SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING MATTERS
Newsletter of ENSEC (European Network on Social and Emotional Competence)
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Welcome!

On behalf of myself, my four co-chairs and our two founding chairs, I would like to welcome you to the 12th issue of the ENSEC newsletter.

László Kasik reports about research in Hungary on avoidance-focused approaches to problem-solving; and Markus Talvio presents from International research of the Lions Quest Evaluation group, both are ENSEC coordinators for their country. Judith Hebron brings insight into a new research project on school transitions of children with autism spectrum conditions, and Jenna Goodgame's research approaches children's and families adoption experiences from an arts approach.

As usual we supply you with information around conferences and events from ENSEC member countries. Get excited: we will be celebrating our 10th anniversary at the 6th Biannual ENSEC conference with a very special venue!

We like to introduce another country coordinator of our team. Get inspired and join the crew!

Special thanks goes to our country coordinators and members who have contributed to this issue enriching our network with valuable information, and for inspiring discussion and reflection.

We would appreciate your comments on the matters discussed in this newsletter, please bearing in mind that the work of ENSEC is being done by chairs who are all volunteers, and on top of busy jobs.

We would love some interesting features for the next edition. Please send any contributions to me (Carmen_huser@web.de) as a Word document so that it can be cut and pasted – no logos please. We have started to accept longer features to share richer, detailed knowledge throughout the network. However, this is a newsletter and not a journal – so no long academic papers accepted!

Thank you!

6th ENSEC Conference: Diversity

Date: 7-9 June 2017
Venue: Stockholm, Sweden

We will celebrate ENSEC's 10th anniversary by cruising between to capitals, Stockholm and Helsinki.

The 6th ENSEC conference will take a diversity perspective on children and youth, including dimensions such as children's sense of connection, inclusion, and hope. We promise teachers, psychologists, social workers, public health workers, university students, and all kind of researchers, an amazing and exciting conference.

Proposals for participation can be submitted in the following formats:

- Paper (full paper or work-in-progress)
- Symposium or Panel Presentation
- Workshop
- Poster

Important deadlines:

- Call for papers - open from 31 August 2016 until 31 January, 2017
- Notification of acceptance - 28 February, 2017
- Registration - open until 30 April, 2017
- All presenters must register by 31 March 2017 to ensure publication of their abstract and a place in the Final Program

Örebro University, Sweden
The City of Gothenburg, Sweden
Conference organisers, Sweden

More information: https://www.oru.se/om-universitetet/konferenser/ensec/

Date: 21– 22 September 2016

Venue: Hotel Westin, Zagreb, Croatia

ENABLE aims to prevent bullying and cyberbullying in learning and leisure environments and contribute to the well-being of children aged 11 to 14. ENABLE does this through focusing on establishing Peer Support schemes in schools and encouraging social and emotional skills development (SEL). Find out more about the network and project behind ENABLE: http://enable.eun.org/

The conference will mark the end of the 2-year project and will bring together stakeholders, industry, policy makers and teachers from across the 5 European partner countries. The conference will introduce the resources created as part of ENABLE, and serve as a forum for debate and information sharing around the role we can all play in decreasing the effects of bullying.

More information:

https://www.eiseverywhere.com/ehome/index.php?eventid=183640&

Be quick! Registration ends: 10 August 2016!!!

Ellie Cooper | The Diana Award

Projects Coordinator

The Diana Award is one of the six European partners who have co-created the ENABLE (eliminate bullying in learning and leisure environments) project.

www.diana-award.org.uk

Twitter: @DianaAward @AntiBullyingPro

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thedianaaward

CADin III International Congress:
Learning, Behaviour, Emotions in Changing Times

Date: 20-22 October 2016
Venue: ISCTE, IUL, Lisbon, Portugal

This conference considers changing life contexts, new forms of socialization, entertainment and learning in a world of progressing technology, globalization and consumer culture. These rapid changes impact parents, children and adolescents, education professionals and mental health.

