of coffee, each adventure can stand in for diverse experiences and so forms a bridge between them, and between people, often initiating the bouncing of further adventures off one another as we use the stories of our everyday lives to find and to share further personal connections.

We may be interested in the historical veracity of these tales (though this interest is often actually directed at elaborating further stories about the truthfulness or other characteristics of the story teller), but a fairy tale’s freedom from concern for historical veracity allows greater freedom and depth of interpretation, and freedom to understand oneself and one’s situation through what we allow the tale to tell us. It offers a pattern or structure applicable universally to understand diverse individual circumstances. For this reason Aristotle (Poetics 1461 b,3) describes the tale or the myth found in poetry as something ‘more philosophic and serious than history, for poetry speaks of what is universal, history of what is particular.’ Schliemann’s archaeological discoveries at Troy are valuable, of course, but mere historical facts should not distract us from the universal value of the stories in Homer’s Iliad.

The twelve adult students, the heroes of this article’s story, were from five different countries (Korea, China, Japan, Thailand and Saudi Arabia), with different languages and diverse cultures, of a number of faith positions (Christian (two different denominations), atheist, Taoist, Buddhist (two different schools) and Sunni Muslim), men and women, and with varied motivations for studying English in the UK. The English language teaching approach at Canterbury Christ Church University, where they studied, involves groupwork, discussion and listening to other students’ points of view. For this reason, to help create the necessary social bonds for them to share, compare and understand each others’ experiences, the discourse and conventions of English-language storytelling formed part of their course. This began with the language of everyday anecdotes, and moved on to the language for telling and comparing folktales and myths. This facilitated intercultural exploration, and also – through raised awareness of other traditions – exploration by the students of their own cultures.3

There was a further rationale for giving storytelling a prominent place in this English-language programme. This was that many of these students were planning to pursue a degree or a foundation course in the UK, and feedback from tutors on these courses suggested that the students might benefit from developing greater critical awareness of the academic texts they would encounter in their studies, and awareness of the importance of the range of linguistic choices available to them in a presentation or at every stage of a piece of writing. A focus on storytelling made it clear that a story does not simply exist waiting to be told, but that the story itself arises in the telling, that the storyteller or the writer makes decisions in organisational structure, in grammatical form, in vocabulary and in modality to present and to convey a point of view; none of these decisions is neutral. In a traditional tale, which often features binary oppositions (wise and foolish, beautiful and ugly …) and clear-cut issues of right and wrong or good and bad, these linguistic decisions and the reasons for them are frequently relatively transparent. This therefore forms a clear starting point from which to explore analogous linguistic decisions, in the media and politics, and then more subtle, but important, features and conventions in academic writing.

3 Interestingly, a theme which came up repeatedly at the IX Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture, at which this paper was first presented, was the development of self-understanding through seeking understanding of others (Pavoncello, 2010).
A fairy tale is a particular story form, in which a protagonist, with whom the reader or listener identifies, is faced with difficulties and, through the exercise of his or her attributes or personal qualities, overcomes these difficulties to achieve fulfilment and happiness. As Bettelheim explains (1978), as the reader or listener identifies with the hero of the tale, and takes on the hero’s troubles, these troubles come to symbolise the difficulties which face the reader or listener in real life. Then, when the story shows how these troubles can be overcome, it shows that real-life difficulties can be overcome as well. It takes seriously the trials that people undergo in the world, and offers reassurance that we nevertheless have the resources to win through in the end.

For a story truly to hold the child’s attention, it must entertain his curiosity. But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination; help him to develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions; give full recognition to his difficulties, while at the same time suggesting solutions to the problems which perturb him... giving full credence to the seriousness of the child’s predicaments, while simultaneously promoting confidence in himself and in his future. (Bettelheim, 1978, p. 5)

Near my home is a children’s playground, with a small assault course consisting of ropes and log bridges and stepping stones. Children set themselves a challenge: to face obstacles and difficulties and yet to make their way from one end to the other. In the same way as a fairy tale invites us to share the hero’s trials and eventual triumph, which symbolise our own troubles and faith that they can be overcome, perhaps these games allow children to live through the troubles that face them, symbolised as an assault course, and build not only confidence in their ability to cope with an immediate physical challenge, but, through the symbolism of the challenge, a self belief that will take them through difficulties of much greater importance.

Besides the dozen adult heroes of this article’s story there were thirty children, six to seven years of age, in a class at Priory Infants School in Ramsgate, not far from Canterbury. The ages, backgrounds and circumstances of these sets of students might suggest that they had little in common and no point of contact. Nevertheless we, their teachers, collaborated on a project in which stories formed a bridge over these boundaries.

First, we identified experiences which the adults had been through, which were analogous to some which the children might worry about. The adults had all made a transition from the cultures of their native countries to the alien world of the UK, facing all the anxieties about friends old and new, strange routines, different expectations, unfamiliar teaching styles and patterns of work which the children happened to be thinking about, too, as they anticipated their transition from infants’ school to junior school. What the children were about to experience may seem relatively trivial, compared to the journeys made by the adult students, but from their point of view the change of school was potentially an enormous event, and was certainly comparable from this subjective perspective. We therefore got the adults to put their experiences into the form of stories, which they themselves created in computer presentations, to tell in symbolic form of their anxieties and how they overcame them; these stories were then passed on to the children, to show them how the kinds of concerns they might have could be faced and dealt with. The children discussed the stories and sent questions back to their creators. In this way the stories became both a source of reassurance and a bridge between the writers and the children they were written for.

The course

As befits a project inspired by fairy tale, preparations for story-writing followed the traditional ‘rule of three’ (Booker, 2005, pp. 229-235), with a course in three parts: first narrative structure, second, symbols, and third, multimodality.
Narrative structure

Although the adult students were at an upper intermediate level of English (B2 in the Common European Framework), their writing training hitherto had been concerned almost exclusively with word and sentence level details, with little attention to the overall structure of a text. For them to create coherent stories that took the protagonist from an encounter with troubles to an overcoming of those troubles and an eventual happy ending, it was necessary to shift their attention from a habitual ‘bottom-up’ approach – attending to details of grammar and sentence structure – to a ‘top-down’ approach to a text a whole (Heald-Taylor, 1989; Paran, 1992). Beyond this project, the awareness that such an approach delivers would be useful in these students’ academic research and writing.

One narrative structure, which can be applied to any fairy tale, sequences its stages as orientation (setting the scene and establishing characters), complication (bringing in the problems that the hero has to face) and resolution (in which problems are solved) (Labov, 1972).

To introduce the students to this structure, they were first reminded of stories with which they were all familiar: Snow White, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, The Hare and the Tortoise and Jack and the Beanstalk. For each story, the students agreed on (1) who the story was about, (2) what problem(s) he or she faced, and (3) how he or she overcame them. It was then explained that the answer to each of these questions corresponded to a section (orientation, complication and resolution) in the narrative. The students were then given texts of each story, and together worked out the divisions between the three sections. This generated useful discussions concerning what each part of the text was about, and also led to further work uncovering lower level orientation-complication-resolution structures. For example, the orientation stage of Jack and the Beanstalk (which precedes Jack’s encounter with the giant) can itself be subdivided into orientation (with Jack going to market to sell the family cow), complication (He sells the cow for a few beans, which so enrages his mother that she hurls the beans out of the window.) and resolution (The beans grow into an enormous beanstalk, which leads the way to escape and magical adventures).

Following this, the students each wrote out traditional tales from their own backgrounds, which were photocopied and handed to the rest of the group, for everyone to read and to analyse into the orientation-complication-resolution stages. The next step was to classify these tales as myths, legends, fairy tales, cautionary tales or fables, all of which have general rules and conventions. These features are set out in Table 1.

Again, this generated a good deal of discussion. If we admit Disney’s The Lion King (1994) (as one student insisted we should), then do the talking animals make it a fable, or does the happy ending render it a fairy tale, or is it a hybrid of the two? Does the happy ending which is now usually given to The Little Mermaid render it a more satisfactory fairy tale than Anderson’s (1836) original? Is the story of George Washington and the cherry tree a legend or an American foundation myth, or the beginning of a fairy tale, or a cautionary tale on the value of honesty, or is its popularity due to all these elements?

Of course, other classes of students from around the world might not share these particular stories, and it may be difficult to find others which they do. Instead, it might be necessary to resort to a film with a clear narrative structure, and for the teacher to write the story of the film for use in class. The important thing is that they start with a story they already know, so that they can straightforwardly pick out the stages in the tale when confronted with the text. If they are given the text to a story they do not yet know, there is far more likelihood that they will become bogged down in details, with little idea of the bigger picture.

In general, controversies of this kind seem to arise more with ‘modern’ tales than with their more ancient counterparts. Nevertheless, the table itself could generate argument: readers might disagree with parts of it, or might reasonably object that it is based on (just one understanding of) what might be called the European canon, and consider it inappropriate, or even imperialistic, to try to force stories from other traditions into it. In any

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### Table 1: Classification and typical features of traditional stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Myth</th>
<th>Legend</th>
<th>Fairy tale</th>
<th>Cautionary tale</th>
<th>Fable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>Hercules</td>
<td>Robin Hood</td>
<td>Snow White</td>
<td>The Boy who Cried Wolf</td>
<td>The Hare and the Tortoise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Orpheus and Eurydice</td>
<td>King Arthur</td>
<td>Jack and the Beanstalk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>to teach about customs, or history, or about the world, or about gods or great people</td>
<td>to entertain</td>
<td>to warn</td>
<td>to teach about how to behave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The story</strong></td>
<td>The story is usually about great people (e.g. very strong). They are particular people, different from normal people, and have names. They are often gods or the children of gods. The stories or characters are often based on historical events or people.</td>
<td>Usually the main character is somebody that the reader/listener can identify with. Usually, s/he has no name, or only a nickname (e.g. Cinderella), or a very common name (e.g. Jack). The story usually has parts which involve magic or seem like a dream.</td>
<td>The story is usually like real life (but not always).</td>
<td>Usually the main characters are animals, which symbolise personal qualities or kinds of behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ending</strong></td>
<td>The ending is often unhappy (but not always).</td>
<td>There is a happy ending.</td>
<td>The ending is usually unhappy.</td>
<td>There is a moral: characters are punished or rewarded, according to their behaviour.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Symbols

Moving from narrative structure to symbols, the twelve adult students were asked why they thought that one to the fairy tales – they chose *Jack and the Beanstalk* – is so popular with children. Three of their responses were:

‘You can climb to the sky.’

