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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EC	European Commission
ESL	early school leaving
ESLer(s)	early school leaver(s)
ET 2020	European Commission ‚Education and Training 2020' work programme
EU	European Union
EURYDICE	Education Information Network in Europe
GPDS	ESL-Prevention Group (*Group de Prévention du Décrochage scholaire*)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SDT	Self-Determination Theory
SES	socio-economic status
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Study
TITA	Project Team cooperation to fight early school leaving: Training Innovative Tools and Actions

UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

Preface

Urška Štremfel and Maša Vidmar

Modern European society is beset by various problems. Early school leaving is regarded as being one of the most pressing. In the last two decades, it has been placed high on the European Union policy agenda and various promising solutions to the problem have been identified and policy, research and practical approaches to address it developed and implemented.

This scientific monograph, as part of the three interconnected monographs: Early school leaving: Contemporary European Perspectives, Early school leaving: Cooperation Perspectives, Early school leaving: Training Perspectives, may be seen as one of them.

Three monographs have been prepared as the scientific base within the TITA project (Team cooperation to fight early school leaving: Training, Innovative Tools and Actions). Each monograph covers in detail one of the three main pillars of the TITA approach – early school leaving, team cooperation and educators training. The three-year project forms part of the programme Erasmus+, Key Action 3 in whose framework the European Commission conducts policy experiments in order to test and improve policy implementation systems, structures and processes that have a potentially significant impact on the future EU policy agenda. The monograph offers valuable scientific insights into the topic of cooperation perspectives of early school leaving also to the wider interested research, policy and practice community in the EU and beyond.

We would like to express our gratitude to the many people who institutionally and personally supported us in preparing this monograph: to all those who talked things over, read, wrote, offered comments and assisted in the editing, proofreading and design. Special thanks go to our children Tija, Zarja and Jan for giving us the inner strength to start and complete this project.

1.0
introduction

1.1
Team Cooperation to Fight Early School Leaving: Training, Innovative Tools and Actions

Urška Štremfel and Maša Vidmar

Early school leaving (ESL) in the European Union (EU) is recognised as an urgent and serious problem for individuals and society as a whole. It represents the waste of both individual life opportunities and social and economic potential (European Parliament, 2011). In this context, reducing ESL is essential for achieving several key objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy. Decreasing it addresses the 'smart growth' aims by improving education and training levels as well as the 'inclusive growth' aims by targeting one of the biggest risk factors in unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. The Europe 2020 strategy therefore includes the headline target to bring the share of early school leavers (ESLers) (persons aged between 18 and 24 who leave education and training with only lower secondary education or less, and who are no longer in education and training) below 10% by 2020, from 14.4% in 2009. That EU 2020 headline target was also acknowledged as one of the five priority areas of the strategic framework for European cooperation on education and training (ET 2020).

Although considerable effort to tackle ESL at the levels of the EU and member states has already been made (not only in the ET 2020 framework, but also of its predecessor ET 2010), the 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of ET 2020 noted that the EU is not on track to meeting the headline ESL target by 2020. The Education Council (2011) confirmed that all of the efforts so far to address ESL have not been effective and efficient enough and that further and new

approaches are needed. Further, the European Commission (2011) recognised that, while the factors leading to ESL vary from country to country, the causes of ineffective policies can be boiled down to three typical issues: a) the lack of a comprehensive strategy; b) the lack of evidence-based policy-making; and c) insufficient prevention and early intervention measures. On that basis, the Education Council (2011) recommended the development of a framework for coherent, comprehensive cross-sectoral strategies and evidence-based policies against ESL so as to provide a range of school-wide and systemic policies that target different factors leading to ESL.

The Education Council invited the European Commission to support member states' strategies through the exchange of experience and good practices, and to facilitate effective peer learning, networking and experimentation with innovative approaches to measures aimed at reducing ESL and improving the educational outcomes of children and students from groups at risk of ESL (Education Council, 2011). Member states are thus supported in exploiting all opportunities of the common EU cooperation in the field, taking advantage of the existing and developing new tool kits, which will enable the EU as a whole to achieve the agreed target.

Taking the above EU initiatives into consideration, the TITA (Team cooperation to fight early school leaving: Training, Innovative Tools and Actions) project contributes to accomplishing the EU headline ESL target by addressing one of the key policy messages identifying the critical conditions for successful policies countering ESL (Thematic Working Group, 2013): to promote and support multi-professional teams in schools to address ESL by building on evidence-based policies and practices.

TITA's evidence-based approach to ESL

The TITA scientific base consists of three sections (European perspectives of ESL, Cooperation perspectives of ESL, Training perspectives of ESL) presented in three interconnected monographs. It was prepared in line with the European Commission's (2007) understanding of evidence-based education. The European Commission (ibid.) believes that such education enables the member states and EU institutions to identify the most effective education policies and practices, and allows for their effective implementation. Evidence-based education provides the foundations for modernising education systems. The improved use of knowledge that occurs as education policies and practices are developed in turn improves the quality of both the content of education policy and governance in the education field.

This means decision-making in the area of education must be strategically oriented towards improving education based on research and evidence. In the process, policy decision-makers, experts and stakeholders should join forces in the search for ways to develop new knowledge that will, based on high-quality education, contribute to the EU's economic competitiveness and social cohesion (ibid.: 12, 13).

The TITA project consortium brings together educational experts and researchers, policymakers and practitioners from European countries in a collaborative research and implementation process that enables the evidence-based approach to ESL to be fully realised. By identifying the main factors that trigger ESL and reviewing the phenomenon's characteristics at the national, regional and local level of the consortium countries, it provides an accurate understanding of the scope and reasons behind ESL; namely, the preconditions for establishing targeted and effective evidence-based policies and practices regarding ESL.[1]

TITA also considers the European Commission's (2011) recommendation that policy experiments be based on precise information in order to better target measures, monitor their development, while constantly adapting them and drawing policy lessons from their results. By providing in-depth information on the contextual factors of ESL in the member states making up the consortium, the TITA scientific base also takes into consideration Edwards and Downes' (2013: 47) thinking that "one implication of recognising the local sensitivity of interventions is the need for practitioners to work with data in order to make evidence-informed decisions about adjusting practices". Although Dale (2010) states that establishing the relative importance of factors, and the nature of the causal links and mechanisms, is a crucial step in enabling policymakers to formulate evidence-based, and possibly targeted, pre-emptive ESL measures, the TITA scientific base focuses more on describing and conceptualising new ways of

1 For example: a) the collection of evidence allows for the analysis of the biggest reasons underlying ESL for different groups of students, schools, and local, regional and national systems; b) the combination of data on ESL and contextual data (e.g. socio-economic information) can help in targeting measures and policies at different groups of students, as well as specific local, regional and national communities; c) gathering and analysing information on the motivation and non-cognitive skills of ESLers and their employment and career perspectives can also assist in the targeting of measures and policies; d) evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing policy measures aimed at curtailing ESL is an important basis for improving strategies and programmes for increasing pupils' chances of school success (Council, 2011).

working with ESLers than on assessing measurable outcomes of policy experiments (Edwards & Downes, 2013: 48).

Fields of TITA (scientific) backgrounds

The overriding goal of the TITA project is to support the implementation of innovative policy solutions at the institutional level to reduce ESL, in line with the priorities set out in Europe 2020 and ET 2020. By promoting and supporting multi-professional teams in schools, it provides scientific support, tools for actions and training to address ESL. Therefore, the project presents innovative responses to the generally identified problem of common EU cooperation in the field of education, and thereby addresses the European goals.

Promoting and supporting the development of multi-professional teams in schools at the EU level is identified as a key to successful strategies to cut ESL. To work on ESL with other professionals and to establish student-centred measures, education staff needs to understand ESL, the basic principles of multi-professional cooperation and develop or strengthen special skills. Accordingly, the TITA comprehensive scientific base provides a detailed evidence-based understanding of: a) early school leaving (as the core policy problem the TITA project addresses), presented in the monograph Early school leaving: Contemporary European Perspectives; b) cooperation (as a promising solution to reducing ESL), presented in this monograph and training (as a tool for arriving at solutions), presented in the monograph ESL: Training Perspectives.

Cooperation in tackling ESL can take different forms at the national, regional, local or school level (Thematic Working Group, 2013: 14). Horizontal coordination between different actors and the vertical coordination of different levels of government are equally important. The experiences of member states, comparative data and analytical research suggest the key issues for successful policies include the cross-sectoral nature of collaboration and the comprehensiveness of the approach. ESL is not simply a school issue and its causes need to be addressed across a range of social, youth, family, health, local community, employment and education policies (European Commission, 2011: 8). Each stakeholder and each policy area provides a valuable and different perspective in understanding ESL processes. They each play a valuable role in defining solutions and offering expertise to address different factors that lead to ESL. Through

networking, they provide a holistic solution which supports the development of the whole person.

This monograph focused on cooperation perspectives of ESL considers cross-sectoral cooperation for dealing with ESL at the system (national) or local level and the level of multi-professional teams. In the first subsection, the emphasis is on the importance of the cross-sectorial approach on the system level. The second subsection examines different forms and benefits of school and local community collaboration. A review of existing (good) practices in cooperation at the level of multi-professional teams as well as a review of theoretical dispositions and empirical and practical insights into team cooperation from the perspective of group processes and relational expertise for effective multi-professional collaboration are given in the third subsection.

Methodological aspects of the TITA scientific base

Reflecting the TITA project's underlying rationale, its scientific base is based on an interdisciplinary approach (policy analysis, theory of organisations, pedagogy, andragogy, psychology, philosophy). By considering a wide range of research evidence, it provides a holistic approach to ESL, its understanding and targeting policies. The TITA scientific base was prepared using the following sources and methods:

Theory and literature review

A thorough review of existing theoretical and empirical research on ESL, multi-professional cooperation and training in order to provide comprehensive theoretical bases and a multidisciplinary background to develop policy experiments and elaborate on its results. In that framework, scientific monographs and articles high in academic quality and based on sound evidence are the main source of the reviews.

Review of primary sources (official documents)

A review of official sources that form the policy framework for addressing ESL at the levels of both the EU and the consortium countries (France, Spain, Luxembourg, Switzerland). The chief source of the investigation in this framework entails EU strategies, Council recommendations and Commission communications, as well as national laws, strategies and other legislative documents.

Review of existing (good) practices

An analysis of existing (good) policies and practices and measures in order to expose 'what works' when tackling ESL in different environments and which approaches are worthwhile learning from when developing new (school, local, national) approaches to ESL. Data for the analysis are gathered by different sources (mainly the DG EAC and EACEA websites, ESL project websites, national reports etc.). While the focus of the TITA scientific base is ESL in the EU, we also refer to practices outside Europe, which strengthens the evidence base, and suggest alternative solutions.

Synthesis of the quantitative information available on ESL

Data were gathered and analysed from different points of view (longitudinal analyses, comparison between member states, different regions and local environments in the EU). Strong disparities in ESL levels might indicate specific structural problems in certain geographical areas or educational tracks and help identify national, regional and local specificities of the phenomenon. The primary sources are EU qualitative reports, country reports, inspection reports, as well as EU and OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) indicators.

Secondary analyses of data from international comparative assessment studies

Secondary analyses of data emerging from international comparative assessment studies are made in areas where existing studies do not provide sufficient information on ESL that is of special importance to the TITA project. These data can provide an additional strong and robust evidence base for tackling ESL at the level of the consortium countries. These data can provide an important insight into factors that cause ESL (identification and prevention) and effective school and policy practices that contribute to reducing it (intervention). In addition, such data are not only able to explain the big differences between EU member states in attaining the EU benchmark, but can also identify the factors that help cut ESL in the member states which are making the best progress in that regard.

In order to provide a comprehensive review of the ESL phenomenon, the TITA scientific base consists of scientific review articles that are organised in the sections and subsections already described above. Each scientific review article consists of the title, a key message in which the article's

main idea is highlighted, an abstract in which the substance of the article is summarised, and the core of the article which elaborates on specific TITA-related content.

Based on the wide and deep pool of knowledge contained in the TITA scientific base, the authors have summarised its main findings in Practice Briefs (Scientific Abstracts on Early School Leaving). These Briefs summarise key (policy) messages of each scientific review article and make recommendations for practice deriving from the scientific findings. The TITA consortium believes it is important for strong and robust evidence to be presented to practitioners, policymakers and other interested members of the public in an easy-to-read format to attract their attention to the topic and enhance the opportunities to translate TITA's innovative measures into ESL policies and practices at the school, local, regional, national and international (EU) levels.