The CADIn invites you to participate in the III International Congress CADIn. We suggest you a dozen workshops and conferences for more than 20 national and international experts from areas as diverse as language disorders, autism, learning disabilities, ADHD, epilepsy, sleep or non-invasive neuro-modulation. With an eclectic offering of topics and speakers, this event was carefully planned to meet a diverse audience of educators, therapists, health professionals and caregivers. Join us in this very special for all who care for special people celebration!

More information: http://congressointernacional2016.cadin.net/en

PREPSEC Conference 2016: Social Emotional Competencies. Pathways to Tolerance

Date: 20-21 October 2016
Venue: Wroclaw, Poland

Coping with social diversity has never been such an important skill as today. The Prepare curriculum is a tool to support those who work with youth in order for all to gain understanding and tolerance in a changing community. The PREPSEC International Conference will provide opportunity for teachers, administrators, and youth care professionals to see the potential of social emotional competency training.

More information: http://prepsec.no/conference-2016/

SEBDA 2017 National Conference: Social Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties (SEMH) at home and school: Where are we now?

Date: 23 – 24 March 2017
Venue: The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Newcastle, England

Keynotes include Professor Dame Sue Bailey, Professor Brahm Norwich, and Professor Barry Carpenter

For further information about the work of SEBDA and forthcoming events please see www.sebda.org or contact siri.howie@sebda.org

Avoidance forms among adolescents

Authored by László Kasik

Avoidance as style of social problem solving basically bears a basis of negative orientation (D'Zurilla et al., 2002). In the case of avoidance, it is not the facing of the social problem and one's aspiration to solving it is characteristic, but the postponement of the dealing with the social problem and its solution, and not solving the social problem altogether in the background of which mostly lies the small degree of taking responsibility and the aspiration of decreasing the unpleasant feeling or thought of the social problem. Avoidance, in essence, assumes a negative orientation towards problems, problematic situations and the solution, and possesses a negative emotion-thought basis (D'Zurilla et al., 2002; Frauenknecht & Black, 2009). The avoidance forms measured by the questionnaires mostly make up one factor; therefore, they neither provide a detailed picture of individual forms separately nor their connections. With most questionnaires it is only possible to measure avoidance that manifests in one's behaviour; there are less tools available to measure cognitive and emotional avoidance (e.g. Roskos et al., 2010; Ubinger et al., 2012).

The earlier Hungarian results of the cross-sectional and longitudinal studies show that avoidance is less typical of nursery school pupils than of 8-18-year-old students (Gáspár & Kasik, 2015; Gál & Kasik, 2015; Kasik, 2014, 2015; Kasik & Gál, 2016). The aim of our present work was to develop a questionnaire (Avoidance Questionnaire for Adolescents, AQA) which can be used from adolescence onwards and test it among 15- and 18-year-old students. Our aim was to become able to measure most forms of avoidance as well as to shed light on the system of correlations of how these relate to some sub-processes of social problem solving. Based on the revelatory and the confirmatory factor analysis, the final 11-factor 42-statement AQA is able to measure problem-solving in both age groups with regards to (1) Negative thoughts, feelings, physical symptoms, (2) Negative self-efficiency, insolvability, (3) Prevention, (4) Annulation, (5) Neglecting, (6) Expectation, diversion, (7) Mulling, (8) Postponement/Strengthening up, (9) Stopping/Subordination, (10) Asking for help, and (11) Problem-solving due to external pressure. In the case of six factors out of the 11 (Prevention; Expectation, diversion; Negative self-efficiency, insolvability; Postponement/Strengthening up; Neglecting; Mulling), there is a significant difference between 15- and 18-year-olds. There is only one higher value in the case of one factor among the 15-year-olds –

Prevention –, therefore preventing problematic situations and experiencing them is more typical of them.

To examine the convergent and discriminative validity of the AQA, we used the Social Problem Solving Inventory–Revised (SPSI–R; D'Zurilla et al., 2002). Most sub-processes show positive correlation with the Negative orientation, Impulsivity and Avoidance factors of the SPSI–R; the connection between Positive orientation and Postponement/Strengthening up and Mulling is considerable in addition to Asking for help and Problem solving due to external pressure which are in a negative way with the Avoidance factor of SPSI–R.