‘Jack is brave.’

‘Children want to know what will happen.’

This served as a convenient way to explore the idea of identification with a character in a story. In the above responses, ‘you’, ‘Jack’ and ‘children’ are superficially quite different subjects, but as explanations for the appeal of the story they are all the same thing: ‘You’ (whoever you are) identify with ‘Jack’ (the hero), who represents all ‘children’ (i.e. everyone). Jack is a symbol for each of us and all of us, and his adventures symbolise our adventures. The orientation-complication-resolution structure itself symbolises where we come from, what we are going through, and what we hope to achieve.

In this case, the main point here is to use the table to encourage students to move from detailed bottom-up processing to thinking about larger structural features in their reading and writing more generally.
The students next chose a fairy tale and brainstormed elements in the story. For *Little Red Riding Hood* these included the wolf, grandma’s cottage and the path through the forest. The students discussed what each element made them think of (danger, safety, not getting lost ...) and built up personal symbolic understandings of the story. For one it represented a strange encounter (the wolf) which so confused the heroine that she forgot what she was supposed to be doing. For another it was about going out of one’s way to please another person (straying from the path to pick flowers for grandma) so obsessively that it made that person angry (grandma replaced by the wolf). Others responded to the wolf as a simultaneous source of danger and fascination. For some students who had difficulty articulating what the story meant to them, it was productive to give them a list of possible ideas to discuss and choose from. Table 2 is a worksheet for use in class, to stimulate discussion of what the elements in a story (in this case, *Snow White*) might symbolise.

Table 2: Worksheet for classroom discussion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Story of <em>Snow White</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Here are some elements in the story of <em>Snow White</em>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the forest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With another student, discuss what each of these elements might symbolise.

Here are some suggestions:

| danger | an older woman (mother / sister / teacher / classmate...) | feeling shy | becoming aware |
| apparent safety | being inactive | change | knowledge | something desirable |
| independence | being looked at | love | happiness | other things ...? |

N. B. There is not a single correct answer here. Symbols mean different things to different people!

**Multimodality**

The study of multimodality concerns the interplay of different modes of communication, including speech, writing, sounds and visual images (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). This was important to the project, as the students were to engage in producing illustrated fairy tales, but is also relevant beyond. It has been argued (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996) that multimodality is of growing importance today, under the influence of electronic communication, globalization and the intensification of cultural and linguistic diversity. Students’ critical awareness has to encompass not only the influence of linguistic choices in a text, but also the other semiotic choices that accompany them, from the size of text and the font, to the gestures, images and sounds which surround them. In their presentation of work
they should consider not just the words but how they look and sound and what they can convey by other means and how most effectively to do it.

This stage of the course flowed naturally from the study of symbols, with the students comparing and discussing the meanings they attached to things represented in words, sound and image. ‘Tree’, for example, will mean different things, depending on whether you are responding to the spoken or the written word (which will be affected by tone of voice or lettering), an image or a photograph, a sound (a tree in the wind, for example, or being felled). It will be affected by how these signs and representations work together, by how they interact with signs and representations of other things – and, of course, with your background and circumstances.

A fruitful way to explore these ideas proved to be to look at the best of children’s picture books (Lewis, 2001; Arizpe & Styles, 2003). These frequently use sophisticated plays on traditional forms. A favourite example is presented below (Figure 1), from Oram and Kitamura’s (2004) *In the Attic*. Here, where boy and tiger first meet and make friends, the speech bubbles which would conventionally contain text are filled with patterns, both striped but one red and one yellow to match the colours of the two characters. The image might be read as a beautiful metaphor for intercultural encounter and communication, but is open to many more interpretations and discussion.

*Figure 1: Multimodality and symbolism in a children’s picture book* (Oram & Kitamura, 2004)

Another feature is the use of variation, juxtapositions and interplay of text and image to convey more than either element could achieve on its own. For example, the students exchanged interesting views over why, in Kitamura’s *UFO Diary* (1989), the text always lies beneath the illustrations, until an encounter at the heart of the story, after which they always rest on top. *The Night Pirates* (Harris, 2005) generated diverse opinions over its frequent changes to the text, in size, font, spacing and even direction. *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963) provoked different interpretations of changes to the shape and size of the pictures as the story proceeds, the complete absence of text in the story’s central ‘rumpus’, and what is symbolised by such elements as Max’s wolf costume, his boat and his supper.

**Creating stories**
Fundamental to the rationale for this course was the idea that a text’s linguistic and other semiotic features are not arbitrary; they are chosen for a reason. It was essential that the students understand this insight. For this reason they created their fairy tales only after working through several preparatory steps in which they considered exactly what they wanted to convey and how best to do it. There were nine stages:

1. The students discussed and made notes on their experiences as language learners in a foreign country.
2. In pairs and groups of three, they pooled their thoughts and wrote them out under the headings: background and beginning, anxieties and problems and how these were overcome.
3. The students considered ways in which these experiences might echo those undergone by the children at the infants’ school.
4. The next step was to brainstorm ideas for characters, story elements and events which might symbolise these experiences (both adults and children’s).
5. The above headings were translated into orientation, complication and resolution, and the symbols and events were worked into the outlines of a story.
6. The students decided how to represent each of these elements and stages in the story: whether in words (and then in what font and size) or in images (and what style these should be, whether naturalistic, surrealistic or abstract), and how words and images should interact (whether illustrating or complementing, or conveying contrasting ideas), general issues of colour, darkness and light, whether animation might enhance the story, and then how words and images should stand in relation to each other (above, below, to the side, in front ...).
7. This put the students in a position to commence the written part of their stories, with support from their teacher where it was needed.
8. For images, the students either searched the internet and then cropped and manipulated them, or drew or painted their own pictures which were then scanned into a computer.
9. Finally the students put the words and images together in PowerPoint® presentations, and thus produced their fairy tales.

The results of this process included tales of adventurous bees, a talking teddy bear, children transformed by night into animals, three fish in quest of the sea, and much else. The following description of three of the students’ stories gives an idea of their variety.

**The Prince of Purpletreeland** tells of a young prince who, in accordance with the tradition of his country (‘Purpletreeland’), must travel in search of ‘the most valuable thing’ in a mysterious foreign country. Along the way he encounters the novelty of green trees, exotic beasts which turn out to be friendly, and then a scared and lonely girl whom he befriends and with whom he finds food and shelter. A few years later he returns home, without having found ‘the most valuable thing’ but happy and grown in confidence. ‘He was now ready to be the next king.’

The story, a collaboration by students from Thailand and China, is told using brief captions, bright, colourful and slightly surreal cartoon images found on the internet, and simple but effective computer animation. It conforms to the commonplace motif in fairy tale and myth of a hero undergoing trials before earning his birthright as king, often taken to symbolise the successful transition to adulthood, or social acceptance and contentment more generally (Bettelheim, 1978). It also cleverly brings in a quest for ‘the most valuable’ thing – a feature under various guises in a number of traditional tales (and recycled in, for example, Coelho, 1993) – which the hero initially interprets as a physical object and which eventually turns out to be within the hero (courage, for example, or confidence, as in the story here) or at
home, and which the hero comes to recognise or to gain only by searching for it elsewhere. The prince’s shock at first encountering green trees is an interesting novelty, perhaps designed to point out the insight (which the story-creators perhaps gained through their experience on the course, and which they probably thought worth sharing with the children reading their story) that what is familiar to some people can seem quite alien to others, and vice versa.

The Crocodile Which Became Lonely was the only story with a sad ending, and the only one created by a student who, by her own choice, created it alone. It also proved the most fruitful for philosophical discussion. In it, a crocodile takes up residence in an unfamiliar river, where he becomes so irritated by the curiosity and persistent questioning of the other creatures that he suddenly takes to swallowing them, simply to shut them up. Soon he acquires a taste for this, and swallows everyone there, and eventually the entire river. Enormous now, he moves on to swallowing people, towns, ‘the light and also the moon and the stars’. Finally, alone in darkness and silence, the crocodile catches a joyful sound coming from somewhere. After much searching he realises it is the sound of all the people in his stomach, who have established a thriving city inside. ‘He regretted being alone. And he thought about the fact that he couldn’t join with a circle of friends. He examined the situation, and he cried and cried, all alone.’

This story’s creator happened to be a professional artist in Japan, and the visual images were all her own work – in painting, crayon and collage - scanned and manipulated on computer. The story has a clear autobiographical element: its creator enjoyed working quietly and alone, valued her privacy, and could become upset by the relative boisterousness of other students. Though she never displayed anything like the destructive rage of the crocodile, it was evident that there were times she wished to be left alone. Through her story she highlights the tension between this need, and the need for company and friendship, a tension which the children who read the story recognised and talked about.

In Jenny and the Sweet Shop, Jenny is a girl about to change schools. This gives her such anxiety that she wishes she could become tiny so that nobody can find her. The night before she is due to start at the new school her dog wakes her and takes her to a mysterious sweet shop in the middle of a forest. Here she receives a sweet that makes her tiny – just as she wished for. Her parents, however, are naturally distraught at her apparent disappearance, so Jenny resolves to return to her normal size. She braves the forest to seek the sweet shop, and, once she has taken a sweet to return her to her proper size, she wakes up. Of course the experience was all a dream, but Jenny emerges reassured of the love and support of her parents, and confident in herself, ready to face the challenge of the new school.

The story, by a Japanese and a Chinese student, combines simple hand-drawn cartoons, and pictures from the internet. It cleverly uses the fairytale staple of magical shrinking and growing to symbolise an initial resistance to growing up, and then acceptance of responsibility and consequent growth in self-confidence.