Possible uses of the TITA scientific base

The TITA consortium contends that ESL policies and practices should be evidence-based and adaptable to local, regional and national conditions. Developing such policies requires a strong political commitment but also solid knowledge of ESL processes among the wide range of actors involved. The TITA scientific base has therefore been prepared as:

- *Scientific input for the TITA consortium* when preparing and implementing evidence-based and targeted policy experiments for addressing ESL by promoting and supporting multi-professional teams in schools and for successfully conducting other project tasks.
- *Scientific input for practitioners*, implementing policy experiments in three consortium countries (France, Luxemburg, Switzerland). To work on ESL with other professionals and establish student-centred measures, education staff need to understand ESL and develop or strengthen special related skills. The scientific and comprehensive database on ESL, as summarised in the Briefs for Practitioners, has been prepared in order to support these ends.
- *Scientific input for policymakers* at the national and EU levels (European Commission) to understand the policy relevance of the project results. From the policy point of view, the TITA

scientific base establishes the foundations for the effectiveness, efficiency and conditions for the scalability of the policy experimentation results and enables the transnational transfer of good practices. Ultimately, the TITA consortium believes that use of proposed and tested measures has the potential to act as a major catalyst for integrating effective and efficient ESL measures into education systems across the EU.

– *Scientific review of ESL for other interested actors.* The comprehensive TITA scientific base is freely available to other interested actors so they can exploit it in support of their particular requirements and interests. Although an enormous amount of research has already been done on ESL, NESSE (2010) identified the need for a more comprehensive review of what is known about ESL. The TITA scientific base is an attempt to respond to that need.

Scientific review articles, published as chapters of this monograph, are published also at the website of the TITA project (http:// titaproject.eu). Design of the website enables searching and reading the articles interactively.

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2.0
cooperation
2.1 cooperation at the system level

2.1.1

The Emergence, Importance and Challenges of a Cross-sectorial Approach to ESL

Urška Štremfel

Synopsis

The multi-faceted natur"e of the ESL problem in turn calls for a multi-faceted response. Cross-sectoral cooperation is seen a promising solution in this regard. Although highly promoted in EU policy documents, it encounters a lack of conceptual clarity and various challenges to its practical implementation. The proper evaluation of practices currently in place across the EU would help with its development.

Summary

At the heart of this article is the declaration (e.g. European Commission, 2013) "In order to be effective, policies against ESL should be cross-sectorial and involve stakeholders from different policy areas". Conditions for policymaking have changed fundamentally in the last decades as reflected in trends towards globalisation, multilevel policy networks, privatisation and increased democratic participation. It is argued that effective solutions for most societal problems (including ESL) can no longer be found by the respective individual ministries (traditional administrative silos) but only through the coordination of goals and instruments established at different decision-making levels and in various policy areas. In its focus on the emergence, importance and challenges of cross-sectoral cooperation at the system (national, EU) level, the article briefly

overviews its interdisciplinary theoretical considerations and exposes the deficiencies in their theoretical, terminological and definitional consistency. Various rationalities for establishing cross-sectoral cooperation to address ESL and in general are discussed, including solving complex contemporary policy problems and achieving shared cross-cutting goals. The clear gap between the promotion of education's cross-sectoral cooperation with other sectors in EU policy documents and the serious challenges of putting it into practice is exposed. The national strategy and the national coordination body are seen as important cross-sectoral measures for addressing ESL, but their prescriptive top-down nature is called into question. Namely, the literature review conducted in the article shows that cross-sectoral cooperation is a developmental process that needs long-term changes in organisational culture, building trust and the acquisition of the right skills on all levels. A set of conceptual tools making up the overarching conceptual framework is intended to adequately support the process of cross-sectoral implementation. But, even more importantly, its further development requires solid evaluations of the existing practices. Without them, cross-sectoral cooperation for dealing with ESL in the EU would remain an extensively practised yet poorly understood phenomenon.

Key words: Cross-sectoral cooperation, system level, policy, challenges, EU, ESL

Introduction

Demands for better horizontal management between policy sectors are not new. Stead and Meijers (2009, p. 318) cites the work of Finer who already in 1933 identified the need for authority capable of not merely planning all activities for today, but of coordinating all relevant actors for a considerable period into the future. Peters (1998, 295) observed that ever since governing structures began to be broken up into departments and ministries, there have been complaints that one organisation does not know what the other is doing, and that their programmes are contradictory, redundant or both. Pressman and Wildavsky (1984) noted that there is no more common suggestion for reform than »what we need is more coordination«.

More recently, cross-sectoral collaboration is increasingly assumed to be both necessary and desirable as a strategy for addressing many of global society's most intractable problems (including ESL). Knowing how to

respond collaboratively and effectively to contemporary problems that are so interconnected, complex and encompassing is a major challenge (Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2015; Heath, 2007; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Authors (e.g. Rayner & Howlett, 2009a; b) argue that effective solutions to these problems (including ESL) must be found by various public policy actors as well as via coordination among the goals and instruments established at different decision-making levels and in various policy areas.

Different forms and classifications of cross-sectoral cooperation are recognised in the literature (e.g. Andrews & Entwistle, 2010) and promoted in EU policy documents (e.g. Nico, 2014; 2016)[1]. The section on cooperation in the TITA scientific base is organised according to Edwards & Downes' (2013, pp. 36-37) classification that distinguishes three approaches (levels) of cooperation: individualised (in multi-professional teams); b) ecological (local community initiatives); and c) policy (national policies). This article concentrates on cooperation at the system (EU and national) level. Research shows that the success and sustainability of cross-sector cooperation at the local level and at the multi-professional team level depend considerably on the appropriate national policy framework to promote inter-sectoral synergies from policy development through to implementation (Edwards & Downes, 2013; European Commission, 2013; Eurydice, 2014).

By considering the intensive promotion of cross-sectoral cooperation as a promising approach to tackling multi-faceted social issues (such as ESL) in EU policy documents (e.g. Council of the EU, 2011; 2015; European Commission, 2006), the lack of its in-depth theoretical conceptualisation (e.g. Bryson et al., 2006), the challenges of putting it into practice in research and practice (e.g. Bourgeois, 2013; Berthet, & Bourgeois, 2014) and its embryonic development level in the ESL area (e.g. Eurydice, 2014), this article's primary aim is to present the emergence, importance and challenges of multi-sectoral cooperation in addressing ESL. The article is structured as follows. After a brief introduction to the issue, the article first provides theoretical insights into cross-sectoral cooperation, its emergence, definitions and rationale. Second, how cross-sectoral policies are defined

1 Classifications are made according to different criteria (e.g. *hierarchical level* (vertical and horizontal cooperation between and within EU, national, regional, local, school level); *type of actor* (state/organisation/individual, public/profit/non-governmental); *number of participating entities* (dual/multiple); *time dimension* (development/implementation/evaluation of public policy; ad hoc/contemporary/permanent); *intensity* (sharing information/merging authority); *type of information* (voluntary/mandated)). In practice, very hybrid (non-ideal) forms of multi-professional collaboration exist.

in the main EU policy documents on ESL and education in general is presented. Third, the article elaborates theoretically and empirically exposed challenges and certain guidelines for successful cross-sectoral cooperation (in addressing ESL). The conclusion summarises the key findings.

Methodology

To address the article's aims, the following methods are employed: (a) an analysis of relevant literature and secondary sources. Within this framework, we conducted a literature search of the scientific EBSCOhost, Web of Science and Google Scholar online research databases where the main key words for searching the relevant scientific literature were: early school leaving, cross-sectoral cooperation/coordination/integration; and (b) an analysis of formal documents and legal sources at the EU and national levels (EU official documents in the area of educational policy, non-official documents, press releases), and an analysis of the national policy documents (e.g. legislation, strategies, reports) in EU member states.

Theoretical insights into cross-sectoral cooperation

Approaches

Cross-sectoral collaboration is an inherently interdisciplinary phenomenon and multiple theories (e.g. network theory, resource dependence theory, corporate social performance theory, institutional economics theory, strategic management theory, social ecology theory, microeconomics theory, institutional theory, negotiated order theory, political theory) from various scientific disciplines (e.g. organisation studies, public administration, leadership, strategic management, conflict management, collective action, policy studies) provide relevant and alternative insights into its functioning (Bryson et al., 2015; Wood & Gray, 1991).

Although the term cross-sectoral cooperation dominates the literature, many other terms are also used to explain the same, similar or quite different forms of cooperation. At the policy level, namely the focus of this article, Tosun & Lang (2013) distinguish between: a) government-centred approaches, which pay particular attention to institutional arrangements (holistic government, joined-up-government, policy coherence, whole-of-government, comprehensive planning); and b) governance-centred approaches, with a bigger emphasis on the interactions of different sectoral actors (horizontal governance, policy integration, boundary-spanning

policy regimes). The literature uses a variety of other related (and sometimes synonymous) terms such as partnership, networks, alliances, policy consistency, cross-cutting policymaking, concerted decision-making, policy cooperation, collaboration, coordination and integration (e.g. Andrews & Entwistle, 2010; Stead, 2008; Thomson & Perry, 2006). Despite the various and sometimes even overlapping terms in use, authors agree that cooperation, coordination, collaboration and integration differ in terms of their depth or interaction, commitment and complexity, whereas policy cooperation implies dialogue and information, policy coordination also implies also transparency and avoidance of policy conflicts and policy integration, which also includes joint working, attempts to create synergies between policies, and the use of the same goals to formulate policy.[2]

As the practice of cross-sectoral cooperation has expanded, the nature of these processes has remained poorly defined. Many untested assumptions exist in terms of the definitions, components, structures and outcomes. Cross-sectoral cooperation thus continues to be an increasingly practised yet poorly understood phenomenon (Googins & Rochlin, 2000). Tosun and Lang (2013, p. 1) agree with Hood (2005) that scholarship on cross-sectoral policy coordination and integration appears to be lagging behind the practice of policymaking, adding that "despite the vast corpus of literature, the study of policy coordination and integration has failed to advance clear-cut theoretical expectations and does not allow for drawing generalizable conclusions".

Emergence and definition of cross-sectoral cooperation

The Weberian classical model of bureaucracy specialised in sectors[3] (professionalised administrative branches) represented the dominant approach to understanding and analysing public policymaking in the twentieth century. Various demands for better horizontal management among policy sectors should thus be studied in this regard (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Steurer (2007) argues that so-called administrative silos, which are constructed around policy domains but ignore related policies and problems, are an important factor and challenge in policy integration. Policy

2 The aim of the article is not to elaborate the differences between cooperation, coordination, collaboration and integration. The article uses terms as originally applied in the reviewed literature.

3 Policy sectors focus on a specific area of public policy and include all groups, organisations and institutional rules pertaining to that arena of policymaking and implementation (Krott & Hasanagas, 2006, p. 556).

integration is hence defined as the management of cross-cutting issues in policymaking that transcend the boundaries of established policy fields, which often do not correspond to the institutional responsibilities, rules, organisations and divisions of authority of individual departments (Meijers & Stead, 2004, p. 1; Shannon & Schmidt, 2002, pp. 17-18). Integration is the replacement of specific elements of existing policy 'mixes' or 'regimes' – the goals, objectives and calibrations of existing policy tools and goals – by a new policy mix, in the expectation of avoiding the counterproductive or sub-optimal policy outcomes that arise from treating interrelated policy regimes and components in isolation from one another (Rayner & Howlett, 2009a). It may also be understood as "a process in which autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures, governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions" (Thomson & Perry, 2006). As seen from the above definitions, achieving a common goal and problem-solving are recognised as the two most important motives for establishing cross-sectoral cooperation. Bryson et al. (2006, p. 44) therefore define cross-sector collaboration as the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities and capabilities by organisations in two or more sectors to jointly achieve an outcome (goal) that cannot be achieved by organisations in one sector separately.

The rationale for establishing cross-sectoral cooperation

Cross-sectoral partnerships are seen more and more as a solution to the most pressing social problems facing contemporary society. As the complexity of social problems grows, the need for collaboration between two or more sectors within and across the traditional domains becomes more urgent (Hood, Logsdon & Thompson, 1993; Tosun & Lang, 2013). In that manner, a cross-sectoral partnership can be described as an interorganisational effort to address problems too complex and too protracted to be resolved by a unilateral organisational action (Gray & Wood, 1991, p. 4). An important factor facilitating cooperation is thus, on the one hand, the actors' recognition that contemporary social, economic and political conditions (problems) affect them all and, on the other hand, that in an increasingly pluralistic society, solutions to social problems must satisfy diverse constituencies (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 130).

In theory, cross-sectoral partnerships not only "enable public agencies to tackle social problems more effectively by unlocking the benefits of comparative advantage" (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010, p. 680), but by enhancing reciprocity and mutual (policy and organisational) learning, they also build future cross-sectoral problem-solving capacity and lead to better policy designs and more efficient policy implementation (Innes & Booher, 2003; Tosun & Lang, 2013). Pooling resources helps to enhance innovation potential by making the most of complementary strengths and synergistic effects of diverse competencies and knowledge on the part of different actors (Gazley & Brudney, 2007; Grudinschi et al., 2013; Heath, 2007; Herranz, 2008; Jupp, 2000; Lasker, Weiss & Miller, 2001; Selsky & Parker, 2005; Soininen, 2014). Accordingly, Gray (1989, p. 5) defines cross-sectoral cooperation as a "Process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible".