The correlation values significantly helped the more accurate interpretation of the values of the factor analysis based on which it is useful to not only evaluate the forms of avoidance according to their positive and negative nature but to understand them as a process. Based on the collected research data, in terms of both the measurement-evaluation of avoidance and for the purpose developing a programme, it is vital to distinguish between begun (deals with the problem), not begun (does not deal with the problem at all; can also be called total avoidance), suspended (does not continue avoidance, chooses another mode of solution) and aborted (stops the begun avoidance, does not choose another mode of solution; can be called stopper) avoidance.

The data gathered from the research conducted with the questionnaire may provide significant help in enabling a more complex understanding of the nature of avoidance and it may also form the basis of developing problem solving and, what is more, avoidance-focused help and development school programmes.

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Primary-secondary school transition for young people with autism spectrum conditions

Authored by Dr Judith Hebron (Manchester Institute of Education, University of Manchester, UK)

The move from primary to secondary school involves a number of challenges and changes for all young people. Despite this, research indicates that negative effects, such as reduced academic motivation and lower self-esteem, are transitory for most children (Bloyce & Frederickson, 2012). However, for young people with autism spectrum conditions (ASC), this educational transition may present particular difficulties. The child-centered environment of a primary school can be difficult to replicate in a secondary school where children have multiple subject staff whose awareness and professional understanding of ASC may vary. In adjusting to secondary school, children are also expected to form new social relationships in unfamiliar settings and adapt to changes in routine, both of which can be major challenges for pupils with ASC. Nevertheless, to date, there has been limited research in this area.

This recently completed research project therefore aimed to explore in detail the move from primary to secondary school (referred to simply as 'transition' from here on) for young people with ASC. Thirty-eight students with a diagnosis of ASC and twenty-two typically-developing (TD) students, their parents and teachers completed

questionnaires before, during, and after the transition: in the final term of Y6 (primary school), at the end of the first term of Y7 (first year of secondary school), during the third term of Y7, and at the end of the first term of Y8. Participants were drawn from mainstream and special schools across North West England and North Wales. Questionnaires on school connectedness (*Psychological Sense of School Membership,* Goodenow, 1993*)* and hopes for the future (*Children's Hope Scale*, Snyder et al., 1997) were conducted with students, while a quality of life measure (*KIDSCREEN*, Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2008) was used with all participant groups. In addition, there were ten ASC case studies, with students, their parents and teachers involving interviews at each time-point.

The project findings are broadly optimistic, with most of the young people with ASC experiencing a positive transition. This does not mean that transition was successful for every student, or that students did not encounter significant challenges along the way. However, the findings indicate that a successful transition is possible with appropriate preparation and support.

In terms of questionnaire findings, the short-term negative trend in school connectedness found in previous literature was reported by the TD students, but those with ASC reported improvements from Y6 into Y7. Students in the TD group tended to give more positive responses about school than those in the ASC group in Y6, but the gap had narrowed significantly by the end of Y7. Group differences were often apparent in the Quality of Life questionnaires, with students in the ASC group generally having lower scores than those in the TD group. However, the gap between the two groups reduced over time in most domains.

The case study findings offered evidence for factors that influence a positive transition. In particular, the quality of transition planning and on-going support had a significant impact on students' success, with a range of strategies used by primary and secondary schools. Parents valued support before and during the process in terms of knowing what to expect and who to contact. They were understandably anxious about the transition and often more so than their sons and daughters. Positive home-school links were therefore vital in facilitating transition. When this happened, potential issues could be pre-empted or addressed early. Student support needed to be individualised and reviewed on a regular basis. Support requirements sometimes changed substantially and swiftly when moving to secondary school, leading to increases in provision (and funding difficulties).

Knowledge of the student was crucial as well as an understanding of the diverse nature of autism. Homework could be extremely challenging for some young people, as they felt that school and home were separate environments, as well as being very tired by the end of the day. In many cases new friendships were formed, and reflected finding students with similar interests from the new peer group. There was no apparent increase in bullying for most students, despite some incidents. However, more needs to be known about what happens beyond Y7 for young people with ASC as they enter adolescence, especially in terms of well-being. This was highlighted in the questionnaires where there was often a decrease in scores in early Y8. This

might reflect the onset of puberty and adolescence, but less is known about the trajectory of students with ASC aged 12 to 16.