Reading the stories

At this point, an active part was played by the other heroes in this article’s story: the children. There were thirty, all native English-speakers, aged six and seven, in their final year at Priory Infants School, Ramsgate. Like a number of schools in the UK and elsewhere, Priory Infants School has a ‘Philosophy for Children’ curriculum. This involves presenting children with a stimulus, typically a story, from which the children themselves draw ideas for subsequent discussion.

One approach, after presenting the stimulus, begins with having the children individually make a note of ideas or topics that come to mind as a result. Then, in pairs or in threes, they
discuss these first thoughts (‘anger’ or ‘being sorry’, for example, might come up following ‘The Crocodile Who Was Lonely’), and the teacher writes them up on the board. Next, the children look at the list of thoughts together, and suggest possible questions for discussion. These might be quite specific to the story (e.g. ‘Why was the crocodile angry?’) or more general (‘What makes people lonely?’). After a number of questions have been offered and written up, the children are invited to say what they like about each suggestion, and then vote on the one or two they want to form the focus of enquiry. The child who thought of the chosen question now offers an initial opinion, which everyone else is expected to think about. With the teacher acting as a facilitator, children then contribute their opinions, questions, answers, agreement and support, disagreement and requests for clarification. In the process they are encouraged to exhibit thinking that is Caring (showing an interest in and sensitivity to others’ experiences and values), Collaborative (responding to, and supporting others’ ideas), Critical (seeking evidence and reasons) and Creative (speculating, and relating ideas to others) (SAPERE, 2010). The teacher draws the enquiry to a conclusion by returning the focus to the original question, and then allows time for reflection on what has been learnt. Finally the class reviews how the session went, with a view to improvements for such sessions to be carried out in future.

The introduction of Philosophy for Children has been found to enhance children’s confidence, speaking and listening and thinking skills, and emotional awareness (P4C; SAPERE, 2010). The stories created by the English-language students at Canterbury Christ Church University formed a stimulus for class enquiry, and generated discussions which touched on such ideas as friendship, anger, regret, belonging and reconciliation. This contributed to a sense of shared experience, and developed the children’s confidence in dealing with the areas they talked about, as well as in themselves more generally.

Conclusion

The work of the adult English-language learners discussed here shows how the study of narrative structure, symbols and multimodality, and the collaborative creation of original stories, can form a bridge between people of diverse backgrounds and ways of thought. The involvement of young children in the project suggests how this bridge can extend across age as well as culture, and can draw on individuals’ creative, emotional and intellectual resources for the benefit of all involved.

A frequent discovery made by teachers who take up philosophy for children is the remarkable depth of thought and reflection which even the very young are capable of (Lipman, 1976). It appears that, much of the time, we are misled into supposing that because children’s language is relatively unsophisticated, their thought must be unsophisticated, too. A similar observation can be made about commonplace attitudes to language learners (or speakers of languages other than one’s own): it sometimes appears to be assumed that a less-than-advanced level of English, for example, indicates a less-than-advanced level of intellect. A valuable lesson which the adult students and the children – the heroes of this project – brought home to us, their teachers, is the ability we all have, whatever one’s age or native language or other features, to understand and draw meaning from stories, the better to understand both others and ourselves.

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Culture in English Coursebooks: Essentialist or Non-essentialist?

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Abstract

The increasingly recognized importance of the status of English as an international language and its concomitant circumstances have brought about significant changes in the ways cultural issues are dealt with within the discourses of English language teaching. The major change which sets the scene for the present study concerns the conception of culture. Recent trends have highlighted the importance of a shift from an essentialist view of culture to a non-essentialist one. Within this climate, this study aims to unearth views of culture underlying a selected sample of coursebooks used in the teaching of English to adults in Turkey. Theoretically informed by the work of Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2004), the paper presents a critical discourse analysis of the cultural content of the selected coursebooks.

Introduction

Traditionally, anthropologists have defined culture as the way of life of people, and, by this usage, we can speak of American culture and/or Chinese culture (Mathews, 2000). In line with the anthropological conception of culture, which became influential in the writings on English language teaching (ELT) and still exists to a greater or lesser degree, it was mainly US and British contexts and characters that provided a great deal of the cultural background to a wide variety of ELT coursebooks. Yet, with growing interest in ideological and interdisciplinary theory, the 1990s witnessed a widespread recognition of the implications of globalization and the connected issue of English as an international language (EIL). There has occurred a shift of emphasis from standard views of culture to non-standard views of culture (Atkinson, 1999). There also emerged a body of literature that was highly critical of the cultural content of globally designed ELT materials due to their Anglo- or Euro-centrism, stereotypical cultural representations, under/mis-representation of local cultures, and few opportunities for cross-cultural activity (Clarke & Clarke, 1990; Dunnet, Dubin & Lezberg, 1986; Prodromou, 1988). Accordingly, as Gray (2002) notes, in many coursebooks there has been a shift to international settings, which reflects a growing sense on the part of the publishers of EIL. Another important factor in the rise of these ideological and socio-cultural concerns in the pedagogical domain was also the larger philosophical changes that have taken place in recent history (Canagarajah, 1999).

The field of ELT has been experiencing a poststructuralist shift of paradigm (Morgan, 2007). Inspired by such post-modernist concepts as identity, power, and discourse, poststructuralists are concerned with “what culture does” rather than “what culture is” (Morgan, 2007, p. 1042). Agreeing with this poststructuralist concern, Kumaravadivelu (2008, p. 10) maintains that, in the field, “the word culture is used as a noun, giving the wrong impression that it is an object or a thing or a museum piece”. In much the same vein, Holliday (2005) criticizes the essentialist view of culture which conceives it of having a physical entity, as though it is a place which people can visit. These poststructural ideas on culture suggest an exciting range of theoretical and conceptual possibilities. Yet, there is still limited information about how those changes in the theoretical discourse are reflected in the treatment of culture in English coursebooks.

In fact, cultural content of English coursebooks has long attracted the attention of researchers worldwide. As far as the research in Turkey is concerned, while recent studies have focused on various aspects of the cultural content of English coursebooks, including
multicultural elements (Korkmaz, 2009), cross-cultural topics (Hamiloğlu & Mendi, 2010), and representations of age, social class and gender (Arıkan, 2005), little has been said about the views of culture which inform those particular choices regarding their cultural load. To address this gap, the present small-scale study aims to unearth views of culture underlying a selected sample of coursebooks. The primary reason behind the selection of coursebooks as research materials is their power which derives from their enormous scope and widespread use (van Dijk, 1989; Littlejohn, 1998). Combined with the great extent to which coursebooks effectively structure classroom time (Littlejohn, 1998), their enormous scope makes coursebooks invaluable research materials.

**Views of Culture: Essentialism vs. Non-essentialism**

Holliday (2001) outlines two major views of culture in the social science literature: essentialist and non-essentialist views. In their work on intercultural communication, Holliday et al. (2004, p. 2) define the term essentialist as “presuming that there is a universal essence, homogeneity and unity in a particular culture”. According to the essentialist view of culture, there is an onion-skin structuralist model in which sub-cultures are caught within the larger national cultures (Holliday, 2001). In this way, the world is divided into mutually exclusive national cultures and thus people in one culture are perceived to be essentially different from people in another (Holliday et al., 2004).

Contrarily, non-essentialism considers culture as a moveable concept used by different people at different times to suit purposes of identity, politics and science (Holliday, 2001). Free from national pre-definitions, it recognizes that culture is used by people as their own resource for self-presentation and thus allows cultural behavior to speak for itself (Holliday, 2001). Holliday (2005, pp.17-18) further argues that although essentialism will seem natural and normal to many people, it is problematic since it might easily lend itself to a wider set of chauvinism which includes racism and sexism as it allows to think that “German culture believes that ...”, and that “she belongs to German culture, therefore she ...”. Therefore, despite the fact that in reality views might range between the two extremes (Holliday et al., 2004), the work of Holliday et al. (2004) provides a strong theoretical basis to explore the thinking that underlies the choices that have been made regarding the cultural content of coursebooks.

**Research Materials**

Selection of the coursebooks to be analyzed has been a demanding task due to the wide range of coursebooks in the market in Turkey. For the purposes of the study, three English language coursebooks that are used in the teaching of English to adults and/or young adults in private English language schools have been chosen on the basis of their popularity. The selected coursebooks are *New Headway*, *Interchange* and *Face2face* including the student’s books, teacher’s books and workbooks. Further information about the selected coursebooks has been summarized in Table 1. Levels of the books have purposefully been chosen of the same level so as to minimize the effects of other related factors. In order to have an in-depth understanding, one single unit from each book has been chosen on the basis of thematic unity. The theme selected is one that appears in all three books, that of living and travelling abroad. Another reason for the selection of this theme is its potential to reveal the ways cultural issues are dealt with more than any other theme due to its explicit focus on culture.

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6 See Appendix for extracts from the selected coursebooks.
Table 1: Information about the selected coursebooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Headway</td>
<td>Liz &amp; John Soars</td>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The Third Edition)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interchange</td>
<td>J.C. Richards with J. Hull &amp; S. Proctor</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face2face</td>
<td>C. Redston &amp; G. Cunningham</td>
<td>Cambridge</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Method

With a purpose to unearth the views of culture underlying the three selected coursebooks, the present study utilizes the tools and concepts of critical discourse analysis. The research has combined aspects of Fairclough (1989) and van Leeuwen’s (2008) critical discourse analytical frameworks. In addition to Fairclough’s textually oriented model, the sociosemantic inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented as well as the framework for analyzing the visual representation of social actors offered by van Leeuwen (2008) have been employed to analyze both the textual and, if applies, visual data. Thus, the overall design of the study is descriptive-analytic.

Findings and Discussion

The results of the critical discourse analysis of the coursebooks point to two major findings. The first is that it is the essentialist view of culture which informs the particular choices in relation to the cultural content of *New Headway* and *Interchange*. People are identified with their national cultures which are represented as homogeneous and in turn essentially different from other national cultures. In doing so, the essentialist view of culture makes nationality a core component of people’s identities. The second finding is that the non-essentialist view seems to inform *Face2face* with a focus on “life-style identities”, as Machin and van Leeuwen (2007, p.49) put it, which are more individual and flexible. In addition to what they are, people are defined on the basis of what they do. The discussion of these findings will include a few examples from each unit due to the limitations of space.