Various studies (Krott & Hasanagas, 2006, p. 556; Page et al., 2015; Pollitt, 2013, Stead, 2008, p. 140), in addition to achieving common goals and solving policy problems, synthesised and mentioned several other factors that help understand the motives, need and importance of cross-sectoral cooperation:

- promoting synergies (win-win solutions) between sectors
- reducing duplication in the policymaking process, both horizontally and vertically
- promoting consistency between policies in different sectors (horizontal) and at various levels of decision-making (vertical)
- giving a stronger focus to the achievement of a government's overall goals rather than the achievement of narrower sector-oriented goals
- helping to promote innovation in policy development and implementation
- encouraging greater understanding of the effects of policies on other sectors
- increased efficacy in actual policy-guided outcomes
- make better use of scarce resources
- public value creation

Cross-sectoral education policies against ESL at the EU level

The great political significance of education's cross-sectoral character is closely linked to the Lisbon Strategy where education is defined as an issue of social cohesion and economic competitiveness. Since then, the cross-sectoral approach has been recognised as a promising measure for addressing various important issues (efficiency and equity of education, social dimension of education etc.). For example, the European Commission (2006) states that education policies alone cannot address educational disadvantage since educational opportunities are limited by the interplay of personal, social, cultural and economic factors. Similarly, Council Conclusions (2010) argue that education is neither the sole cause of social exclusion, nor the sole solution to it. In all cases, it is pointed out that multi-sectoral approaches are required that can articulate education measures with broader social and economic policies (employment, the economy, social inclusion, youth, health, justice, housing and social services). The importance of the cross-sectoral dimension in addressing contemporary EU problems is also evident from the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart Sustainable Inclusive Growth (Halász, 2013), where several flagship initiatives (including the Agenda for new skills and jobs, Agenda Youth on the Move) and targets (including ESL) presuppose the cross-sectoral cooperation of education with other policy fields.[4]

Although reducing ESL was already detected as an EU policy priority in 2002 and various measures for addressing it have since been identified and applied, cross-sectoral cooperation is a relatively recent addition to them. Council Conclusions (2010; 2011; 2015) stated that comprehensive, cross-sectoral strategies providing a range of school-wide and systemic policies targeting the different factors leading to ESL should be put in place and applied. Similarly, the European Commission (2013) argues that »In order to be effective, policies against ESL should be cross-sectorial and involve stakeholders from different policy areas«. These arguments indicate that ESL is understood as a problem of the education system, society and the school, rather than a problem caused only by the young person and their family, background or peers (Nevala & Hawley, 2011). One can argue that the multi-faceted nature of the risk of ESL in turns calls for a multi-faceted (cross-sectoral) response.

4 Ecorys (2014, p. 3) reports that at the highest political level education was attributed with cross-cutting, horizontal importance in paragraph 9 of the Treaty of Lisbon (2009).

Cross-sectoral cooperation in addressing ESL should encompass horizontal cooperation at different levels (from synergies between services or ministries at a higher regional/national political level to multi-professional work at the school level) as well as vertical cooperation between national, regional, local and school levels. Given the complexity of ESL, the education policy field should cooperate especially with employment, social, youth, family, justice and health, with each field playing its own special role to address ESL (e.g. a smooth transition from school to work, mitigation of social disadvantages, offering non-formal learning opportunities) (Eurydice, 2014). In order to ensure the success of a cross-sectoral approach to ESL, different forms of cooperation should complement and support each other (Euryidice, 2014).

The European Commission (2013) has proposed various measures for an effective cross-sectoral approach to ESL. In terms of governance (p. 13), a national strategy is seen as "necessary to ensure a coherent, systemic and coordinated approach, the exchange of good practice, and the efficient use of resources". Important elements of a sustainable and comprehensive strategy include: a) a coordinating body (ministry responsible for education or a separate agency with the aim to support and facilitate cooperation at the national level, raise awareness and ensure long-term political commitment regarding ESL); b) a progressive approach; c) local and regional adaptation; d) awareness raising and training; e) sustainable funding; and f) monitoring and evaluation.

Eurydice (2014) reports that cross-sectoral cooperation (areas, systematic approach, institutionalisation) vary between EU member states due to their different cultural and political traditions, different political and institutional (vertical and horizontal) structures as well as traditional links and methods of cooperation. Its monitoring and evaluation are still missing in almost all EU member states, making it very difficult to assess its effectiveness (also comparatively) and creating an obstacle to its further improvement and development.

The challenges of cross-sectoral cooperation

Despite the potential of cross-sectoral cooperation to tackle contemporary social problems and the arguments found in the literature and EU policy documents presented above that it is necessary and desirable, various challenges to its successful implementation are acknowledged in practice. Tosun and Lang (2013) explain that, based on the characteristics of

cross-sectoral policies, both opportunities and challenges can be expected. Rayner and Howlett (2009a) report that while policy integration is currently fashionable, efforts to replace the traditional 'policy silos' are fraught with risks. A very real possibility exists of creating ineffective instrument mixes or incomplete reform efforts with the resulting poor outcomes at the macro, meso or micro level. According to the overall orientation of this article, we especially expose those appearing on the macro (policy) level. Rayner and Howlett (2009a) distinguish three forms of challenges:

- *Politics of implementation:* weaning key actors off subsidies or reregulating critical sets of social and economic activities against opposition from those actors who benefit from the status quo.
- *Administrative:* related to the link between a desire for better policy integration and a more collaborative policymaking style.
- *Analytical*: most notably those connected with the logic of goal rationalisation and, especially, the identification of optimal policy instrument designs.

Benson (2011) identified three overlapping barriers to effective joint actions:

- *The differing worldviews, interests and mandates of the sectors.* Actors' discrete areas of expertise tend to embrace information within their own discipline while disregarding other matters as irrelevant to taking action on the issue. This may lead not only to counterproductive but also conflicting situations (also see Tosun & Lang, 2013).
- *The resource allocation and planning processes within government.* The expected courses of actions and consequently resource allocation are defined by governments for sectors. Civil servants' work is thus evaluated according to their contribution to the attainment of sectors' objectives, rather than broader objectives requiring joint cross-sectoral action.
- *Capacity constraints within sectors for generating necessary information.* Actors usually lack expertise and information about other sectors. Deficiency in this capacity may constrain successful cross-sectoral cooperation.

Nico (2014) identified the following problems in the development of cross-sectoral (youth) policy that either relate to political, ideological systems and will or the lack of knowledge, evidence and data:

- *cross-sectoral (youth policy) as a rhetorical exercise and politically-correct vocabulary* (including the lack of a legal framework; intentions with no action; principles with no specific programmes, unclear relationships between departments, ministries or agencies);
- *lack of functionality or efficiency of existing structures* (including no communication, no collaboration or no coordination between departments, ministries or agencies; or the overlapping of responsibilities and disregard for what is being done outside or beyond the respective ministry or equivalents); and
- *problems associated with the structure itself* (such as the fact a ministry or its equivalents are situated at the bottom of the governmental hierarchy or, alternatively, are not even part of that hierarchy).

The challenges of a cross-sectoral approach to ESL

Moving forward to the challenges of cross-sectoral policy in addressing ESL identified in the EU, Nevala & Hawley (2011, p. 63) report that most countries still have a fragmented and insufficiently coordinated approach to ESL, leading to the duplication of activity and funding. Similarly, Eurydice (2014) realised that the necessary process of creating a shared understanding of the issues, getting to know each other's culture and motivational forces and establishing common working methods is very recent in most countries and remains a challenge for all. Consequently, there is still little country-specific experience or evidence showing how cooperation mechanisms actually work in practice.

Because the concept and practice of partnerships is still at a very early stage of development (also beyond the ESL domain), much of the conceptual underpinning has yet to be developed and core stages and elements have neither been adequately identified nor tested within an empirical framework (Googins & Rochlin, 2000, p. 141; Edwards & Downes, 2013). The ability to generalise partnership models and capitalise on transferable knowledge is hence also minimal at this time. In any event, some rare

general guidelines for successful cross-sectoral cooperation were found in the literature:

In the area of ESL, formalising cooperation, for example, by means of a (national) coordinating body or comprehensive ESL strategy are seen as a way to enhance synergies across government departments and between different levels of authority, schools and other stakeholders. It is regarded as a mechanism for strengthening commitment, improving the monitoring and evaluation process as well as identifying areas for further work (Eurydice, 2014). High-level politics and changes at the national policy level are important, but not the sole factor in successful cross-sectoral cooperation at the lower (local, school) level. A successful cross-sectoral approach requires cooperative efforts at all levels and can be supported but not imposed by one strategic document(s) or legal framework (Christensen & Laegreid, 2007; Pollitt, 2003). Cross-sectoral cooperation is a long developmental process that calls for new skills, changes in organisational culture and the building of relations based on mutual trust (March & Olsen, 1983). Instead of prescriptive policy measures, Edwards and Downes (2013) suggest that a robust overarching conceptual framework, involving a set of conceptual tools to help shape the development of national policies and guide the work of actors in practice, is needed.

Conclusions

It is often assumed at the political level that cross-sectoral cooperation is the Holy Grail of solutions to modern social problems. These beliefs are supported by funding of various forms of cross-sectoral cooperation at different levels, even though there is little evidence of how successful it can be expected to be (Bryson et al., 2006). In EU policy documents (e.g. Council Conclusions, 2011; 2015), cross-sectoral cooperation is regarded as a necessary and desirable measure for dealing with ESL. It is argued that the multi-faceted nature of the risk of ESL requires a multi-faceted (cross-sectoral) response. But there is a clear gap between the European discourse and the theoretically and empirically acknowledged challenges of cross-sectoral cooperation in practice. The theoretical views on cross-sectoral cooperation at the macro policy level presented in the article show that cross-sectoral cooperation is important yet hard to achieve (e.g. Bryson et al., 2015). There is no general theory of cooperation that can fully explain the preconditions, process and outcomes of successful cross-sectoral cooperation (e.g. Wood & Gray, 1991), as well as no single evidence-based answer, recipe

or even magic wand that can guarantee its effectiveness. At the moment, while cross-sectoral cooperation on ESL in the EU is being developed at an embryonic level (Eurydice, 2014), based on the literature review conducted the article was only able to identify general guidelines for its further development (national strategy, national coordination body, conceptual framework). But more importantly, it points out how properly designed evaluations of current practices in EU member states are required to provide more evidence-based recommendations for how to cooperate to effectively address ESL and other problems of today that face the EU.

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2.2 cooperation at the community level

2.2.1
How Does Community Learning Work and How Does it Help Reduce ESL?

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Synopsis

With community learning, the entire school community engages in a cohesive and collaborative action with external agents (e.g. sport, cultural, industrial organisations). It promotes informal educator-student relations and teaching methods and thus encourages own action and participation in the learning process of (potential) ESL student. It accounts for students' needs and interests.

Summary

The main purpose of this paper is to define the core principles and aims of community learning and identify ways in which community learning can help combat ESL. In the context of ESL, community learning effects are most evident in community-school ESL prevention and intervention programmes and community compensation programmes. In order to be most efficient, community learning is an integral process that comprises collaboration between different community organisations, local policy-makers, families, schools, teachers and students. It is very important that the process is carried out by qualified educators since teaching methods and approaches are both formal and informal. The community learning approach is based on individualisation (participants' cognitive, emotional and behavioural characteristics are accounted for) and experiential learning (community life is included as a rich source of knowledge,

there is congruency between what is being taught and experienced) and is meant to take place in a hospitable and supportive environment. There is also a commitment to use culturally relevant material. Thus it takes place in various community organisations and its aim is an anti-discriminatory, culture-specific and equal educational and learning setting where individuals develop through their own action and participation. The learning process is supported by a mutual educator-student informally-oriented relationship in which the student's interests, capacities and needs for physical safety, socio-emotional support, achievement, competence, relatedness and autonomy are accounted for. As such, the community learning approach can have a great positive impact on ESL in the sense of improving students' learning motivation, achievement, sense of belonging, and can support their emotional, social and psychological well-being.

Key words: community learning, community-based education, informal education, whole school approach

Introduction

Community learning is a community-based, individual-oriented education and learning approach that connects what is being taught in schools to the community, including local institutions, history, literature, cultural heritage and natural environments. It is an educational and learning approach deriving from broader concepts of informal education and adult education. As such, it has been present in the educational sphere for decades, with the first promotions of local education in Europe dating back to the 1790s. The greatest expansion of community-based education in Europe began in the 1970s when lifelong education and the learning society were key points in a report by the Faure Commission which was the then keystone of education policy (Manzoor, 2014). Community learning is based on the belief that all communities have intrinsic educational resources that educators can use to enhance learning experiences for students. Synonymous terms found in the literature are community-based education, place-based learning, place-based education and informal education (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

Nowadays, the core of community learning is the theoretical concept called the Wisconsin Model of Community Education (Horyna & Decker, 1991). The model provides a framework and a set of community learning principles that refer to both students (student's self-determination, ability of

self-help, leadership development) and community organisations that provide community-based education (localisation, integrated delivery of services, maximum use of resources, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and lifelong learning principles). The general purpose of community learning is to develop a community as a whole by acknowledging and supporting its members and their capacities as a priority. Participants of community learning are actively engaged in the process and seen as equal and the most important agents in developing the educational process based on educational equality and mutual, informal educator-student relationships (Horyna & Decker, 1991; Rubenson, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2004). Also of great importance is collaboration between community organisations, families, schools and students. Different research results (e.g. Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002; Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006; Shumow, 2009) show that in case of such collaboration schools and teachers are able to provide ESL-prevention-based programmes that acknowledge students' culture, families, beliefs and expectations, connect the individual's interests and community resources with school courses, and provide an environment where all students feel accepted, related, competent and autonomous in the learning process.