Full and summary reports have been produced for schools, as well as student feedback. These are available on request. There are also a number of forthcoming publications from the project. To be kept informed of these as they are published please contact judith.hebron@manchester.ac.uk (and from 1st September 2016 j.hebron@leedstrinity.ac.uk).

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International Lions Quest Evaluation Project

Markus Talvio PhD, University of Helsinki, Finland. markus.talvio@helsinki.fi

What is the Lions Quest?

Lions Quest program aims to support positive youth development in school settings through health promotion, strengthening social and emotional learning and emphasising service. In addition to teaching and studying SEL skills in the classroom, LQ promotes the creation of a safe learning environment, and encourages creating and maintaining solid connections to pupils' families and other networks associated with the school and its pupils. LQ also encourages the entire school community to learn in order to serve others.

To maintain the quality of LQ, teachers must participate in the LQ teaching workshop which provides teachers with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement LQ in the classroom setting. Our goal was to investigate the possible benefits for teachers from the Lions Quest teaching workshops in different countries.

The Phases

Phase I. The Phase I was a start for a larger evaluation project on the outcomes of LQ. To be able to compare them in different countries, it was essential first to compare the perceptions on LQ goals of the LQ trainers and the LQ country coordinators in different countries. Only if their perceived goals on LQ were similar in different countries could we compare the outcomes of the LQ training later on. Overall, the results indicated that the LQ implementers' answers were quite similar in different countries. In terms of their perceptions on both the goals of the teachers' workshop and the goals of the LQ program for the pupils there was not much variation. It would seem that the process of LQ implementation was quite successful in maintaining the original goals in the LQ curricula: the perceptions of LQ goals and the official LQ goals were similar internationally. It is thus possible to compare the outcomes of LQ in different countries (Talvio & Lonka, 2013).

Phase II. The intention of the Phase II was to develop and test a training evaluation model of the International LQ Evaluation Project. The participants of the study were teachers from Finland. There were 155 members of the school staff that participated in the LQ training. The comparison group consisted of 65 teachers. In addition, there was a second comparison group comprising of 46 teachers and other members of the school staff.

The study was a pre-post quasi-experimental intervention study. Teachers participating in LQ rated the goals as more important and relevant after receiving training. Furthermore, participants from the intervention group felt more competent in skills related to the LQ goals than the comparison groups. In addition, it appeared that the evaluation model of the study can be used in measuring the outcomes of teachers' LQ workshop (Talvio, Berg, Ketonen, Komulainen, & Lonka, 2015).
In addition, participants' perceived coherence of the LQ goals were explored. The LQ intervention resulted in a significantly increased coherence in the 'safe environment' and 'promoting SEL' variable pairs among training participants compared with the comparison group. Participating in the LQ training did not, however, increase the coherence significantly with regards to the 'help others' or 'healthy life' variable pairs compared with the comparison group (Talvio, Berg, Komulainen, & Lonka, 2016).

In the qualitative study the answers of the open ended questions were analyzed and the categories were established based on both theory and data. The participants showed more knowledge of the topics taught after the training and were also more capable of applying their knowledge to typical situations related to teacher profession (Berg, Talvio, & Lonka, 2015).

Phase III focuses on surveying on 1000 teachers (depending on data collection procedures) and other school staff that will participate in the Lions Quest course in (100 participants in each country) ten countries.

In addition to the 100 participants who will be surveyed in each country, there will also be a comparison group of a maximum of 100-150 members (depending on the data collection procedures used) of school staff who have not participated in the Quest training in each participating country.

The results from Finland, Italy, Japan and Lithuania indicated that the teachers perceived the importance of the LQ goals more important after participating in the LQ teachers' workshop. In addition, they felt more competence in implementing the LQ content in their classrooms. Further, teachers valued the LQ higher after the workshop. In the comparison group, however, no changes were found. These results will be published during the autumn 2016 in a peer-reviewed international journal.