Examples of Essentialism and National Identities

The analysis of the representations of the social world in *New Headway* suggests that, despite the variety in topics, one major classification scheme that the texts draw upon is to do with nationality. The reading part titled ‘A World Guide to Good Manners: How not to behave badly abroad’ is one of those contexts where the focus is explicitly on nationality. According to the teacher’s book, it aims to provide students with context that encourages use of modals to express obligation and permission. The analysis of the composition of these pages suggests crucial insights into the information value and salience of those elements. At the top is the title and the text is placed towards the lower part. On the right is Extra Tips about travelling abroad and on the left is a photo depicting four different cultural groups. When the elements constituting this part have been evaluated as a whole in terms of their salience, the title seems to be one of the most salient elements due to its bigger size, the color contrast between red and black, and its placement at the top. In addition, the photo is another most eye-catching element in the composition not just because of its size, but also because it
is placed towards the left in relation to the other elements in the visual field. With respect to the information value of the elements of the composition, the placement of the photo on the left signifies that it is presented as given information which is self-evident and commonsensical and the tips are presented as new information to which the reader/viewer must pay special attention.

Returning now to the text, two classification schemes that are drawn upon are important to note. One is a classification of manners: greetings, clothes, food and drink, and doing business. The other one is a pre-existing scheme which divides the world and its people into different countries/nations. The text refers to fourteen different countries (America, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Thailand, Spain, Mexico, China, Greece, France, India, and Russia) and three larger regions (Middle East, South America and Asia). The people of the world are classified according to their countries and the people of these countries are collectivized as homogeneous groups. Furthermore, generic references to these people such as ‘An American or Canadian’ betrays a view of reality in which a generalized essence constitutes the reality of being an American and each American is a specimen of that essence. In addition, how people greet in these countries or what people wear is represented as a categorical truth which is evidenced by the use of simple present tense. This is also telling in the sense that “the prevalence of categorical modalities supports a view of the world as transparent...without the need for interpretation and representation” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 129). On the whole, based on the stereotypical representations of different cultural groups, the text describes what particular cultures are like and then presents a number of suggestions as to how to behave abroad. Furthermore, the title, which is the most salient element in the visual field, implies that these suggestions are to be accepted as good manners and otherwise as bad behaviors.

As is implicated by the content of the text, four cultural groups represented in the visuals are people from Britain, Asian and Muslim countries, Italy/Spain/Latin America and Japan. One striking feature of their visual representation is that it is only the people from Britain who are depicted from below, which provides them with symbolic power over the viewer as an authority or role model. While the Muslim women are depicted at eye level, the other two groups are represented in a lower position through the strategy of disempowerment. Although those particular angles might be appropriate to capture those particular scenes, they are telling in terms of their visual representation, since, as Fairclough (1989) notes, the choice is very important because any photograph gives one image of a scene or a person from among the many possible images and thus different images convey different meanings.

What follows the reading part is a vocabulary part which aims to introduce nationality words. Students are asked to match the people from different countries with a phrase so that each statement can make up a stereotypical description of that national group. This is followed by another activity in which students are asked to write stereotypical statements about the nationality groups given in a chart. In the teacher’s book, teachers are also warned to be careful about not hurting students’ national pride if in their classes there are any students from those countries mentioned in the chart. Consistent with the rest of the unit, the classification of people in terms of their shared national identities and the accompanying assimilation of them into homogenous groups are noticeable as recurring patterns. The presentation of information about them as facts through expressive modality of categorical truth further implies that national characteristics are considered to be fixed without change. What is also striking is the softening of generalization about the Canadians through the use of ‘often’ and the preference of a past accomplishment for the description of the British.

The forthcoming listening part aims to encourage interaction and fluency as students discuss the social rules involved in going to somebody else’s home. Firstly, students are asked to listen to three people (i.e. Sumie, Kate and Lucas) talking about inviting guests

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home for a meal and to complete a chart and then to discuss what happens in their own country. It is notable that they all introduce themselves by telling their names and where they come from. Namely, they identify themselves with their nationality/citizenship which is a social rather than an individual identity trait. Then, they assimilate themselves to that social group which is evidenced in the use of collectivizing ‘we’. Only Kate shifts from collectivization to individualization throughout the rest of her talk. All the speakers present the information they give as categorical truth through simple present tense. Furthermore, expressive modality of must used by Sumie indicates that the truth is evaluated as an obligation.

*Interchange* is very similar to *New Headway* in terms of the ways cultural issues are dealt with. The unit named ‘Crossing Cultures’ defines cultural differences in terms of different nationalities. One significant example of this orientation can be seen in a speaking activity in which customs are differentiated in terms of different countries. Each country is represented with its flag and each is framed off, which signify their difference. Except for the one related to Canada, which is given in the form of advice through the use of should, other customs are presented in imperative mode which signals a demand for action from the addressees. The Grammar Focus part also employs a similar orientation. It presents statements with when/if clauses which can be used to describe a custom or something that is expected or normally done and/or general truths. The statements have been mentioned to be real customs in the USA and Canada. The presentation of those customs as general truths implies that the associated cultures are imagined to be homogeneous and consensual groups despite the fact that they might show diversity and complexity to some extent due to other identity components such as social class and ethnicity. The prevalence of ‘you’ is also striking in the sense that it is used as an indefinite pronoun referring to people in general. Thus, the producer of the text claims solidarity with the addressees and by implication passes off her own perceptions of the reality as those of the people in general.

This is followed by a listening part in which students listen to three people describing unique customs they observed while travelling. The focus of the post-listening activity is the country and the associated custom as well as the reaction of the person. Although it has not been mentioned explicitly, the speakers seem to have an origin of an Anglo-American country. The places they travelled are Spain, Asia and Middle East. The way they are talking about their experiences is characterized by the individualization of speakers and the collectivization of the people of those countries/regions. Although there is no explicit labeling of those people, it is obvious that the people of Asia and the Middle East are assimilated to one single group through the use of ‘people’ and ‘they’. The prevalence of assimilation and collectivization signals that all the people of such large regions as Asia and the Middle East are conceived to be homogenous and consensual. The use of expressive modality of categorical truth in relation to the customs reveals that the speakers claim the authority to tell people their own observations as the truth. With respect to their reactions to the customs they met, it is notable that the speakers all had negative attitudes and it is only Susan who ‘got used to it and even started to like it’ after a while. The customs are as follows. In Asia people make noise when they drink soup, in Spain people eat late in the evening and stay until very late, and in the Middle East women wear something over their head and a dress that covers their whole body. While explaining her reaction, Alice refers to the way her own family brought up her. John expresses his surprise with a question: ‘How does one get up and go to work or school the next day after eating and drinking until three in the morning?’ His remark is significant in that he prefers to use ‘one’, rather than ‘you’, since, as Fairclough (1989) stated, ‘one’, as a middle-class pronoun, undermines the meaning of ‘people in general’ because people in general don’t use the word.
The last part of the unit is a reading activity which contains excerpts from the journal of a Taiwanese student studying in Chicago during her first three months in the USA. One striking feature of the text is that, despite the individualization of Lim’s experience in Chicago, there is a tendency to overgeneralize her experiences and observations. Especially in the second and third excerpts, based on her very short and single experience, she concludes with assertions and truth claims about the American people and the life in America. This is also reinforced in the post-reading activity which asks students to match each journal entry with its main idea. In the second excerpt, there is a comparison of American students and Taiwanese students. Taiwanese students are collectivized as a homogeneous group through the first-person plural and Lim assimilates herself to that group and thus does not identify herself with the American students in her class. This comparison is quite reminiscent of a widespread but highly criticized tendency in TESOL, which tends to explain ‘passive, obedient and non-participant’ class behaviors of Asian students in terms of their Asian culture.

Similar orientations are also noticeable in the workbook. There is another reading passage which has the same title and topic in the workbook. In the first paragraph, despite the lack of an explicit reference, one’s country and the associated culture are presented as the major category to define her identity. The analysis of the vocabulary items displays that ‘culture’ co-occurs with ‘different’ and cultures are assumed to differ from country to country, which implies that the text draws upon a one country-one culture relation. Another notable association, which lumps two groups together, is ‘many North Americans and Europeans’ and they are presented in direct opposition with all ‘other countries’. This categorization signifies a polarization between these two groups. On the right is also a list of tips to avoid culture shock which are given in the mode of imperatives and thus signal a demand for action from the addressees.

Examples of Non-essentialism and Life-style Identities

*Face2face* is different from the other two books in many ways such as the frequent use of media-related texts, the prevalence of individualization rather than collectivization, and the reinforcement of modern life-style signifiers within a consumption realm. The first section of this unit sets a context of tourism industry in order to introduce and practice new vocabulary and grammar. Despite the representation of different countries (Costa Rica, UK, Greece), the focus is not on the countries but on the jobs. People are not identified with what they are but what they do. Namely, people are categorized in terms of the particular jobs they do. This sort of functionalization of people allows one to see that people do similar things and have similar problems no matter where they are from or where they live.

The unit contains a reading part about Tony and Maureen Wheeler who started the company, Lonely Planet, which is involved in guidebook publishing and television broadcasting. The text tells the story of Wheelers from how they started the company to how it has become an international company. There is no mention of that they are British; that is, they are not identified with what they are. Rather, their personal accomplishments are presented within an achievement space. Vocabulary choices are significant in that their accomplishments are emphasized with a particular focus on the limited resources they had. The prevalence of numbers also signals that this is a success story. They are presented as symbols of success who started with an old van and little money and ended up with a huge publishing and television company.