Besides ESL-prevention- and intervention-based programmes, community learning plays an important role in ESL compensation activities in which communities, different local agents, schools and teachers collaborate in programmes for students who have already left the school system early. Although the focus of the TITA project is mainly ESL prevention and intervention strategies, those can also be improved by understanding the community-based compensation programmes. That is why this article also addresses community learning as a form of ESL compensation activities.

In the paper, we discuss the basic principles of the community learning concept and, by reviewing good practices of ESL prevention and compensation community-based programmes, present the crossing points where community learning can make a difference – complement the regular school process and apply its advantages to reducing ESL. The described characteristics and principles of community learning do not imply that these are simply not present in formal school settings.

Methodology

In the process of reviewing the literature in field of community learning, we first conducted a literature search of the scientific EBSCOhost online research databases (Academic Search Complete, ERIC, PsycARTICLES,

PsycBOOKS, PsycINFO, and SocINDEX with Full Text databases). Since we also wanted to review the practical implications of this theoretical concept in practice, we also searched for related results online (Google). The main key words initially used in both cases were: community learning, community education, community-based programmes, informal education, community education dropout prevention, and ESL and community learning. In this first step, we noticed a very limited number of research results under the term "community learning". We therefore expanded our search to the field of adult education in which community learning is largely incorporated. We also examined references cited in the reviewed articles, educational programme brochures, and project reports. Texts that were taken into account had to meet the following criteria: the topic needed to address community learning or education in theory and/or practice, and needed to address the role of community-based learning and education in tackling ESL rates. Conclusions are primarily based on findings from theoretical and research articles, and evaluations of different community learning projects/programmes that were available.

Principles and Aims of Community Learning

Community learning is a theoretical concept which comprises ways of working with and supporting communities through community action and community-based learning. It promotes learning and social development and is central to the individual's social capital since its main purpose is to increase the skills, networks and resources individuals need to address different social and educational shortages, and find new opportunities. A general guideline in this process is the individual's development through their own action and participation in the learning process where their needs and interests are accounted for. It is also important for the community itself since it strengthens its capacities and therefore improves the overall quality of life (Horyna & Decker, 1991; Rubenson, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2004).

Community learning is sometimes also referred to as informal education and community empowerment and has a particular concern delivering learning and development opportunities to socio-economically disadvantaged individuals. Its approach is collaborative, anti-discriminatory and equality-focused and, besides conventional teaching methods (reading, writing, tutorials, presentations, group work), is based on informal teaching methods (e.g. role play, socio-drama, photo language, art, case studies,

agency visits, participative action research, movement, painting, storytelling etc.) (Ancosan, 2009). It takes place in various community organisations such as community centres, adult education facilities, local institutions that promote culture, sport, health, job trainings, industrial plants, in nature, and also in schools. In this manner, awareness of the community's importance facilitated by community policy-makers is particularly important. The community learning concept follows the principle that the most obvious and basic manifestation of caring and support at the community level is the availability of resources needed for human development (Benard, 1991).

Also of great importance in community learning and community-based educational approaches are community teachers, often referred to as community educators and professionals (to avoid the formality and hierarchy of the relationship implied by the term teacher). The relationship between students and educators is informal in nature. The educator's role is to promote mutual relationships and therefore contribute to a socially just and equal society. They should be committed to respecting other persons, promoting well-being, truth, democracy and fairness, and should also be aware that community learning is a process in which they work with people rather than for the people. Accordingly, they have to be emphatic and able to adapt to the individual's needs, interests, beliefs, priorities, abilities, expectations and learning processes (Carson Bryan & Wang, 2013; Jeffs, Rogers, & Smith, 2010; Jeffs & Smith, 2008).

At the core of community learning is the theoretical concept called the Wisconsin Model of Community Education (Horyna & Decker, 1991) which provides a framework and a set of community learning principles, which include development of the individual's self-determination, self-help and leadership and, in the case of community educational organisations, principles that determine the localisation of the educational process, integrated delivery of services, maximum use of resources, inclusiveness, responsiveness, and implementation of lifelong learning processes. It is thereby a concept that comprises the person-environment fit and stage-environment fit principles (Eccles & Midgley, 1989).

Self-determination refers to the capacity of local citizens to best identify personal and community needs. They have a right and a responsibility to be involved in planning the learning and educational process. In this way, the whole process of community learning begins by recognising and identifying the individual, group and community needs that represent the core

of the whole process. Strengthening and encouraging individuals' capacity to be able to help themselves (Self-help) and develop responsibility for their own well-being is another core element of community learning. Leadership development is another basic principle of planning community-based education. It refers to the identification, development and use of local citizens and their capacities to lead, organise and help develop community-based learning. Where learning and educational processes take place (Localisation) is also another important aspect. Activities, programmes and events that are brought closer to where people live and are easily accessed have the greatest potential for high-level participation. Diverse needs and interests are also more easily met when different organisations that operate for the public good establish close working relationships (Integrated delivery of services) (another important relationship in the educational context is that between schools and other organisations) and use physical, financial and human resources of every community to their fullest (Maximum use of resources). Public institutions also have a responsibility to develop formal and informal learning opportunities that respond to the ever changing needs and interests (Responsiveness) of their residents of all ages (Lifelong Learning). It is also very important that such programmes and activities involve the broadest section of residents (Inclusiveness) who are not filtered by age, income, sex, race, religion, ethnicity etc. (Cobb, 2012; Horyna & Decker, 1991).

A review of existing practices of community learning projects (e.g. Coalition for Community Schools, 2012; Community Learning Partnership, 2015; European Commission Lifelong Learning Projects, 2016; National Center for Family and Community Connections, 2008; Community Learning Collaborative, 2016) showed that most community learning and community-based education projects derive their basic approaches from the previously mentioned theoretical framework. This means that community-based projects operate on the following postulates: Education is based on participants' needs, experiences, prior knowledge and their socio-economic and personal characteristics, community life is included as a rich source of knowledge, the education process is dialogical, learning is mutual, there is congruency between what is being taught and experienced, the potential of each participant is encouraged, the venue takes place in a community, learning occurs in a hospitable and supportive environment, there is a valuing of diversity in intelligence, assessment is holistic in nature and there is a commitment to using culturally relevant material. The content of

those projects is versatile as it can be. The topics most frequently covered are those addressing cultural diversity, elders and ageing, environmental efforts, families, youth and children, health and wellness, hunger and homelessness response, and educational support for a variety of subjects.

Since we are particularly interested in the overlap between community learning and educational support in terms of tackling the effects of ESL, we want to describe this relationship even further in the following paragraph.

Community Learning and ESL

In the context of the role of community learning in ESL, one initiative is particularly present: the initiative to connect schools with the wider community and to use schools as a catalyst for bringing community resources together to bear on community problems. The European Commission (2015) identified the so-called whole school approach as one of the most important steps in tackling ESL. The whole school approach defines the school as the logical site to initiate community collaboration in addressing ESL. Deliberately bridging institutions such as community organisations and schools are also rooted in social capital theory (Putnam, 2000; Rodriguez & Conchas, 2009). This means that the entire school community (school leaders, teachers, learners, parents and families) engages in a cohesive and collaborative action with external stakeholders and the community at large in order to support each learner through community learning. Studies (e.g. Epstein et al., 2002; Schargel & Smink, 2001) show that such collaborative action importantly improves learners' educational motivation (by connecting with real-life experiences and interests), academic achievement, behaviour (increased sense of belonging to the community and school) and supports their emotional, social and psychological well-being (supporting climate). According to research results (e.g. Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002; Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006; Shumow, 2009) partnership between schools and communities also leads to better school programmes and climate, increased parenting skills and leadership, and connected families. In reviewing the studies that address the effects of family and parental involvement in the educational and learning process on student participation, different authors (e.g. Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Smink & Shargel, 2004) established that connecting families with community and schools, in terms of the inclusion of parents in planning and leadership activities and addressing the family's needs, importantly increases

the student's attendance and motivation to participate in formal learning activities.

Various authors (e.g. Epstein, 2002; Shumow, 2009; Zarrett & Eccles, 2009) state that motivation for attainment and learning is the starting point where community learning principles can encourage positive effects. Studies (e.g. Bandura, 1997; Luthar, Shoum, & Brown, 2006; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Wigfield & Eccles, 2002) confirmed that the strongest predictors of a student's activity participation are, besides family involvement, their self-concepts of ability and interest. Students are motivated to participate and even select increasingly challenging tasks when they feel they have the ability to accomplish such tasks and are interested in the task. The influence of encouraging parents, teachers and participating friends is also an important external reason for student's enrolment in the activity (Epstein, 2001; Blank, Berg, & Melaville, 2006). In contrast, a student's negative responses (e.g. stress) lead to decreased motivation and absenteeism (Zarrett & Eccles, 2009). In line with self-determination theory of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000), the individual's basic needs that need to be met in order for the learning activity to be successful are: physical safety, socio-emotional needs for achievement and competence, feeling of relatedness, and autonomy. And those are the aspects where community learning can have an important impact on students prone to ESL (Foley, 2004).

As mentioned in the first section, the community learning approach follows the person-environment fit and stage-environment fit principles which: consider the individual's cognitive, emotional and behavioural characteristics and needs and puts them in the centre of the learning process; connect the lived experiences and knowledge of participants with newly developed knowledge and thus makes it interesting and usable; encourage a learning environment that is safe, supportive, hospitable and promotes social justice and equity in education. In this way it addresses crucial obstacles which prevent ESL students from staying in the educational process: low motivation for learning, different ethnic and immigrant status, different cultural and educational values, low sense of belonging to school, deprivileged socio-economic background, and deficits in social networks and relationships (Foley, 2004; Rodriguez & Conchas, 2009; Smink & Shargel, 2004).

To tackle ESL it is therefore important that communities are connected with schools and provide prevention- and intervention-based programmes that acknowledge a student's socio-cultural environment and

educational beliefs and expectations, and connect the individual's interests with both school contents and community resources. It is also especially important that ESL students have access to caring adults and a climate that recognises their experiential, intellectual and cultural wealth (Rodriguez & Conchas, 2009; Yosso, 2005). This allows them to start to realise their own goals, strengths and aspirations, and develop their resiliency, problem-solving skills, self-esteem, willingness, maturity and confidence for active participation in the school and the community at large (Benard, 1991).

The research results of Zarrett and Eccles (2009) also show that community-school partnership importantly affects the school's approach to students in general. Schools and teachers become more responsive to a student's needs and are less prone to immediate use of disciplinary actions when they know that someone from outside school is looking out for the student's potential and best interests.

Community learning also has a valuable role not only in ESL prevention-based programmes but also in offering programmes and opportunities for students who have already left the school system early (Epstein, 2001). After reviewing ESL compensation activities in 12 USA communities, Martin and Halperin (2006) identified eight common characteristics of such schools and second-chance, community-based programmes that had proved to be successful in practice (graduation of an ESL student to one of the programmes): Open entry/open exit (students proceed through the curricula modules at their own pace and graduate when they complete all state and district requirements), flexible scheduling (flexibility that accommodates students with families and work responsibilities), teachers are coaches, facilitators and crew leaders (emphasis is on close, supportive and informal relationships, students are respected as adults), real-world and career-oriented curricula (success of the programme is employment not only the acquisition of paper credentials, cooperation with local employer needs), arrangement of employment opportunities in summer or after school hours, clear codes of conduct with consistent enforcement (strict standards of attendance and effort, no drugs, violence or bullying), extensive support services (ESL students need adults who counsel, mentor and guide them – case managers, social workers, child care workers etc.), a portfolio of options for various student groups (ESL students leave schools for a variety of reasons and have many different barriers to their re-entry, this way they have an option to choose between different programmes and select the one that best suits their needs).

The community learning approach to education and tackling ESL is therefore an integrative tool that, in order to be successful, must connect all family, school and community agents and be implemented in prevention, intervention and compensation ESL programmes.

Conclusions

In this paper, we discussed the principles and aims of community learning and tried to identify areas where it can make a positive difference to tackling ESL (see Figure 1).