During the *Phase IV* of the International LQ Evaluation Project each participating country will be provided a seminar where the results and recommendations will be presented and the future actions will be planned. In the Phase III, the experiences of the participating countries will be collected and overall recommendations about the actions regarding the development of the LQ will take place. This stage is, of course, also open to countries not participating in the research project.

Research group

Research supervisor:	Kirsti Lonka, Professor, Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki, Finland
Research coordinator:	Osmo Harju, Lions Quest, Finland
Principal researcher:	Markus Talvio, Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki, Finland
Doctoral student:	Minna Berg, Department of Teacher Education, University of Helsinki, Finland

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Voices of Adoption: Creative arts approaches for exploring the narratives and experiences of adopted children and young people and their families.

Authored by:

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This qualitative research project applies a creative arts and media approach to document and present children, young people and their families' views and experiences of adoption. In 2014 the Department of Education in their report 'Adoption: Research Priorities and Questions' highlighted the importance of the need for further understanding of 'the child's journey' to support the direction of future policy and practice.

With this aim, the project seeks to enable participants to express their personal experiences of adoption through constructed images using art, collage, photography and digital media. The use of the creative arts, and visual media as a potential enabling research method has gathered pace over recent years (Bagnoli, 2009; CWDC, 2010, Kara, 2015;) particularly with previously considered 'hard to reach' groups. According to Gauntlett (2007) creative arts approaches can 'provide insights into how individuals present themselves, understand their own life story and connect with their social world'.

Previous research on the impact of adoption on children, young people and families has variously focused on the adoption process itself (Minnis and Walker, 2012), post adoption issues and support (Selwyn et al 2014), the challenges faced on the transition from public care to adoption (Rushton, 2004) and the particular experiences of looked-after children (Thomas, 2013).

Further studies have focused specifically on the psychological and emotional experiences of adopted children and young people (Hindle and Shulman, 2008; Reppold, 2010 and Schoettle, 2000). Studies directly exploring the narratives and voice of adopted children (Minnis and Walker, op.cit; Children's Workforce Development Council, 2010) have identified a range of issues related to attachment and loss, identity, self-esteem and social relationships.

There are 4 phases of the project involving participants in a range of creative activities. The initial phase participants will be asked to submit a self-constructed piece of artwork in the form of a postcard (either hardcopy or digital) with the broad subject of 'Adoption and Me'. The artwork will be reviewed and analysed to identify emerging key themes and issues and to document the range of imagery and metaphors used by participants to express their experiences. This will form the basis of an analytical 'thematic map' (Boyatzis, 1998) to inform the following phases of the research that will involve extended art work, creative group work and recording of narratives.

The aim of this research project is to evaluate the value and effectiveness of a creative arts approach to document and record children, young people and their families' experiences of adoption and to identify indicators for future practice, particularly for counselling and therapeutic interventions.

If you interested to hear more about any aspect of the project or wish to keep in touch with its development, then contact Jenna Goodgame.

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In this issue, we would like to introduce another member of our country coordinators team.

Australia: Dr Michelle Nemec

I am pleased to introduce myself as a country coordinator for Australia. I have diverse experience across education jurisdictions and an interest in how social-emotional skills can enhance one's experience of schooling. My doctoral studies included a major focus on how social-emotional learning is vital at all levels of the school community. Currently, I am working in a school as a teacher with responsibility for teaching and learning. In Australia, we are part of a changing educational landscape – all Australian teachers are moving towards a process of accreditation. This means that all pre-2004 teachers will need to be accredited in the teaching profession from 1 January 2018. Inherent in the Australian Professional Teaching Standards and the Principal Standard is a focus on social-emotional skills as a key element of relational and wellbeing skills. It seems everywhere I look I see the value and role of social-emotional skills for students and teachers being emphasised.

We are still looking for more volunteers for country coordinators from other countries, so please email Carmen Carmen_huser@web.de if you are interested in joining the ENSEC country coordinator team.

Multiculturism, Higher Education and Intercultural Communication. Developing Strenghts-Based Narratives for Teaching and Learning.