The rest of the unit contains a listening, a reading and a vocabulary section which are about a TV programme called ‘Call that a holiday?’. The listening part starts with a brief article about the programme called ‘Top TV’ and goes on with the listening to part of the TV programme. The article is a review of a TV programme with a primary purpose to persuade
the readers to watch it. Yet, there are a number of significant choices in the text which show that there is a specific target group. It addresses to the people who are bored with the package holidays and looking for a holiday with a difference. In doing so, the review promotes a particular consumption behavior and a modern life-style. In the listening part, students are asked to listen to part of the programme in which two of the holidaymakers participated in the programme are talking about their holidays. When asked to tell about themselves, these two people identify themselves with their jobs and ages. One also mentions about her marital status. Yet, there is no mention of nationality. It is also striking to see that both of them work in the media industry- Alan works in advertising and Emily is an editor for a women’s magazine. The focus of the questions is the particular holidays they have chosen and the reasons behind their choices. One goes to Cape Town in South Africa to have a cosmetic surgery and then to go on a safari, the other one goes to New South Wales in Australia to work on an organic farm. The prevalence of individualization in their speech emphasizes their individual choices and their individual reasons. The script of their talk shows that Alan cares about her physical appearance, and Emily refers to her interest in organic farming and the difference of this particular kind of holiday. The reading part consists of Alan and Emily’s reviews on their holidays for the TV programme’s website. What is striking about their reviews is that both of them are quite positive in their evaluations. Both texts emphasize health, physical appearance and fitness.

Conclusion

The results of the analysis have revealed that the coursebooks analysed fall into two major categories in terms of the views of culture informing them. While New Headway and Interchange have been found to be underlied by an essentialist view of culture with a focus on national identities, Face2face seems to be underlied by a non-essentialist view of culture with a focus on life-style identities. In New Headway and Interchange, the world is represented to be divided into national cultures which are homogeneous and consensual. The one country-one culture association reinforces the sense of a simple society in which people’s behaviours are defined by their national cultures. There are also instances of collectivization of the people of Asia and Middle East into one single cultural group. Furthermore, most of the information about different cultural groups are presented as facts rather than opinions. There are also examples of overgeneralizations from individual instances. On the other hand, Face2face is characterized by an extensive use of media-related texts, the prevalence of individualization rather than collectivization, and the reinforcement of modern life-style signifiers within a consumption realm. Preconceptions about national cultural features seem to be mostly avoided. Functionalization, in which people are referred to in terms of something they do (van Leuwen, 2008), seems to be the dominant mode of categorizing people. Rather than traditional identity markers such as nationality and gender, particular aspects of self-presentation such as physical appearance, leisure activities and interests, and occupations are used to convey a modern life-style.

What motivated this small-scale research was to unearth the views of culture underlying a selected sample of coursebooks. Yet, the interplay between the issues of culture and identity has extended the discussion to the identity models too. Machin & Van Leeuwen (2007) make an important point when they write on the two models of identity that are available in contemporary society: while the literature on identity rightly criticizes the essentialism fundamental to the national identity model, it celebrates life-style identity model as an alternative which allows identities to be individual, flexible and complex without taking into its links with corporate ideologies and practices. Such a consideration is particularly important in a study on coursebooks, which are part of “didactic ideological discourse”, in the
words of van Dijk (2006, p. 133). If people interpret discourses as mental models and if ideological learning occurs by generalizing those mental models to socially shared and normalized mental representations (van Dijk, 2006), anything to do with ideological representations and practices becomes important to the analysis. Particular ideologies, whether nationalist or corporate, that are integrated and promoted through the cultural discourse of coursebooks, thus need to be discussed and scrutinized continuously. In addition, given that from essentialism there is just a small step to culturism which is constructed in similar ways with racism and sexism (Holliday et al., 2004), essentialism needs to be recognized and exposed wherever it is found so as to fight against otherization.

References


Appendix

Extract 1 (taken from Interchange)

13 READING

Culture Shock

What kinds of experiences can you gain from traveling to and living in other cities?

August 31
People often refer to Taipei as "The Sleepless City," but I didn't understand why until I got to Chicago. I was window-shopping with another student this evening when suddenly the store owners along the street started pulling down their gates and locking their doors. Soon the whole street was closed, even though it was still light out. This is something I've never seen in Taiwan, where the busiest streets stay awake all night. You can go out to restaurants, stores, and movies even long after midnight.

September 5
After the first week of class, I've found some differences between Taiwanese students and American students. Whenever a teacher asks a question, my classmates blurt out their answers almost immediately. And some of them interrupt the teacher. In Taipei, we're usually quiet in class so the teacher can finish on time. We tend to ask the teacher questions afterward. I don't know whether it's acceptable here for students to ask teachers questions after class.

October 6
I met a really interesting girl in my neighborhood café. I was writing a letter to my mother, and she asked me what language I was writing in. We ended up talking for about an hour. People in Chicago seem very comfortable with each other. It seems quite natural for two people to just start talking in a café. This is something that doesn't happen in Taipei. At home, I would never just start chatting with a stranger. I like that it's easy to meet new people here.

Read the article. Then match each journal entry with its main idea.

1. August 31 ........ a. People in Taipei tend to be more private than in Chicago.
2. September 5 ........ b. Business hours in Chicago are much shorter than in Taipei.
3. October 6 ........ c. American students are more outspoken than Taiwanese students.

Extract 2 (taken from New Headway)
A WORLD GUIDE TO
Good Manners
How not to behave badly abroad
by Norman Ramshaw

Travelling to all corners of the world gets easier and easier. We live in a
global village, but this doesn’t mean that we all behave in the same way.

Extract 3 (taken from Face2face)

TOP TV this week

Call that a holiday?
Tuesday 6.45 p.m. ITV1

This fascinating new holiday
programme follows the adventures
of four people who have chosen to
go on a holiday with a difference. So
if you've ever wanted to travel across
Africa in a jeep, go on a cycling tour
of China, work on an organic farm in
Australia, or go on a South African
cosmetic surgery and safari holiday, then
this is the programme for you. Package
holidays will never be the same again!

Presented by Judith Gardner.
Uniting classroom and industry: placements for Czech academics

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Abstract
This paper reports and discusses the results of an exploratory study, conducted in the Czech Republic, on the perception of the value of industry placement experiences for business studies disciplines academics. An industry placement is an arrangement whereby an academic is seconded to a host firm for a pre-determined period of time, to work in a role defined by prior agreement.

The main aim of this study was to obtain information about the perceptions that Czech academics would place on an industry placement opportunity, in terms of developing networks and fostering communities of practice (as described by Lave and Wenger 1991), with a view to uniting classroom tuition and industry practices. The study was conducted during 2008 and 2009 through a written survey and follow-up personal, semi-structured interviews in English.

It appears that academics are keen to be more closely associated with industry. However, the study found that the notion of building a community of practice appears to be somewhat of a challenge in an environment where the business culture has undertones that still linger from the former communist era. There is a sense of divide between industry and academics, and the introduction of an industry placement scheme may provide a catalyst for breaking down existing barriers, and support the development of social capital through enhanced educational experiences.

The paper concludes that an industry placement scheme, embraced by both industry and academics, has the potential to enhance the curriculum with beneficial outcomes for students. However, the planning and implementation of industry placement programs needs to be mindful of government educational policies, as well as Czech cultural nuances.

Keywords: capacity building; communities of practice; industry placement; professional development

Introduction
This paper reports on a scoping study of business discipline academics in the Czech Republic on the perceived value of industry placement opportunities as a form of professional development. The paper firstly provides some comments about the changing landscape of university education, and subsequently details three significant changes in the Czech Republic over the past two decades. A condensed literature review is provided next, before detailing a previously developed conceptual model that will be ‘tested’ for relevance based on the data gathered from the scoping study, before reaching the conclusion.

In this paper the words educator, teacher and academic are used interchangeably, but are given the same meaning.
The changing education landscape around the globe and in the Czech Republic

Whilst there is “international consensus that the reach, quality and performance of a nation’s higher education system will be key determinants of its economic and social progress” (Sharpe, 2009), the role of universities in society and their reason for being has been the subject of continuing scrutiny and government interference. Universities have traditionally been charged with the “task of critically transmitting knowledge, bringing together teaching and research in an inseparable union” (Roversi-Monaco, 1998, p. 3). Yet, neo-liberal government policies such as the ones pursued by the Howard government in Australia at the turn of the century, resulted in severe education funding cuts and repressive academic employment contracts, designed to exert more bureaucratic intervention as a form of control under the claim that education is business and, therefore, ought to be run like a corporation. In effect, this changed universities from being providers for “the public good and the community” (Star, 2007) to being “conceived as corporations providing a private good for individual consumers” (Star, 2007).

In the context of the Czech Republic three significant events have taken place in the past two decades. Firstly, the collapse of the former Soviet Union, during 1989/1990, under which the Czech higher education system was isolated from the world that existed beyond the ‘iron curtain’ (Pol, 2005). Secondly, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia through separation from the Slovak Republic at the end of 1992. Thirdly, the joining of the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004. Becoming a EU member and a part of the Bologna process was, for the Czech education system, “the most important external stimulus directing the transformation process” (Pol, 2005, p.2).

The Bologna Process requires co-operation “between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees [as] higher education should equip students with the advanced knowledge, skills and competences they need throughout their professional lives” (Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, 2009, pp. 3-5). The “co-operation between higher education and business … stimulates knowledge transfer in both directions” (European Commission - Education and Training, 2009). It is interesting to note the emphasis given to the co-operation between universities and industry that forms a core component of the Bologna Process ideals. This appears to reflect industry’s desire for employment ready graduates, and effectively challenges universities to adapt their curricula towards a more practical and less theoretical approach. It should be noted that discussion on the need for more or less practice or theory in the curriculum is beyond the scope of this paper.

If the argument is for a more practically based application of the curriculum, then it follows that academics ought to be exposed to current industrial practices and processes, so they may incorporate these into their teaching and learning practices. It is argued here that an academic should not be expected to teach contemporary industrial processes without having had some experience of it themselves, as there would otherwise be no context for this teaching. However, for industry placements to materialise, some investment is required from the government/educational institution, and this issue will be discussed later in the paper.

The next section considers the notion of an industry placement, the context in which it occurs, and the nature of the relationships which may be formed through this type of activity.