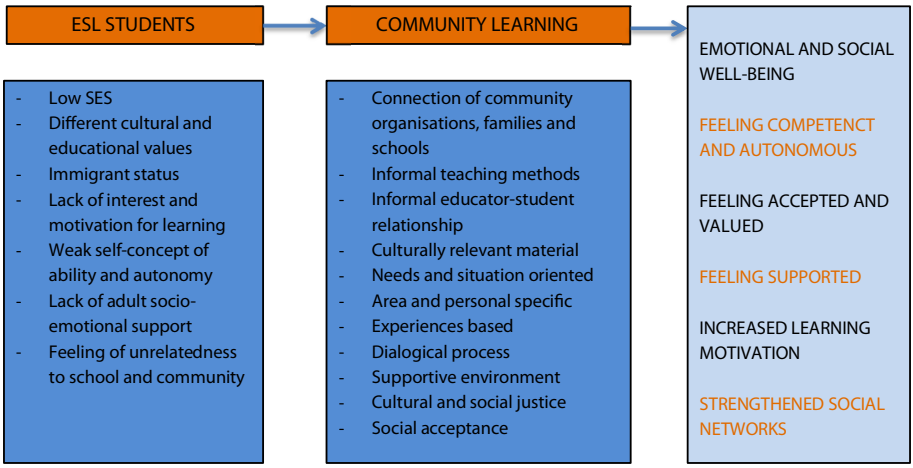

Figure 1. Effects of community learning principles on a (potential) ESL student's characteristics and its outcomes

According to the literature review of theoretical and research articles' findings and evaluations of different community learning projects/programmes that are available, we can identify activities at different levels of the educational process that must be addressed in order to successfully tackle ESL. Those activities capture the following levels of the educational process: a) individual level (emphasis on the individual's needs, beliefs, culture, potential etc.); b) educational approach level (informal teacher-student relationships, use of informal and formal teaching methods, mutual learning, congruency between theoretical knowledge and experiences, supportive environment etc.); and c) community-school level (community as a classroom and rich source of knowledge, collaboration between schools and community agents). Besides those, ESL compensation programmes

also focus on career-oriented curricula and the arrangement of employment opportunities. Community learning is therefore a supportive process where individuals actively develop their capacities by connecting with their environment's resources and where their needs for physical safety, socio-emotional support, achievement, competence, relatedness and autonomy are respected and met (Horyna & Decker, 1991; Rubenson, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2004).

By following the above learning approach, community learning can have a great positive impact on ESL in terms of improving students' learning motivation, sense of belonging, and can support their emotional, social and psychological well-being. Community learning (with all its presented) advantages should therefore become a regular measure in the prevention and compensation of ESL. All relevant actors (students, families, schools, teachers, community organisations and policy-makers) should therefore be actively involved in planning, implementing and evaluating its effects in practice.

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2.2.2
Developing Healthy Social and Cultural Capital and its Effects on Education

Klaudija Šterman Ivančič

Synopsis

Although social and cultural capital is to some extent determined, it is important to be aware that individuals' social capital can also be built and strengthened via the family, peers, school and wider local community. Not only does it encourage a student's persistence in education, it can also help overcome the effects of a deficit in cultural capital on an individual's educational path.

Summary

The main aim of this article was to identify factors at the social- and cultural-capital level that importantly affect students' educational outcomes and early school leaving (ESL) rates as well as to identify factors which can be impacted in order to improve educational outcomes and reduce ESL rates. Based on a literature review, we identified the following factors that form an individual's cultural capital: SES of individual, parents' education level, structure of the family, time spent with children, family culture and educational values, and immigrant status. Further, in the field of investigating the effects of social capital, the chief focus is on the quality of the family environment and relationships, peer relationships, relationships within the school and wider community, and school climate. All of these factors have an important direct impact on students' educational path and ESL and an indirect impact through interaction between an

individual's social and cultural capital factors. One of the most important views we expose after reviewing different research results in this field is that the individual's social capital in families, schools and the wider community can be systematically built and strengthened in order to reduce the negative effects of deficits in an individual's cultural capital. The main steps we identified are: encouragement of support services helping and giving advice to parents on how to positively and supportively raise and educate a child, allowing parents to successfully reconcile professional and private life, enhancing the dialogue between parents and schools, empowering parents and teachers with knowledge of the importance of socio-emotional support during the educational process, strengthening the development of a positive school climate that also includes positive peer relations, and bolstering supportive community-based practices and infrastructure that encourage an inclusive environment and strengthen the individual's sense of belonging, self-concept of ability and interest, and autonomy.

Key words: cultural capital, social capital, local community, educational outcomes

Introduction

The present article has two general aims: to identify factors at the social and cultural capital level that importantly affect early school leaving (ESL) and to identify areas of social and cultural capital that can be encouraged by a student's closer and more distant social settings in order to positively influence their educational outcomes. Overall research trends in this area primarily concentrate on the positive and negative effects of a student's cultural (SES of family, education level of parents, family's immigrant status etc.) and social (support from parents, peers, teachers and the community) background on their educational success, values and achievements. Results (e.g. Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 2001; Panzaru & Tomita, 2013; Lamb, 2003) indicate that all of the factors mentioned above have an important direct impact on students' educational outcomes and ESL and an indirect impact through interaction between an individual's social- and cultural-level factors. This means that the relationship between cultural capital and a student's ESL depends on the level of their social capital; a higher level of social capital can reduce the negative effects of deficits in cultural capital on ESL. Nonetheless, there is less research that considers the interaction

effects between social and cultural capital and points to ways that can help minimise the negative effects of disadvantaged social and cultural backgrounds on ESL. The emerging presumption is that social and cultural capital interact importantly and, furthermore, that there are areas of social capital that can be strengthened on all levels of social settings (including at the peers, family, school and community level) in order to reduce the negative effects of deprivileged cultural backgrounds on educational outcomes and ESL. We intend to investigate this presumption by reviewing the scientific research literature that addresses this topic.

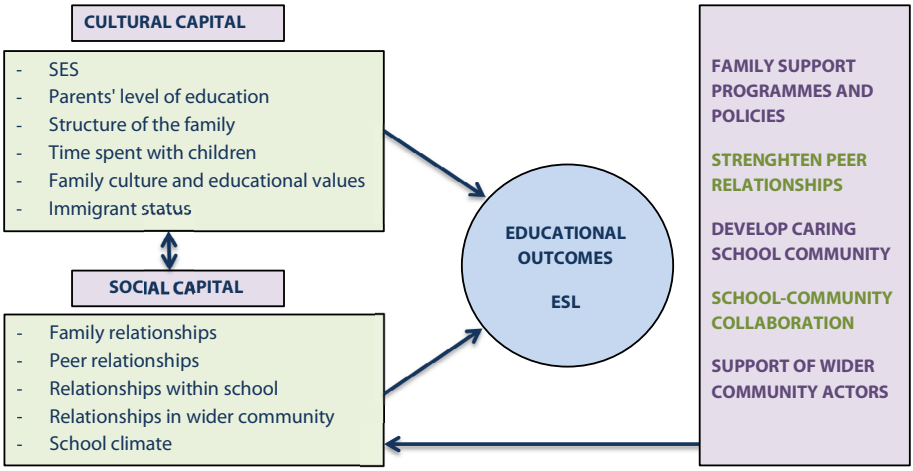

Figure 2. Effects between cultural and social capital, ESL, and areas to be strengthened

In the continuation of the article, we first introduce the theoretical conceptions of social and cultural capital that are most widely used as a basis for research in the majority of studies. Following is a review of studies that addressed the linear effects of social and cultural capital on ESL and educational outcomes and interactional effects between social and cultural capital. Based on a review of the research findings, we synthesise conclusions which identify areas of social and cultural capital that can be strengthened (via family support programmes and policies, strengthening peer relationships, developing a caring school community, school-community collaboration and support of wider community actors) in order to successfully fight ESL.

Arrows in the figure do not imply the only possible relations among the variables. They merely demonstrate the relations examined in this article.

Methodology

In order to obtain adequate research results, we conducted a literature search of the EBSCOhost online research databases. Since we wanted to cover all possible areas of the topic, we searched for the results in Academic Search Complete, ERIC, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, PsycINFO and SocINDEX with full text databases. The main key words that were used are: social capital and ESL, cultural capital and ESL, tackling ESL, effects between social and cultural capital. We also examined references cited in the reviewed articles. Studies that met the following criteria were taken into account: the sample had to consist of adolescents who had left the upper secondary education level before completion, a topic needed to address ESL, data had to present direct or indirect effects of social- and cultural-level factors on educational outcomes and ESL. The results are chiefly based on findings from scientific research articles, although we also took relevant documents from the European Commission and the OECD that address the ESL issue into consideration.

Social and cultural capital

As mentioned, in this article we focus on studies that analysed the linear and interaction effects of a student's social and cultural capital on their educational outcomes, especially achievement and ESL. First, we want to define the theoretical concepts of social and cultural capital as used in most studies.

The majority of research on social and cultural capital in education follows Bourdieu's (1986) and Coleman's (1988) theoretical conceptions (Clycq, Nouwen, & Timmerman, 2014). According to those authors, social capital derives from social networks, but is nevertheless the property of an individual. Coleman (1988) distinguishes three types of capital impact on an individual's learning outcomes: financial capital, human capital and social capital. Financial and human capital is also referred to as cultural capital. Financial capital is measured by a family's wealth or income, and human capital by one's parents' level of education. Such a conceptualisation of cultural capital is also known as family background. Social capital is, on the other hand, measured by the density and quality of relationships and interactions among parents, children and schools. Social capital can occur both within and outside the family. Coleman (1988) argues that it is social capital that allows children to translate the cultural capital present in their family and wider social environment (e.g. schools) into increased

well-being. Besides Coleman's conceptualisation of cultural and social capital, contemporary authors (e.g. Epstein, 2009; Sanders, 2009) point to another very important aspect of the individual's cultural and social capital, that is the characteristics of the wider community (supportive, educative community, promotion of community-based learning, connectedness of families, schools, and wider community organisations).

Following this conceptualisation there is a large body of research (e.g. Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 2001; Epstein, 2009; Panzaru & Tomita, 2013; Lamb, 2003) addressing the linear effects of social and cultural capital on an individual's educational outcomes. In the context of ESL, the majority of studies are particularly focused on the following factors that form an individual's cultural capital: SES of the individual, parents' education level, structure of the family, time spent with children, family culture and educational values, and immigrant status. In addition, in the field of investigating the effects of social capital, the main focus is on the quality of the family environment and relationships, peer relationships, relationships within the school and wider community, and school climate. In the section below we present some of the key findings.

Cultural capital and educational outcomes

The two most commonly identified cultural capital factors of ESL are the individual's socio-economic background (as an indicator of financial capital) and the education level of the parents (as an indicator of human capital) Different national (e.g. Alexander, Entwisle, & Kabbani, 2001; Janosz, Le Blanc, Boulerice, & Tremblay, 2000; Lamb, Walstab, Teese, Vichers, & Rumberger, 2004; Matković, 2009; Panzaru & Tomita, 2013; Rumberger & Lamb, 2003; Traag & van der Velden, 2008) and international studies (OECD, 2010, 2013) confirmed that students from families receiving financial support and students who have less educated parents reveal a higher risk of ESL. The European Commission (2015) also states the raising the educational level of parents and thus enhancing their cultural capital is one of the most important points for tackling ESL.

Socio-economic background and education level of parents are also importantly connected to two other widely investigated cultural capital factors, namely, structure of the family and time spent with children. The results of different studies (e.g. Alexander et al., 2001; Anisef, Brown, Phythian, & Walters, 2010; Lamb et al., 2004; Traag & van der Velden, 2008) show that families with a poorer socio-economic background and

single-parent families generally possess fewer material and socio-emotional resources that promote student achievement and retention in school. Some findings (Hsin, 2009) also suggest that the productivity of parents' time with children – in terms of their ability to translate time investments into positive achievement outcomes – largely depends on their education level.

Rumberger (2004) argues that it is necessary to analyse ESL from an institutional (community) perspective. Within this perspective, the student's behaviour is seen as shaped within different social settings and contexts in which the student lives and learns: e.g. community, school. Especially important are school-related beliefs and values that the individual absorbs in his/her cultural and social settings. Some research studies (Anisef et al., 2010) point out that 13% of the variation in the odds of dropping out can be attributed to community and neighbourhood factors. Through the early years of living within different backgrounds, children acquire different understandings of schooling and education, and this is the important view of their social capital that influences their engagement in schoolwork and their academic performance. According to Bourdieu (1977), families from different social strata pass different cultural values on to their children. In order to sustain educational engagement, it is necessary that students perceive congruence between their own values and those of the education system. Especially at risk are students with an immigrant background (Anisef et al., 2010) who are exposed to an even higher risk of dropping out since the cultural differences between their culture and the host society present them with even greater challenges to adapt and integrate into a new social environment.

Social capital and educational outcomes

Clycq and colleagues (2014) state that it is already established that social capital in the sense of an individual's supportive social networks positively influences his/her educational outcomes and navigation through the education system. Feeling needed, supported, respected and connected are fundamental concepts underlying psychological motivation and functioning (Anderman, 2002; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Every individual has a desire to form relationships from which they gain a sense of belonging, respect, acceptance and encouragement. This is a concept of socio-emotional support which is the core of close and positive relationships and one of the most important views of social capital in relation to ESL.