Spiteri, Damien (2016). *Multiculturism, Higher Education and Intercultural Communication. Developing Strenghts-Based Narratives for Teaching and Learning*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Reviewed by Stephen Miller, Oakwood Friends School and Marist College

Damian Spiteri's Multiculturalism, Higher Education, and Intercultural Communication is a timely book; around the world, colleges and universities are trying to figure out what it means to function in a globalized world of migration, refugees and cultural collision. This book is exhaustive in its research, and comprehensive in its approach, about the topics of multiculturalism and Multicultural Education (MCE).

The Maltese context of this book is both compelling and interesting. As a long-time teacher in Malta, Spiteri uses stories which track recent demographic changes to illustrate the theories in MCE. Following the same cultural case study through a number of different theories in education is illuminating, bringing specificity from the actual classroom practice.

One notion Spiteri brings up at the beginning of the book is particularly intriguing: here, he makes the claim that "They were being given education for a multicultural school, that is to create that school, to make that school exist." This captures the difficulty of creating the schools we want by educating the students as if those schools already existed; like in Plato's *kallipolis*, we may need the perfectly just city to raise the philosopher who could create the perfectly just city. Although Plato frames this as a paradox, it more rightfully serves as a challenge. In this particular case, the question becomes: *what can we do to create the kinds of multicultural institutions needed for the genuinely multicultural education that can produce the kinds of teachers and lectures who can offer this education?* This book offers a lot of insight into both what the challenges are here, and what kinds of considerations, institutions will need to take into account, to bring this about.

Overall, the book raises a number of questions that have no clear answers, questions that only can be answered through political conversation. These key areas centre around a few core ideas.

The Source of Values: The beginning premise of Multicultural Education concerns a high value placed on tolerance of difference. Questions about the meta-ethical values at work in MCE include the source of the liberal values, if there are values, practices and beliefs that are "beyond the pale." How does a college or university offer openness to the opinions of all groups if some groups are committed to reducing the rights of others, and how can illiberal or conservative cultural beliefs and practices be understood in this regard?

Multiculturalism and Relativity: A number of different anecdotes in the book relate to cultural differences in fundamental beliefs and epistemology. One of these relates to the status of witchcraft and magic. The other one concerns a rumour amongst some Hausa people that the author dismisses. In the first case, the book suggests we should take the claims of magic seriously; however, in the second, it begins with the assumption that the claims are false. The epistemological status of MCE remains uncertain. What standard can we employ to discern when a cultural practice is to be assumed incorrect, and when should we view it with sympathy?

The Meaning of Culture and Identity: One of the biggest themes here involves cultures, how they can be supported and understood. These questions relate to the meaning of culture and how multiple affiliations affect them. Multiculturalism often sees culture as stagnant and unchanging. How does cultural change and modernization fit in here? Are all different cultural beliefs equally valid? In regards to Sen's *fallacy of singular affiliation*, must a college or university accept all affiliations a student chooses; and must it, as an educational institution, do the work to understand what could be hundreds of sub-group and micro-affiliations?

Institutional Questions: A number of practical considerations came to mind while reading this book. Schools, just as colleges and universities, all have mission statements and declared goals, how does MCE handle the issue of mutually exclusive final ends? In practice, is there any limit to what final ends a student might have in entering a school system? Must every school accommodate all possible understandings of the purpose of education? How do we handle these final ends that appear to be so incommensurate? On a practical level, the suggestions here about what would make an effective MCE seem to require a lot of resources. In a context in which many college and university systems are both increasing class sizes and reducing staffing, causing lecturers to often teach in numerous institutions; how can MCE innovations be made in the face of diminishing resources? Finally, how much of a college's or university's traditions and history need to be revised to make it adequate for MCE, for instance, in the US. Currently, there are pressures for

Princeton University to remove Woodrow Wilson's name from buildings due to racist writings.

These are obviously a lot of questions. The greatest virtue of this book is that it prompts us to raise these. While the book doesn't attempt to answer them, it offers much sound advice for how institutions can view MCE as both a challenge and an opportunity. Here's hoping Damian Spiteri's humane orientation to teaching and lecturing catches on!