Industry placements: definition, environmental context and relationships

For the purposes of this paper an industry placement is defined as a previously agreed to voluntary period of time spent by the academic working within a host firm, performing agreed to tasks.
An industry placement takes place within the context of higher education and government policies, as shown within the outer circle at Figure 1. In the case of the Czech Republic, because they are part of the EU, there are two specific additional influencing factors, that is, EU funding, with programs such as Erasmus, and the Bologna Process mentioned above.

Figure 1: Industry placement environment and relationships

It can be observed from Figure 1 that four key stakeholders are identified, viz: the academic; the university; the host firm; and the student. Figure one also shows a number of relationships that exist among the key stakeholders. It is argued here that one objective of an industry placement, is gaining additional knowledge and skills to benefit the community, as the “social goals of a nation … education … [is] essential in the making of a people centred nation” (Sivamurugan, 2010, p.9), and this is represented in Figure 1 by the circle in the centre.

The benefits that may be derived from an industry placement are provided in the condensed literature review in next section.

**Industry placement: a condensed literature review**

Industry placements have received some attention from researchers over the past two decades, with potential resultant benefits being the focus of much of the literature, yet “there appears to be little research on [such] professional development practice outcomes” Bergami, R. Schüller, A. & Cheok, J., 2010, *in print*).

The benefits of an industry placement, as identified in the literature, may be summarised as follows:
• Developing the educator’s knowledge and skills in current industry practices, as a means to enhance the curriculum and the students’ learning experience through the inclusion of contemporary perspectives, skills and knowledge gained by the academic whilst on placement (Brown & Chalmers, 1990; Haigh, 1997; Ireland, Golden, & Spielhofer, 2002; Jones, 2007; Klein, 2001; McGavin, 1996);
• Opportunities to develop professional networks and contacts (Haigh, 1997);
• Access to authentic materials to assist with classroom teaching, particularly in assisting to bridge theory and practice (Arnold & Smith, 2003; Ireland 2002);
• Opportunities for teachers to be educators and consultants to industry (Ireland 2002);
• Engaging with industry to more closely align the curriculum with their expectations (Klein 2001; McGavin, 1996);
• Providing firms with ready access to a potential pool of job entrants – the graduating students (Brown & Chalmers, 1990); and
• Enhancing the reputation of the host firm and the educational institution in the community (McGavin 1996a).

The development of networks and business contacts, identified in the literature, may also lead to the formation of a longer term Community of Practice (CoP), as described by Lave and Wenger (1991) and discussed in the next section.

Industry placement: a conceptual model

The benefits and outcomes potentially derived from an industry placement experience are shown in a conceptual model at Figure 2. This model will be ‘tested’ for relevance against the scoping study results later in the paper.

The description of the model begins with the outer boxes surrounding the circle before considering the box inside the circle.

Figure 2: Industry placement conceptual model (Schuller & Bergami, 2008, p. 201)
Teacher industry placement

The industry placement begins after a number of important administrative matters have been finalised. These include: the selection of the host firm; the location of the work place; the role to be performed by the academic on placement (for example the tasks, duties, responsibilities, authority); the reporting lines; the hours of work; and the duration of the placement. These arrangements need to be finalised ahead of time, to provide the academic, the host firm and the university with a common degree of understanding in relation to their mutual roles, responsibilities and expectations resulting from the placement.

The duration of the placement will depend on whether the academic holds any prior relevant industry experience. Where the academic is venturing into a new industry or a new area of study, a longer term placement may be required, as “deep learning often proceeds slowly” (Gela, 2004, p. 8). Where a refresher type placement is pursued, this may be of a shorter duration, of perhaps one to two weeks (Brown & Chalmers, 1990).

Regardless of the length of the placement, the academic enters the host firm as an outsider, yet one who holds some form of legitimate peripheral participation that gives access to the “activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 29) that are subsumed within that industrial setting. This experience engages the academic in a social process that facilitates the development of their knowledge of the host firm’s processes and procedures.

Industry placement experience

The academic would not be immediately familiar with the processes and procedures in the work place, and it is not difficult to imagine that a period of acclimatisation may be required, and possibly, shadowing another employee in the beginning may be desirable or required, or even being assigned to a mentor. Before the academic can embrace the full benefits of the industry placement, they will need to have some understanding of the culture of the industry and host firm, as this will provide some context for learning to take place in situ. The placement experience should be mutually beneficial, as mutual engagement between joint enterprises promotes knowledge and the building of competencies (Wenger, 1998).

Industry placement skills

The academic in situ should expect to gain additional knowledge and skills by having access to the host firm’s resources. The academic is able to observe, participate, theorise and analyse workplace procedures and processes, and this should enable the academic to move to the next step in the model.

Theory development (from practice)

The industry placement experience brings opportunities for the academic to reflect on, and evaluate existing business theories to determine whether they are still relevant to contemporary work practices. The academic has an opportunity to make suggestions for changes to work practices, as they are likely to be seen as someone with ‘fresh eyes’, and a neutral ‘outsider’ making suggestions, additionally, there is an opportunity for new theories to be developed by the academic. Any changes the academic may suggest in the workplace may also be used as to expand the teaching repertoire.

Classroom teaching

The academic should be able to enrich teaching and learning practices in the classroom by incorporating additional contemporary industry materials into lecture notes, handouts and the like; adding problem based exercises based on the industry placement experience; including
case studies specific to the host firm (with prior permission). Representatives of the host firm may also be invited to address the students in class, and student site visits to the host firm may be arranged. These activities should enhance student learning experiences, and new materials may lead to the development of theories or the testing of theories from different perspectives.

**Theory into practice**

Classroom activities may provide opportunities for new theoretical applications to be developed and trialled within the host firm, and if successful, these could lead to full scale implementation. This could benefit the host firm, the academic and the host firm. The host firm should gain efficiency benefits from improved processes, the academic would gain greater standing in the host firm and, depending on the nature of the process, may gain wider industry. This is turn showcases both the academic’s university and the students’ calibre.

As can be seen from Figure 2, this is a closed-loop model because, it is argued here, that the industry placement should not be limited to a once only opportunity. Indeed the authors argue here that an industry placement should happen periodically, to ensure that teaching and learning practices reflect current industry practices as much as possible.

**Community of practice**

According to Lave & Wenger (1991) a Community of Practice (CoP) is an informal group of individual members who “have different interests, make diverse contributions to activity and hold varied viewpoints” (p. 98). For a CoP to exist, there must a commitment to participate and members’ behaviour must be mutually respectful and trusting (Mittendorf, 2006). CoP membership implies “participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing, and what that means in their lives and their communities” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98). The academic is the most likely stakeholder to foster a CoP, because of the central role and connections they have with the other stakeholders identified in Figure 1.

As can be observed from Figure 2, there are three key components within the CoP circle:

- **Community engagement.** This occurs between the academic, the host industry and the university. Universities are actively encouraged to forge strategic partnerships and links with industry and in so doing, opportunities may arise for student internships, as well as project based work. Both of these activities will showcase the calibre of students and the relevance of the university’s programs of study to industry partners.

- **Knowledge and skills acquisition.** This refers to the collective knowledge that the community may gain over time, as a result of the activities and the relationships that are formed through an industry placement, and this may contribute to social capital in the long run. The knowledge gained should also be a useful addition to teaching and learning practices.

- **Industry networks.** This represents the business connections that may arise from the industry placement opportunity. These alliances may enhance the student learning experience and enhance the calibre of graduates through use of host firm processes as exemplars, site visits and invited guest speakers.

The industry placement conceptual model was ‘tested’ through a scoping study of business academics in the Czech Republic, as discussed in the next section.

**Czech academics: scoping study**

After obtaining ethics approval to conduct an on-line study, a possible 550 participants from business disciplines were identified from information available in the public domain, and contacted electronically. Participation in the study was voluntary. The main aim of the study was to gather perceptions from Czech academics about the value of industry
placements. A total of 85 responses were received. Because of space limitation, this paper limits the discussion to the most important aspect of the survey.

The majority of respondents (58%) were in the 18 to 39 years group and this confirms the recent attraction towards academic careers (Centre for Higher Education Studies, 2006, p. 51). There was an exceptionally high correlation between the years of teaching experience and the length of service with the current employer, suggesting that the younger academics were new entrants to the industry, and not academics that have come from other institutions.

The vast majority of respondents (80%) were full-time employees and 19% were on part-time ongoing contracts, with only 1% being on casual contracts. This is certainly a different situation to other countries, such as Australia, that has a highly casualised academic workforce, upwards to 40%.

Of the responses received, approximately 78% of indicated an interest in pursuing an industry placement, yet only 30% of these indicated employer support. The most common barriers to pursuing and industry placement are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Barriers to industry placements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>% of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too heavy a workload</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal reasons (family commitments and age</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of employer support</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that whilst lack of employer support was cited in 30% of responses, it was identified as a specific barrier in only 3% of cases, as shown in Table 1. It appears, therefore, that lack of employer support may not be a significant impediment to pursuing an industry placement opportunity.

The motivating factors cited for pursuing an industry placement are shown at Table 2. It should be noted that this was a free text question, allowing for multiple responses. It can be observed that the three highest cited motivational factors highlight a wish to gain practical experience, the testing of theories in practice, and a better insight and overview of industry. This tends to suggest that there are weak links between industry and academics and, in part, this may be supported by the rate of the other responses cited. For example ‘networking’ only ranked as the fifth highest response, and ‘teaching support’ and ‘bilateral transfer of knowledge’ were only cited five, and four times respectively.

An explanation for the weak links between academics and industry may be the legacy of the former communist regime where, run as a centrally controlled economy, and burdened with controls on freedom of collaboration and expression, such relationships would have hardly been possible. Consequently, it is known that there is a degree of ‘distance’ between academics and industrialists, especially those business persons of advanced age, who may have been influenced in their business outlook by the former communist rule, and older academics who remain detached from innovative business approaches. No doubt, the joining of the EU and the adoption of the Bologna Process will continue to exert a positive influence on forging closer ties between academics and universities and the business sector.
Table 2: Industry placement motivating factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivating factors</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaining practical experience</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing theories in practice</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better insight, overview of industry</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in a different environment</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial issue (additional income)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem (credibility and working outside academia)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of interpersonal skills</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching support (case studies, etc)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral transfer of knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility, discipline</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer support</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were asked to indicate their preferred industry placement duration and a summary of these is shown at Table 3. It should be noted that only 48 responses were received to this question.