The results of different research studies (e.g. Cederberg & Hartsmar, 2013; Gregory & Weinstein, 2004; Owens, Shippe, & Hensel, 2008) show that students with close social ties are able to face difficult situations better, have greater resistance to stress, and deal with problematic situations more easily. Hence, in order to support the development of young peoples' social capital it is crucial to concentrate on promoting those environments most vital for enabling use of those resources (Rose, Wooley, & Bowen, 2013). In the case of ESL, youth, i.e. secondary school students, following social systems with important social ties can be distinguished in the research literature: family (particularly parents), peers, schools (especially teachers), and relationships in the wider community (e.g. organisations that connect families, schools and local communities and create inclusive, safe and nurturing environments). Since it is hard to separate the effects of a particular relationship on a student's well-being and functioning in the school context and because those relationships are usually always connected to the social network, most of the reviewed research focuses on investigating the whole network or at least two important social settings.

The Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU (COFACE) points out that family context in the sense of healthy parental behaviour and the relationship with a child plays a crucial role in the future academic success of children and ESL (Coface, 2010).

Besides that, Downes (2011) states that in order to tackle ESL efficiently socio-emotional support needs to be present not only at a student's family level, but also at a systemic level which includes the teacher's supportive interaction with students, positive relationships in peer groups, supportive collaboration among teachers, schools and community agents.

Studies (e.g. Wrona, Malkowska-Szkutnik, & Tomaszewska-Pekala, 2014) that investigated the correlation between students' socio-emotional support in three social settings (family, peers and school) – as a factor of social capital – and respondents' desire to continue secondary education confirmed the existence of a negative correlation between the respondents' desire to leave education before completing upper secondary school and the perceived level of social support. However, in the case of perceived parental and teachers' support, the correlation appeared to be weaker than in the case of a student's relationship with their friends/peers.

There are also other studies that support those results in an ESL context where authors (Frostad, 2014; Archambault, Janosz, Morizot, & Pagani, 2009) found that feelings of loneliness and being rejected by peers are some

of the most important factors behind ESL, and that the perception of the school environment largely constitutes attitudes to school in a peer group. Moreover, peer relationships that do not include deviant friends, friends who dropped out and include enjoyment in participating in school-complementary peer activities significantly positively influence one's educational aspirations (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Janosz, LeBlanc, Boulerice, & Tremblay, 1997; Madarasova Geckova, Tavel, & van Dijk, 2010).

A major body of literature (e.g. Cederberg & Hartsmar, 2013; Groninger & Lee, 2001; Lee & Breen, 2007; Newman, Lohman, Newman, Mayers, & Smith, 2000; Smyth & Hattam, 2002; Weinstein, 2002) also addresses the school climate as one of the most important factors of both an individual's social capital and ESL. Especially important in this context is a student's feeling of belonging to school, which can be encouraged through a positive student-teacher relationship. Individuals deprived of a sense of belonging often experience greater social rejection, emotional distress and are more likely to leave school early. The extent to which teachers support pupils' efforts to succeed in school also help reduce the number of early school leavers (ESLers) and prove to be especially effective for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. PISA 2012 results (OECD, 2013) also show that an individual's sense of belonging positively affects higher academic achievement.

A sense of belonging and relatedness can also be strengthened through support of wider community agents (e.g. social support agents, institutions that promote culture, sport etc.) and collaboration among families, schools and the community. Particularly important for ESL is the concept of community-based learning which takes place in informal settings, introduces interesting real-life situations and learning opportunities and, as such, fosters students' sense of belonging and intrinsic academic motivation (Schargel & Smink, 2004). Research results in this field (e.g. Epstein, 2009; Ellias & Haynes, 2009; Sanders, 2009) show that the community which supports an inclusive educational environment where individuals feel accepted, respected and supported positively affects the individual's academic achievements, reduces ESL rates and, most importantly, strengthens the individual's social networks and capital.

We can see that social capital in terms of supportive relationships plays an important role in fighting ESL. Rosenfeld (2000) underlines that policy-makers, communities, parents and teachers need to be aware of the fact that perceived teacher or parent or peer or community support alone is not

effective; teacher support must be combined with perceived support from parents or friends or wider community agents, albeit the best combination is perceived support from all providers.

Interaction Effects of Social and Cultural Capital on ESL

Nowadays, the two main questions posed by research community and policy-makers regarding social and cultural capital's on ESL rates are: In which ways do social and cultural capital interact, and can social capital be used to reduce the negative effects of a deficit in an individual's cultural capital (Coface, 2010)? Most research in this field examines the effects between family and teacher-student relationships, the SES of parents, and their education level.

Coleman (1988) stated that social capital represents a filter through which the parents' cultural capital is transmitted to and used by their children. Most research on this topic (e.g. Bordieu, 1977; Markussen, Froseth, & Sendberg, 2011; Roderick, 1993) established links between students' (social and cultural) background and parental SES, education completion, perceptions of schooling, educational values, a student's engagement with school work and their performance. Teachman, Paasch and Carver (1996) tested whether social capital in terms of supportive relationships moderates the effect of parental financial and cultural capital on leaving school early. The results showed that the relationship between cultural capital and a student's ESL varies according to the level of schooling-specific social capital (e.g. parents' involvement and support in learning and school activities) presented in the family. Greater amounts of social capital reduce the negative effects of cultural capital on dropping out of school and therefore suggest that those effects can be decreased by strengthening the individual's social capital.

Roderick (1993) also claims that the school community and wider community can make a difference for students at risk of dropping out by compensating for the lack of support from their parents, while Rumberger (2004) states that, although schools cannot do anything about the demographic and social characteristics of their students, they can change their own practices that have a direct impact on ESL rates in their school.

In addition, the OECD (2013) points to the importance of policy measures strengthening school and community practices that encourage supportive relationships among teachers, students and families, especially in socio-economically deprivileged areas where the individual's cultural capital

determines their social capital to an even greater extent. For instance, families with a lower SES usually live in less settled neighbourhoods and school areas, and children have friends from those neighbourhoods. Accordingly, policy attention to strengthening social capital in these areas is even more warranted. To some point, it is therefore not a coincidence which friends children chose, relationships they form, peer and community values they absorb, and which teachers educate them. Still, OECD studies (2013) show that school and community practices which encourage supportive relationships among teachers, students, families, schools and the wider community and establish the same teaching standards for all can help overcome the obstacles of cultural capital in case of deprivileged students.

Conclusions

According to the literature review we can identify the following social and cultural capital factors that importantly affect ESL: SES of the individual, parents' education level, structure of the family, time spent with children, family culture and educational values, immigrant status, quality of the family environment and relationships, peer relationships, relationships within the school and wider community, and school climate. As seen in previous chapters, all of these factors have an important direct impact on students' educational outcomes and ESL and an indirect impact through interaction between an individual's social- and cultural-level factors. The latter means that the relationship of cultural capital with a student's early dropping out is weaker for students with higher social capital (compared to low social capital); it means that social capital can reduce the negative effects of cultural capital (e.g. low SES) on ESL. The main focus of this article was to identify the factors of social and cultural capital that can be impacted so as to lower ESL rates.

We found that social capital factors originate from family, school and wider community environments (Epstein, 2009; Tukundane, Zeelen, Minnaert, & Kanyandago, 2014). Parents are the first and closest agents when considering a student's educational outcomes. In order to successfully tackle ESL, the social and cultural capital of parents needs to be improved. In other words, parenting support is desirable and even necessary to ensure the required framework enabling proper parental involvement in children's education (Giddens, 2011; Panzaru & Tomita, 2013). In this matter family support policies that support child health and appropriately

combine work and family responsibilities are an essential pillar in reducing the incidence of ESL (Kamerman, 2000).

Coface (2010) also points out that to successfully tackle ESL countries should support services helping and giving advice to parents on how to raise and educate a child, how to deal with ESL, fight against the social exclusion of parents through lifelong learning education, offer them social support and reintegration into the labour market, national policies should allow working parents to successfully reconcile their professional and private life, and the dialogue between parents and schools should be enhanced since many of the just mentioned factors can be supported through cooperation between schools and parents.

We may conclude that the quality of family life importantly affects children's school performance but, on the other hand, it is also depends heavily on the family's cultural capital, e.g. economic welfare. Here, there are important indications in the literature that, in order to minimise the negative effects of a student's background, there is a need to take actions that will strengthen the development of a positive school climate that also includes strengthening friendly peer relations. This could be a major factor improving the social capital of teenagers and thus their resilience to various educational challenges (Wrona et al., 2014). Relationships in schools should ensure a sense of belonging and psychological safety. In this matter, schools should promote a caring school community by fostering caring relationships between teachers and children. Also important is collaboration of the school community with wider community agents in order to bring the learning process to the informal environment, encourage students' connectedness with the community and thereby strengthen their sense of belonging, self-concept of ability and interest, and autonomy.

There is also a note to be taken from the research results (Newman, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992; Rumberger, 2004; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986) which indicates that education systems must accept students from different backgrounds and act accordingly. Wehlage and Rutter (1986) claim that the education system in a democratic country cannot run away from responding to students of all backgrounds and social conditions. They argue that school and the community as a whole are obliged to accept differences as a fact of life and offer positive and supportive relationships and material conditions to all students involved, particularly those deprived from this in their home environment. Here public schools and community agents have an obligation to constructively serve children from all backgrounds

and need to improve their effectiveness (Hendrick, MacMillan, Balow, & Fellow, 1989).

We can conclude that community policy-makers, parents and teachers need to be aware of the fact that especially individuals' social capital can be systematically built and strengthened. Further research in this area is also called for. We find there is a lack of both research (also see Rosenfeld, 2000) and theoretical conceptions that explicitly define areas and forms of socio-emotional support in all social settings that promote a student's educational outcomes and help in lowering ESL rates.

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2.2.3
Local Community Support in Students' Self-concept Development, Academic Achievement and ESL Prevention

Ana Kozina, Maša Vidmar and Tina Vršnik Perše

Synopsis

Through high-quality, community-based activities open to all students (including high-risk students), the community can play a significant role in building students' positive academic self-concept and promote overall positive development that can, in turn, lead to lower levels of ESL.

Summary

This paper applies the strength-based approaches (positive self-concept development and overall positive youth development (Lerner, 2007)) to the promotion of young people's success within the school environment and ESL prevention. It introduces the role of the local community in overall (student personal) development and the development of a positive self-concept. A positive self-concept is a valuable resource for favourable developmental outcomes since being socially constructed it can play a significant role in preventing ESL. The paper builds on theoretical findings on changes in the self-concept. Potential ESLers can be influenced by building their positive self-concept (especially academic self-concept), first by significant others providing positive feedback (a positive change in a low academic self-schema) and, second, by introducing and focusing on educational goals (combining educational goals with non-educational goals in a congruent way). Further on, when analysing the role

the local community can play in preventing ESL the relational development system theory and positive youth development perspective (Overton, 2010; Kiely Mueller et al., 2011) can be of great use. Development system theory indicates that youth should be studied not in isolation but as a product of the two-way relationship between the individual and his or her environment. One important environmental asset are community-based activities as a source of positive experience and positive self-concept development (Li, Bebiroglu, Phelps, & Lerner, 2009). Participation in high-quality, community-based activities is an influential contextual asset for promoting positive youth outcomes (positive self-concept and academic achievement as well) (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The paper provides some practical implications and guidelines on how to plan such community-based activities. In the conclusion, special attention is paid to positive self-concept development and support in planning ESL prevention with a focus on high-risk students and the period of transition.

Key words: ESL, self-concept, academic achievement, local community, positive youth development

Introduction

Self-concept is a reflection of individual actual abilities in a specific domain and internalisations of the feedback obtained from significant others (Harter, 2006). It is also an important construct from the motivational perspective since it predicts behaviour in specific domains (Reeve, 2015). In the interplay between self-concept and ESL, the motivational role of self-concept is crucial. Self-concept (e.g. academic self-concept) moderates effort and motivation to be active in a certain field (e.g. school attendance, learning). Since self-concept is socially constructed, and therefore subject to change, it holds the potential to play a significant role in ESL prevention. In the present paper, we will focus on the role the local community (besides other relevant contexts, such as family, school peers) has in fostering positive self-concept development (especially academic self-concept development). We will use the theoretical framework of relational systems models and the positive youth development perspective (Lerner, 2007) as they stress the value of the interplay between the individual and contexts' characteristics in promoting overall positive youth development (e.g. developing a positive self-concept and preventing ESL). Most of the literature has

focused on risk factors for failure and ESL rather than on promoting competencies that can increase young people's likelihood of successfully completing high school. This paper applies the strength-based approaches (positive self-concept development and overall positive youth development) to the promotion of young people's success within the school environment by introducing the role of the local community in overall development and ESL prevention.

Methodology

A search of scientific articles was not successful in combining school-community with ESL and self-concept (for instance: in the database Psych Articles (EBSHOST): self-concept (in title) & early school leaving (in title) – 0 articles; self-concept (in title) & drop out (in title) – 0 articles; self-concept (in title) & academic achievement (in title) – 0 articles; self-concept (in title) & local community (in title) – 0 articles). Since the focus of this paper is on the self-concept and the role of the local community as a context in self-concept development, academic achievement and ESL prevention we used: (i) self-concept handbooks and monographs; and (ii) development system model handbooks and monographs as the main source (with extensive backward search focusing on ESL and factors related to ESL). The development system model and within it positive youth development as a framework was used due to its focus on individual–context relations relevant to this paper.