Table 3: Industry placement preferred duration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry placement duration preference</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full teaching semester release for full time work in industry</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fractional teaching semester release for working in industry one day per week</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One month release for full time work in industry during the teaching period</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One month release for full time work in industry during the non-teaching period</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week release for full time work in industry during the teaching period</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One week release for full time work in industry during the non-teaching period</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be clearly observed from Table 3 that the two most preferred options are for industry placements to last for a complete semester, either on a full time basis or on a one day per week basis. These responses appear to be consistent with existing literature that indicates that time is needed for deep learning (Gela, 2004) in order to gain sufficient knowledge and skills to master processes (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and to nurture “partnerships based on bilateral contributions” (Meadon 1990, p. 28).

A longer industry placement secondment may also prove to be a better catalyst for the development of a sustainable CoP, where contacts may be nurtured over a longer period of time to encourage membership, participation and contribution to the CoP.
Having discussed them main findings of the scoping study, the next section considers the relevance of the conceptual model shown at Figure 2.

**The relevance of the conceptual model to this study**

The model shown at Figure 2 is supported by the finding in this study. The high level of interest in pursuing an industry placement supports the ‘teacher industry placement’ box. The motivating factors shown in Table 2 support, to varying degrees, the ‘teacher industry placement experience’, and ‘theory development’, ‘classroom teaching’ and ‘theory into practice’ boxes. By implication, the ‘industry placement skills’ box is also covered, because if no skills were acquired then there would be no value in the whole process.

There is also support in the responses at Table 2, for the three key elements of the CoP identified in Figure 2, with comments such as the desire to gain practical experience, better insight/overview of industry and the development of interpersonal skills. Importantly, the bilateral transfer of knowledge ought to provide an avenue to develop a CoP based on shared knowledge, mutual contribution and interest, along the notions suggested by Wenger (1998).

In summary, the result from this scoping study appear to lend support to the conceptual model shown at Figure 2, however, further inquiry is warranted for more rigorous testing.

**Conclusion**

This paper has provided information on a scoping study of Czech business studies academics on their perception of the value of industry placement. The findings suggest that there is a strong willingness to pursue this type of professional development activity, and although there may be little organisational support for it, this does not appear to have dampened enthusiasm for pursuing an industry placement. This is an interesting response as it demonstrates a ‘shaking off’ of the former communist restrictions and a willingness to more fully participate in the Bologna Process.

The clear preference for longer term placements is a further indication that Czech academics are keen to spend time in industry. Of course, this study only surveyed academics, so further enquiry with industry would be needed to establish whether there is like desire, otherwise bilateral relationships cannot be formed. To complete the picture, research should also be conducted with the other key stakeholders identified in Figure 1.

Finally, further study is required to more vigorously test the conceptual model shown at Figure 2, and ideally, similar studies should be conducted in other nations to determine whether the responses in this study are unique to this situation, or whether there are common international patterns.

**References**


Gela, B. (2004). Deep change: professional development from the inside out, Scarecrow Education, Lanham, MA, USA.


Systemic Leadership Challenges for National Public Education Policy

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Cecily Ward, CEO, Global Leadership, Singapore cecily.ward@globaleadership.com

Abstract

This paper considers the development of the National Education curriculum in Singapore and the critical role it has played in the development of the nation. The history and challenges faced over the years by Singapore educators attempting to implement this program of nation building is reviewed and a number of policy speeches of the day are analysed. Questions as to its ongoing adaption to find relevance for the new generation of school educators are posed and insights offered from the perspective of an academic teaching leadership and policy issues at the National Institute of Education to the next generation of Singapore school teachers and leaders.

Introduction

In only 52 years of independence, Singapore has successfully built and developed its economy to become one of the most successful developing nations in the world (Goh, 2005). While most of the world suffered through a recent global economic crisis, life in Singapore went on as normal and barely skipped a beat. Singapore’s leadership acknowledged many years ago that it’s economic policy alone was insufficient to drive the economy towards the challenging targets which had been set. Early in the nation’s history, the role played by education was recognized as a critical element in achieving economic competitive advantage (Porter, 1990), and increasingly so against the backdrop of a knowledge-driven and globally connected economic environment. In order that it might continue to enhance its national economic competitiveness in the global market, Singapore became increasingly dependent on how their citizenry could enhance their know-how and market this to global market (Drucker, 1993; Ohmae, 1990).

Tan and Ng (2008, p73) posit that, "Singapore's education is and has been driven by pragmatic considerations". In 1965, the literacy rate in Singapore was 60%, with only three out of 100 high school students progressing to university. The figures 40 years later are a literacy rate of 94%, with one in five high school students going on to university (Goh, 2005). The government has been constantly reviewing and revamping its education system with the aims of enhancing its economic competitiveness in the global environment with concomitant education reform initiatives offering the required momentum to the system. A number of education policy initiatives were rolled out in a in a bid to foster greater creativity and innovation in students, those very skills seen to be wonting in the Singaporean collective competencies.

The then prime minister Lee Hsien Loong in 1997 stated that:

I just told you how the payoff on education is going up and, therefore, this is the best way to level up our society. Our aim is to give every child a top-rate education. Therefore, our emphasis is on the quality of all schools in Singapore, including all of the neighbourhood schools and not just the top schools (Lee, 1997).”
In order to achieve the national objectives of both excellence in education and sense of nationalism, a policy of National Education was introduced in 1997. It sought to operationalize this policy through:

- Teaching about Singapore's nation-building successes against the odds;
- Fostering Singaporean identity, pride and self-respect;
- Understanding Singapore's unique developmental challenges, constraints and vulnerabilities; and
- Instilling core values, such as meritocracy and multiracialism, as well as the will to prevail, in order to ensure Singapore's continued success (Lee, 1997).

**National Education Policy Initiatives**

As part of the initial teaching training and as an on-going set of directives, the prime minister called upon each Singaporean educator to promote these six key National Education messages:

1. Singapore is our homeland; this is where we belong;
2. We must preserve racial and religious harmony;
3. We must uphold meritocracy and incorruptibility;
4. No one owes Singapore a living;
5. We must ourselves defend Singapore; and
6. We have confidence in our future (Ministry of Education, 1997).

A part of the National Education approach, the policy of “Thinking Schools, Learning Nation (TSLN)”, was unveiled as an initiative and launched in 1997 which would provide a vision to offer guidance and context for the educators. Prime Minister Lee, then Deputy Prime Minister, made the following remarks in relation to the new path being forged by TSLN.

How do we judge the success of our education system? Not just by the number of A's our students get in major national examinations, or by the high standing of our students in international comparisons of science and mathematics achievements, although these are important. Equally important is the quality of the people the education system produces — their integrity, character, and intelligence: their attitude towards work, their ability to be team-players and their sense of responsibility and commitment to society. This is the traditional Asian concept of education, embracing balanced development of the whole personality moral, cognitive, physical, social and aesthetic. The "Thinking Schools Learning Nation" vision requires us to re-think our formula for educational success (Lee, 1997).

The initiative, while updated, clarified and modified over the years, remains as Singapore education’s defining vision since its inception. In 2003, a set of “Desired Outcomes of Education” was identified and announced to support the educators’ continued efforts towards achieving the TSLN vision. While this policy statement contained a number of directions deemed of great import, the focus was firmly on the spirit of "Innovation and Enterprise" (I&E). The Education Minister at the time, Tharman Shanmugaratnam, described I&E as a "critical part of TSLN" (Tan & Ng, 2005, p53).

The policy direction was motivated by the need to prepare Singaporean students to meet the demand and challenges of the increasingly competitive global economy by encouraging a “mindset and outlook of creativity, initiatives and self-reliance” (Tan & Ng, 2005, p42). The emphasis was for educators to attempt to imbue students with a spirit of inquiry and
intellectual curiosity, a willingness to do things differently, and a resilience and ruggedness of character. So armed, it is hoped that the new generation of Singaporean would be better able to generate new knowledge, identify opportunities and possess the courage to persevere in the face of new challenges.

**Resilience**

Goh (1995) discussed how Japanese children are taught to cope with earthquakes, while Dutch youngsters learn about the vulnerability of their polders, or low-lying areas. Singapore children by contrast need to be taught the challenges of living with a small land area, limited territorial sea and air space, and a dependence on imported water and oil. Students are coming to realize that years of continuous growth does not necessarily mean that it is their divine right to enjoy a high-quality life. One of the roles of educators is one of inculcating in the students the values of being able to cooperate, share and care for others, so that they will be more resilient and help one another during times of need. The students have to possess ample knowledge of Singapore and its history, and develop a love for the country from a young age, for it is they who will drive Singapore to greater heights, and they who will be counted on to defend the nation in times of need. Whatever success is enjoyed in Singapore today has been the fruit of their forefather's labor and to a certain extent the current generation. Speaking to Singaporean educators currently in the system, a common concern expressed is that as the nation's only natural resource is "people", they and future generations need to continue to work hard or everything fought for in the past might fall easily fall apart.

Developing resilience is certainly an issue for a generation who has never been through difficult times of the severity experienced by its founding fathers, a mere one generation removed. Tan & Ng (2008:74) state that "the current generation below the age of 35 has grown up accustomed to strong economic growth each year, and they take their security and success for granted. Therefore they are less willing to make sacrifices for the benefit of others in society. They are more worried about their individual and family's welfare and success, not their community or society's well-being." Tharman (2004, p3) went on explain that:

"...what is it that is new that we need to prepare our young for, in the future. The most obvious change is that it is now a much more interconnected world than it has ever been. And the pace of these interconnections has also increased. China and India alone, are recasting the global economic landscape in fundamental ways... it's not just about low cost. It's not just the fact that places like China and India are much cheaper than the developed world, or cities like us. It's also the fact that they are concentrating their best and most energetic talents in the key cities..."

However, in today's advanced technological age, the children are able to access the internet with ease and they are well-aware of other countries which they might compare with Singapore. According to Tan & Ng (2008), "these intangible factors will be what remakes Singapore, and allows Singapore to stay relevant". To attain the Desired Outcomes of Education through the implementation of I&E, the Education Ministry reviews the school curriculum at all levels of education which encompasses both learning and teaching approaches. As highlighted by Ng, 2005b, there are "teething issues to be addressed and refinements to be made, both in policy and in practice" in order for I&E to flourish in the examination-driven culture where academic results still ranked in top priority in Singapore for both educators and other stakeholders such as parents.
Building Innovation & Enterprise

Hargreaves (2003) believes that in order for schools leaders and teachers "to promote the spirit of I&E among students, they need to model the right attitude and qualities". The education system in Singapore has always focused on the acquisition of factual knowledge from the past. According to the former Education Minister Teo Chee Hian (Teo, 1998, p25), "we will need to shift the focus to creative thinking skills instead of just being followers, the young must be prepared to experiment, to make mistakes, to learn and to innovate, in order to be leaders in their own fields". The shift in this new paradigm would mean that teachers need to reflect on their existing teaching pedagogies and think of new ways of teaching, collaborating with their peers and inventing new ways of sparking off this culture of inquiry learning that we want to see among the students. Tan & Ng (2005) also state that "teachers have to explore new methods of teaching to spark off questioning in the classroom or to excite the students to explore or think through issues for themselves". Thus, one of the most critical tasks for teachers is to be innovative in the teaching and learning process. According to Walker and Walker (1998), "teachers are therefore caught in a dilemma between the push for innovation and the pull of the familiar".

In order to implement I&E in schools, school leaders need to be role models of innovation and entrepreneurship so as to be able to spearhead the initiatives in school while managing to fall within the guidance and parameters defined by MOE. School Leaders need to consider ways of inspiring teachers and students with a vision which they have articulated, and designing the kind of school experience that they want to provide within their schools. Teachers could then in turn help the school leaders to see how they could realise that vision. This big-picture approach would help teachers look beyond the everyday challenges they face. It is important to note that teachers will only believe in the initiative and be galvanized into action when their leaders truly advocate and embody the spirit of I&E.

Challenges

A challenge facing the successful implementation of I&E is that cynicism may set in if there is any discrepancy between the school leaders' word and their deeds as teachers may then perceive I&E as yet another fad to satisfy the requirements of the policy. Tan & Ng (2005), state that I&E may consequently "end up as an exercise of form without substance" (p45). Therefore, failure by these school leaders to recognise the importance and significance of the I&E spirit may pose a risk as some school leaders and their staff in trying to satisfy the requirements of the policy may choose to task only certain members of the school to be involved in I&E initiatives rather that engaging the whole teaching body. As a result, instead of bringing across innovation in the classroom to benefit the students' learning outcomes, there may be seen as stand-alone tasks which have little impact on the students' learning experience.

The greatest challenge for both school leaders and teachers to attain those desired outcomes of education lies in the need to promote I&E in schools and yet produce or maintain their good academic results. As some school leaders and teachers do not perceive a positive correlation between I&E and academic results, they therefore either outwardly express concern or quietly resist through non-participation. In practical terms, schools still need to compete with one another in order to break into or remain in the desired band, in spite of the shift from ranking schools based on exact academic scores to banding schools with similar academic performance. It is not possible to ignore the fact that schools are still reliant on academic performance as a yardstick or measurement of their success. Indeed, performance bonuses, promotion and sought after postings are dependent upon their perceived success on a range of criteria, and academic standing of their students remains a
very important element. Moreover, the existing performance-oriented social psyche presents another challenge to school leaders and teachers to innovate within the confines of their core teaching structures.

Many of the parents still have a strong mindset of using quantitative method as a measure of academic success. They might then question “why change a teaching strategy that brings so much examination success?” (Tan & Ng, 2005). Thus, despite efforts to redefine educational success, one cannot rule out the fact that schools are still reliant on academic performance as a yardstick of success. This implies that schools and teachers are still preoccupied with delivering tangible examination results at the end of the day. Therefore, the implementation of I&E in school will have to take into account that "the education system is an open system that is deeply influenced by the wide societal culture and vice versa” (Tan & Ng, 2008).

Lastly, changing teaching pedagogy entails a complex process. According to Tan & Ng (2008), "it is not a straightforward matter for teachers to switch from traditional teaching to new processes and change lifelong habits in order to improve their teaching, even if the new curriculum or pedagogical approach is cascaded to the teachers through briefing and training” (p.66). Lui (2007) states that "there is a need to understand better the impediments to teacher innovation" and acknowledged the fact that "there are many individual, departmental and school factors that need to be addressed before I&E can be achieved system-wide".

Tan (2003, p.53) believes that "It is by no means the case that policy implementation and outcomes are unproblematic and uncontroversial". As is the case with most education policies, there are problems and controversies that may arise as schools attempt to attain these two desired outcomes. Even with the introduction of the Ability-Driven-Education (ADE), the education system remains very much result-oriented. Students have to ensure that they do well in their examinations. The mindset of going to well-known elite schools and eventually, to top universities, is firmly built in them.

Implications

In 1965, Singapore defiantly embraced independence while surrounded by potentially unstable and hostile nations. The focus and determination borne of these circumstances, together with Confucian values which emphasise hard work and filial loyalty, have helped Singapore transform into the advanced democratic society that it is today. However, the question remains whether Singapore can make the next shift from educated and hard working to an innovative and enterprising nation.

Singapore society puts its children under tremendous pressure to perform well in schools which results in most students being able to attain remarkable academic progress but unfortunately found wanting in other departments. In addition to the pressures of their normal school workload, the students enroll in co-curricular activities, tuition and piano lessons, among a plethora of other choices which demand their attention. Students are left with very little time to do other important things that are not tested in exams. For example, one of the stated goals of NE is “Knowing and loving Singapore”, however, as this is not an examination module it is not given priority. Learning merely for the sake of examinations would appear to be the mindset of a great many students. As a consequence, students are becoming more narrowly focused rather than holistically educated.

Singapore students often seem to lack the essential human skills such as co-operation, sharing and caring for others. Parents set the expectation of success early on in the student's learning journey, most students are under tremendous pressure to succeed and they might view their classmates as their direct rivals, a threat to their own academic progress. In addition, a recent survey has revealed that 4 out of 5 students in Singapore suffer from a lack
of sleep (Khalik, 2009). This troubling statistic reveals that the students are too occupied in their pursuit for good academic results and thus neglecting their health.

In spite of the apparent preference of Singaporeans to maintain the current approach of working hard to achieve academic excellence rather than develop a more holistic range of skills, the MOE has remained determined to achieve transformation through its TSLN Policy. The policy itself is regularly being revamped and new initiatives are being launched to help maintain relevance and achieve its objectives. For example, in 2005 MOE announced the establishment of two initiatives, the Programme for School Based Excellence and the Niche Programme, with the purpose of providing a more diverse landscape with many different schools to enrich the educational experience of Singapore school children. Examples of Niche Programmes include robotics, rock-climbing and business and enterprise. The Outram Secondary School, which recently gained Niche Programme status for business and enterprise, integrates concepts like entrepreneurship and financial literacy throughout the school’s curriculum (MOE, 2011). Provided MOE persists with its vision and rewards and recognizes those students and schools who embrace the new approach, it is anticipated that with time the Singapore culture and values will shift to recognize the value they offer in terms of building a nation of innovative, life-long learners.

Other developing nations look to Singapore to learn from their approach to education transformation. While the general principles outlined above are presumably valid for all countries, it is doubtful whether others will be able to achieve the same quantum shift that Singapore has achieved. This is not only to do with the drive and determination exhibited by Singapore’s MOE. It also has to do with the size and complexity of the challenge at hand; Singapore is a nation of 5 million on an island 20km by 40km, and despite being a multicultural society with three main race groups it is remarkably homogeneous. The education system is well funded, for example the Niche Programmes schools discussed above each received $150,000 over 3 years to support the establishment of the program within the school. Finally, the government itself is very stable and, having been in power the past 42 years and recently elected for a further term, they do not suffer the distractions of shifts in education policy that inevitably come about with a change in government.

Conclusion

Nearly all teachers in Singapore must first undertake their training at the National Institute of Education (NIE) in Singapore. As the sole trainer of teachers for government schools, academics at NIE teaching policy courses are in a unique position to see firsthand the reaction to NE and the response to the leadership which mandated its implementation.

Students teachers will at times comment that as part of the national education expectation of teachers, rather than enjoy a public holiday they will be obliged to undertake school based activities on: a) Total Defense Day, the day of commemoration of Singapore's surrender under British colonial rule to the Japanese in 1942; b) Racial Harmony Day, the day of remembrance for the outbreak of inter-ethnic riots in 1964; c) International Friendship Day, when the importance maintaining cordial relations with neighboring countries is celebrated and; d) National Day, when Singapore’s political independence was gained in 1965. In some quarters they wonder whether this mandated sense of national pride achieves the original stated purpose set. Whether they are coerced or see it as a good career move to be seen to volunteer, is a matter of conjecture.

However, what is measured gets rewarded, what is rewarded gets done. Teachers, along with all other Singaporean civil servants are appraised under a system called Enhanced Performance Management System (EPMS). If a teacher is given the choice of giving additional classes in preparation for exams at the expense of Nationa Education classes, Civics and Moral Education for example, for many the choice becomes an easy one. As the
high student marks impact the school’s standing, hence for those teachers whose students perform well, there is much to be gained in EPMS terms. Stakeholders, primarily parents, typically drive for top marks for their children, where this has to be traded off for missing out on being offered an enhanced sense of national pride; the tangible easily wins out over the abstract.

The challenge for the country’s leadership therefore is to create relevance for the new generation of teachers, who in turn will promote this to their young charges. As much as the typical Singaporean is fiercely patriotic, the doctrine of Kiasu (Hokkien Chinese expression to suggest fear of losing out to someone else, or almost a ‘dog in the manager’ attitude) seems to dominate Singapore life. Nowhere is this more obvious than when it comes to citizens maximizing the potential of that which they value above all else, the ongoing academic success of their offspring.

References

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