Self-concept, self-concept development: link to (academic) outcomes, motivation and ESL prevention

Self-concept (a collection of domain-specific self-schemas) is typically seen as a cognitive representation of the self or perception of one's personal and interpersonal characteristics (Haney & Durlak, 1998). Self-concept can also be defined as an organised collection of characteristics, traits, attitudes, opinions, beliefs and other mental elements which individuals attach to themselves in different stages of development and in different situations (Kobal, 2000). Situations or domains typically include school, peer and athletic contexts (Galambos & Costigan, 2003). The self-schemas that are central to self-concept are those which are more important to every individual. At the same time, they also reflect the developmental period one is in (Markus, 1977, in Reeve, 2015). In adolescence, the major self-schemas

are related to academic competence, athletic competence, physical appearance, peer acceptance, close friendship, romantic appeal and behavioural conduct or morality (Harter, 2006). Self-schema is a cognitive generalisation about the self that is domain-specific and learned from past experiences (Markus, 1983 in Reeve, 2015). For instance, in school the individual develops academic self-schema that is domain-specific and derived from their past experiences and reflections of those experiences (Reeve, 2015) in the school setting. This specific self-schema answers the question about 'me as a student'.

The development of self-concept is supported on one hand by cognitive development and on the other by social interaction processes (Harter, 2006). In focusing on normative developmental changes, cognitive development impacts two general characteristics of the self-structure: differentiation and integration. With regard to differentiation, emerging cognitive abilities allow the individual to create self-evaluations across various domains; multiple selves in different contexts. In relation to integration, cognitive abilities allow the individual to construct a higher-order generalisation, also called general self-concept (Harter, 2006).

Positive self-schema and positive evaluations about oneself are related to positive outcomes, such as a lower level of depression, lower level of conduct problems (Gerard & Buehler, 2004; Trzensnievsky, Donnelalan, & Robins et al., 2006) and higher academic achievement (Avsec, 2007; Juriševič, 1999). The data collected so far point to the co-dependence of individuals' uncertainty about themselves, a low self-concept, a low academic self-concept and lower career aspirations with a greater likelihood of ESL (Reid, 2000). The one that predicts academic achievement most significantly is the domain-specific academic self-concept. The relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement depends on the developmental period one is in. In the early years of schooling academic achievement fosters the academic self-concept whereas in later years the relationship becomes more reciprocal and in adolescence the relationship is the other way around, namely the academic self-concept fosters academic achievement (Juriševič, 1999). Taken together, these findings show that positive self-concept is a valuable resource for favourable developmental outcomes. All said, it makes academic self-concept an important building stone of academic success and ESL prevention. For instance, several relevant strengths that youth must develop to be successful during adolescence include positive self-evaluations, long-term planning, use of effective

learning strategies and prioritising goals (Wigfield, 1995). These skills all contribute to learning and greater school engagement (Wigfield & Cambria, 2010; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

Self-schemas (e.g. academic self-schema) generate motivation (e.g. for learning, staying in school) in two ways. First, self-schemas, once formed, direct behaviour in ways that call on feedback that is consistent with the established self-schemas: self-schema consistency (Reeve, 2015). For instance, if one sees himself as a successful student he or she will engage in school activities more, put greater effort into school work in order to get the feedback that will reinforce their already positive self-schema in the academic field. In contrast, the student who perceives him or herself as a school failure will become less and less active in the school environment. Second, the self-schema creates motivation to move from the real self to the ideal self (goal setting) (Reeve, 2015). In order for a student to stay in school he has to have a goal to stay in school. For example, a student who sees him or herself as a basketball player and not a student will move from the school setting and put more effort into basketball trainings, e.g. could leave school early to pursue his or her aims in basketball). Potential ESLers can be influenced in both of these two processes. First is the positive change in the low academic self-schema (by significant others providing positive feedback) and the second is setting goals in the educational domain (by combining educational goals with non-educational goals in a congruent way).

The role of community in self-concept development

According to social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), the individual's self-concept is partly derived from their role and connectedness to the group. The importance of the interplay between individual characteristics and contexts is stressed in relational developmental system theory. When studying adolescence, the theory is operationalised as a positive youth development perspective (Lerner, 2007). When addressing risky behaviour such as ESL, following the relational development system theory and the positive youth development perspective (Overton, 2010, in Kiely Mueller et al., 2011) can be of great use. Development system theory indicates that young people should be studied not in isolation but as a product of the two-way relationship between the individual and his or her environment. For instance, in adolescence adaptive adolescents' regulations involve aligning the developing strengths of youth with the features of their complex and changing worlds (e.g. school transitions). When the intervention and positive change

occurs on both sides – individual and context – positive youth development takes place (Lerner, Bowers, Geldof, Gestdottir, & DeSouza, 2012). The basic idea is that youth will develop positively when their strengths are aligned with the resources existing in their ecology. Positive outcomes (e.g. a positive self-concept) will be more probable and risky behaviour (e.g. ESL) less frequent. The question then is how to boost individual strengths and ecological assets so as to increase the likelihood the young person will become productive (including academically productive).

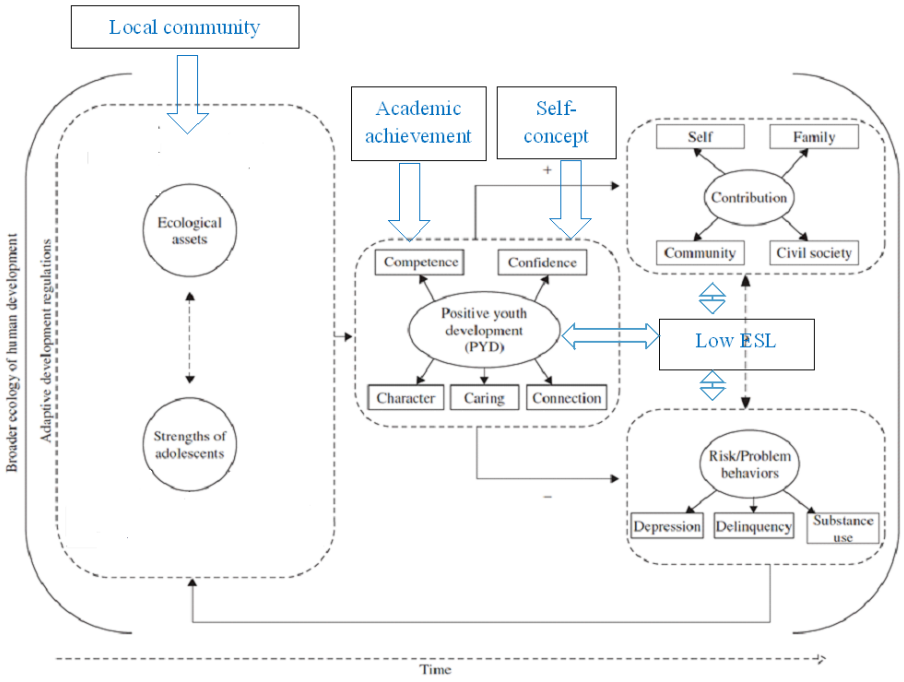

Figure 3. Relational developmental model: The role of academic achievement and local community (Adapted from Lerner et al., 2005)

The positive youth development perspective (Lerner, 2007) proposes a model in which positive development is operationalised through the 5Cs: competence, confidence, character, connection and caring (Lerner et al., 2012). The 5Cs model emphasises the strengths of adolescents (Bowers, Li, Kiely, Brittian, Lerner, & Lerner, 2010) as a result of positive interactions between individual characteristics and context (including the local community). The process is outlined in the figure above.

Academic achievement forms part of one of the 5Cs: competence, and self-concept forms part of another: confidence, and they are both results from positive interactions between the strengths of the individual (such as school engagement (Chase, Hilliard, Geldof, Warren, & Lerner, 2014)) and ecological assets or contexts (such as social networks (local community) and institutions (school)). In order for students to be successful, they need strong support from their families, neighbourhoods and schools. As seen from the model, a student's academic success and positive self-concept is a product of many factors, both individual and contextual (Chase et al., 2014). According to the positive youth development perspective, there are strengths that exist in the ecology of youth, that is, there are resources in the families, school, neighbourhood and the local community that can support the actualisation of adolescents' change in more positive directions. These contextual resources are called ecological developmental assets (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Semsa, 2006). One important contextual asset is community-based activities as a source of positive experience and positive self-concept development (Li, Bebiroglu, Phelps, & Lerner, 2009). Participation in high-quality, after-school activities is an influential contextual asset for promoting positive youth outcomes (a positive self-concept and academic achievement as well) (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). When there are positive programmes in the community in which youth can participate, these programmes play an important role in promoting positive outcomes (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Kiely Mueller et al., 2011). After-school activities constitute a significant portion of the time that many young people spend away from the family and school setting that can function as a protective factor. Participation in community, after-school activities can also impact on youth achievement within the school setting (Zaff, Moore, Papillo, & Williams, 2003). For instance, participation in a variety of extracurricular activities is linked to higher school engagement, lower risk behaviours and positive academic outcomes (Fredrics & Eccles, 2005).

Unfortunately, not all students are equally involved in such activities, for example students who come from a home without as many resources are frequently left out. The community can come forward in addressing these issues by providing cost-free activities for youth. Taking part in high-quality, community-based activities results in several positive outcomes, such as goal-setting skills related to self-concept development (Larson, 2000; Simpink, Vest, & Becnel, 2010). In addition to promoting positive outcomes and self-concept-related outcomes, participating in community-based,

out-of-school activities has been linked to several other outcomes that are also related to academic achievement and school success, such as emotional regulation (Larson & Brown, 2007) and structured positive and prosocial peer relations (Barber, Stone, Hunt, & Eccles, 2005, in Kiely Muller, Lewin Bizan, & Brown Urban, 2011). The community activities differ from school by providing challenge and motivation to develop their skills. The community context gives youth critical opportunities to work towards a real-world goal, exert control over projects and learn skills that may engage their energy and attention (Ramey & Rose-Krasnor, 2012). For instance, youth living in communities with greater opportunities to participate in structured activities may experience better overall development than do youth in less well-organised communities (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000), indicating the important role the local community plays in positive youth development and ESL prevention.

Practical implications

In order to promote positive development and, within it, promote development of a positive self-concept and prevent ESL, Eccles and Gootman (2002) suggest eight community programme characteristics are important: (a) physical and psychological safety; (b) an appropriate structure; (c) supportive relationships; (d) opportunities to belong; (e) positive social norms; (f) support for efficacy and mastering; (g) opportunities for building skills; and (h) integration of family, school and community efforts. In a shorter version, these have been condensed to three: (a) positive and sustained programmes (lasting at least a year); (b) including youth life skills building activities; (c) activities led by youth and the inclusion of activities holding a high value for youth. Participation in such programmes has been linked to positive outcomes, among others to higher grades and a positive self-concept (Kiely Mueller et al., 2011). When the community setting offers opportunities for meaningful participation and broad commitment in ways that extend to interests outside the self, such as citizenship and volunteering, youth respond in ways that impel growth and positive youth development (Ramey & Rose-Krasnor, 2012).[1] In addition, the programmes that are aimed at boosting the self-concept show a notable improvement in a

1 For example, a specific, well-organised programme which helps to build a strong self-concept in connection to educational attainment is the PLYA programme in Slovenia (Dobrovoljc et al., 2003): Project learning for young adults, which is a publicly accredited informal education programme intended for the unemployed aged between 15 to 25 years with the intention to either encourage young people to return

participant's personal adjustments and academic achievement (Haney & Durlak, 2006).

When planning an intervention, one also has to consider the timing in line with the developmental trends of self-concept. The entry to elementary school and the period of middle childhood is connected to a general decline in the overall and domain-specific self-concept (Cantin & Boivin, 2004). Researchers (Harter, 2006) attribute this drop to greater reliance to social comparisons information and social feedback, leading to more realistic judgements about one's capabilities. After this period and the identification of relative weaknesses and strengths concerning specific domains, recovery of the self-concept is expected. The next developmental drop in self-concept is expected in early adolescence due to the transition to lower secondary school (Wigfield, Eccles, MacIver Reuman, & Midgley, 1991). It is in this period that ESL is also most frequent. In Western societies, the physiological and emotional changes related with puberty (indicating the onset of the period of adolescence) often overlap with the changes associated with the transition from elementary to lower secondary school (Cole et al., 2001). But this decline has been found to be less common and less intense in low-risk students (Castro-Olivo, 2014). Research also shows that a lower level of connection with school through school engagement may have a negative impact on students' academic achievement (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Humphrey, 2013). This all indicates that special attention to the positive self-concept development and support should be paid to the transition periods in order to foster ESL prevention, with a focus on high-risk students and the period of transition.

Conclusion

The paper concentrates on the role of the local community in both positive self-concept development and academic achievement, which both lead to ESL prevention. The positive youth development perspective, which provides a theoretical foundation, represents a strength-based approach (as opposed to a prevention model) and sees youth as a resource to be developed and not as a problem. Following this perspective, every young person has the potential for successful and healthy development and all youth possess the capacity for positive development. The basic idea is that young people will develop positively when their strengths are aligned with the resources

to education or to find a job. The programme is basically a second-chance programme, but it also builds on relationships with the community.

that exist in their ecology. Positive outcomes will be more probable and risky behaviour (such as ESL) less frequent (Lerner et al., 2012). The positive youth perspective asserts that young people have the right to contexts that foster their strengths and competencies, which provide opportunities and encouragements to learn and explore (Damon, 2004). The community context can provide just that to promote positive development and prevent ESL by introducing community-based activities that are free to all and organised in such a way that promotes positive youth development and positive self-concept development (congruent with the academic self-concept).

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2.2.4
Support for Autonomy, Competence and Relatedness Using School-community Collaboration as a Systematic ESL Prevention Tool

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Synopsis

The local community (school–community collaboration) can play an important role in preventing ESL by supporting a student's basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. Autonomy, competence and relatedness are the building stones of intrinsic motivation that is crucial for students to stay in school.

Summary

The paper analyses the role of the local community in ESL – with a special focus on school–community collaboration and based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2002). School–community collaboration occurs when groups or agencies come together to establish an educative community. The educative community is composed of a multitude of educating entities such as school, home, places of worship, the media, museums, libraries, community agencies, and businesses (Drew, 2004). When these entities take part in a common goal (education), students may see more meaning in education and be less likely to leave school. Some of the positive results found at schools practising extensive community–school collaboration are improved reading and maths performance, better attendance rates, a decrease in suspension rates, and a reduction in the ESL rate (Schargel & Smink, 2004). In the paper, we propose a model in which we use school–community collaboration as a possible tool

for supporting psychological needs and positive effects on achievement and attendance rates using Self-Determination Theory – SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Self-determination theory argues that people have three basic psychological needs: (i) the need for autonomy; (ii) the need for competence; and (iii) the need for relatedness. All three are discussed in this contribution and the role of school–community collaboration in satisfying these needs is explained. It has so far been established that when these psychological needs are met in students their well-being increases significantly, their knowledge is conceptual and ESL is less common (Ryan & Deci, 2009). There have also been more specific connections between an autonomy supporting environment and a low level of ESL (Alivernini & Lucidi, 2011). Our underlying assumption presented in the paper is that positive and ongoing school–community collaboration fosters students' autonomy, competence and relatedness, which consequently prevent ESL.

Key words: local community, school-community cooperation, self-determination theory, relatedness, autonomy, competence

Introduction

The research on ESL reveals that one of the crucial factors influencing a student's decision to leave school is a (lack of) motivation (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997). Individual differences in academic achievement (and persistence to stay in school) can be significantly predicted by students' self-efficacy beliefs and strong motivation to succeed in school (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013). The level as well as the quality (intrinsic or extrinsic) of motivation is important. Intrinsic motivation is the inherent propensity to seek out novelty and challenge, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore and to learn (Reeve, 2015). Students with high levels of intrinsic motivation are less likely to leave school early (Guay & Vallerand, 1997; Hardre & Reeve, 2003). When students are intrinsically motivated they experience engagement, perceive that their school-related tasks are decided on by themselves (self-determined) and based on their personal values and interests (Alivernini & Lucidi, 2011). The higher a person's intrinsic motivation the greater will be their engagement in a task (e.g. school tasks in a school setting), the stronger their effort to pursue their goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), to pay attention in class, exert effort and stay in school (Hardree & Reeve, 2003; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). The more students are engaged, the less they are prone to ESL. For instance, a longitudinal study conducted

by Archambault et al. (2009) showed that a global school engagement significantly predicts low levels of ESL. On the other side, extrinsic motivation arises from environmental incentives (rewards, consequences, punishments) that are separate from activity itself (Reeve, 2015). The problem with extrinsic motivations is that, when these environmental incentives are withdrawn, the behaviour stops as well – for instance, if a student is externally motivated to be in school (e.g. grades, parental pressure) and if these external rewards or punishers are gone (or a student no longer finds them relevant), he or she would leave school. All of this supports the notion that it is important to develop students' intrinsic motivation. One of the most empirically supported theories of the contemporary psychology of motivation is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2002). SDT was chosen as a framework for the present paper due to its in depth-models of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with practical implications, among others, for the field of education. In the paper, we will discuss how community–school collaboration can enhance students' intrinsic motivation to learn and to stay in school by fulfilling their psychological needs.

Methodology

The search for scientific articles was mostly unsuccessful in combining school–community collaboration with SDT and ESL (for instance, in the PsychArticles (EBSHOST) database by searching the key words 'self-determination theory', 'early school leaving', 'drop out', 'school–community collaboration' only 2 out of 15 articles found through the search engine were content-related and relevant). We used: (i) self-determination theory handbooks and monographs as the main source (and backward search); and (ii) a self-determination theory online platform where relevant research using self-determination theory is gathered (section application of self-determination theory/education) and the online platform ResearchGate.

Self-Determination Theory – SDT

Self-Determination Theory is a theory of motivation. It is concerned with supporting our natural or intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective and healthy ways. SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2002) is not so much focused on the amount of motivation but more on the quality of motivation by differentiating amotivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. All three types of motivation can be placed on a continuum of perceived locus of control or

self-determination. The type of motivation is closely linked to the perceptions individuals hold concerning the origins of their behaviour (whether they are within or beyond their control). On one end of the continuum is amotivation (a total lack of intentionality and motivation). Here we can picture a typical ESL student (Reeve, 2015). On the continuum amotivation is followed by four types of extrinsic motivation that can be distinguished depending on the degree of autonomy: external regulation (not at all autonomous), introjected regulation (somewhat autonomous), identified regulation (mostly autonomous) and integrated regulation (fully autonomous). On the other end of the continuum there is intrinsic motivation as the highest level of self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The level of self-determination increases when we move from amotivation through extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation (fully autonomous motivation).

One of the many advantages and practical implications of SDT is that it explains how amotivation can be changed into extrinsic motivation (in the process of internalisation) first using external regulation (the task is done in order to obtain rewards or avoid negative consequences), then introjected regulation (the task is done in order to improve self-esteem and avoid shame, guilt and anxiety) to identified regulation (the task is done because students feel it is important and related to their own goals – they consciously apply a value to it) and finally to integrated regulation (the task is done because it represents an integral part of the student's values and needs). The level of self-determination, perceived autonomy, increases as we move along the continuum. The level of perceived autonomy is important because the more autonomous one's motivation is, the more effort they put into a task (e.g. schooling) and the more persistent and productive that effort is in terms of learning performance and achievement (Reeve, 2015).

The type of motivation depends on the fulfilment of three basic psychological needs: the need for autonomy, the need for competence and the need for relatedness (the more these needs are met, the more motivation is intrinsic). Need for autonomy refers to being the perceived origin or source of one's own behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Need for competence refers to feeling effective in one's ongoing interactions with the social environment and experiencing opportunities to exercise and express one's capacities (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Need for relatedness refers to feeling connected to others, to caring for and being cared for by others, to having a sense of belonging both with other individuals and with one's community (Ryan, 1995). People are naturally intrinsically motivated to learn and, when the

environment supports all three basic needs, this natural urge emerges and learning is intrinsically motivated and of higher quality (in a school setting if all these needs are met this would relate to lower levels of ESL). Students who are externally motivated persisted much less than students who are internally motivated (Valleard et al., 1997), which leads us to believe that they are also less persistent when it comes to schooling.

SDT in the classroom and its role in ESL

Research (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986; Tsai et al., 2008) shows that ESL students typically have a lower level of intrinsic motivation and identified regulation and higher levels of amotivation. Students become more intrinsically motivated when their basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are fulfilled. The need for competence and autonomy are the most important (the strongest predictors) ones in the development of intrinsic motivation, whereas the need for relatedness is crucial in supporting the process of transforming external motivation into more autonomous motivation. Legault and colleagues (Legaut, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006) found that a lack of support for these three needs contributed to amotivation (a total lack of motivation or the lowest level of self-determination). Amotivated students do not want to study and feel they cannot change their academic outcomes, with the most likely consequence of those feelings being that these students would leave school as soon as they can. They also perceive themselves as being less competent and less autonomous in school activities (Valleard et al., 1997).

Experimental work shows when students are tested or given rewards for activities that are intrinsically motivated their intrinsic motivation decreases due to lowering their sense of autonomy. In contrast, providing students with choice (thus supporting autonomy) and positive feedback (thus supporting competence) typically increases intrinsic motivation. The satisfaction of all three needs results in strong intrinsic goals (e.g. personal growth, affiliation, community) that are linked to greater psychological well-being and better academic and non-academic outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2009). Similarly, Otis, Grouzet and Pelletier (2005) investigated the transition to the first year of high school and found that the ESL intention was correlated with a decrease in self-determined motivation.

Autonomy and competence support:

Valleard and colleagues (1997) introduced a model in which low levels of autonomy supportive behaviours from critical social agents (teachers, parents,

school administration, local community) undermine students' perceptions of their own autonomy and competence which, in turn, decreases self-determined motivation that leads to the thought of ESL and actual ESL. They (Vallerad et al., 1997) studied contextual and motivational predictors of ESL by assessing students with regard to their perception of their autonomy and the support for autonomy and by investigating which students would be more likely to still be in school a year later. They found that students who felt more autonomous and had more support for autonomy felt more competent and were more likely to stay in school a year later. In classrooms where teachers are more autonomy-supportive (e.g. letting students choose from various alternatives, listening to them and asking them for their point of view), students tend to become more intrinsically motivated, perceive themselves as more competent, and feel better about themselves, whereas in classrooms where teachers were more controlling (e.g. giving strict directions or orders, supervising and monitoring too closely or not giving students the opportunity to propose choices and opinions that differ from those expressed by adults), students tended to lose intrinsic motivation, perceived competence and self-esteem (Ryan & Grolnick, 1986; Tsai et al., 2008) and were more prone to ESL (Vallerand et al., 1997). Other studies on the topic (Guay & Valleard, 1997; Hardree & Reeve, 2003; Valleard & Bissonette, 1992) confirmed these findings, thereby stressing the importance of autonomy-supportive behaviour in schools.

The results were also replicated in a longitudinal setting. For instance, Alievernini and Licidi (2011) used a longitudinal design and showed that the level of self-determined motivation in students, which was directly related to the perception of the autonomy support they receive, was the best predictor of the intention to leave school early. Moving even further (by incorporating more variables in their model), Hardree and Reeve (2003) included academic achievement in their analysis of the relationship between autonomy support and ESL, and found that the more autonomous type of motivation influences the decision to stay in school, regardless of the level of academic achievement, namely, even in low-performing students. Alivernini and Lucidi (2011) added academic achievement and SES to the model and found that the level of self-determined motivation in students significantly predicted ESL, even when controlling for their academic achievement and SES, indicating that the intention to leave school early seems to be more directly affected by self-determined motivation than

by academic achievement and perceived competence (Alivernini & Lucidi, 2011).

Intrinsic motivation is also related to higher quality knowledge (which fulfils the need for competence). In an experiment (Benware & Deci, 1984), students were given 3 hours to read a text. The first group was told they would be tested afterwards (low intrinsic motivation was expected) and the other that they would be given a chance to use their knowledge in practice by teaching others (higher intrinsic motivation was expected). The two groups did not differ significantly in the information memorised but did differ in their conceptual knowledge. The findings were replicated in numerous studies around the world (Grolnik & Ryan, 1987; Kage & Namiki; 1990; Fortier, Vallerard, & Guay, 1995).

Support for relatedness

The quality of motivation influences ESL (among others) by strengthening a student's persistence, higher quality knowledge and positive feelings in school also by satisfying their need for relatedness. This is especially important in students prone to ESL since they are usually not intrinsically motivated and therefore we have to find a way to transform their amotivation into first extrinsic motivation and, finally, intrinsic motivation. The need for relatedness is the one supporting the need for competence and autonomy and can be addressed by providing an inclusive environment on the classroom level, school level and community level. Sense of belonging or relatedness refers to the extent to which students feel personally accepted, respected, and supported by others in the school social environment. Students with a smaller sense of belonging tend to be less socially integrated into the school (Pearson et al., 2007) and are less attached to the school community and the wider community. It is in this context (relatedness support) that community-based learning can be of special use. Community is used to expand the social network of students, which satisfies their need for relatedness through community-based learning. Research (Epstein et al., 2009) shows that community-based learning influences (besides influencing self-evaluated autonomy and competence) the sense of belonging, relatedness to school and the wider community. Important emphasis also has to be put on teachers' motivation to collaborate with the community and support for their interests as well. Various studies of elementary and high school students (e.g. Hardre & Reeve, 2003; Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2007) have

shown that teachers' support for autonomy is related to their own autonomous motivation and later work engagement.

As noted, the need for competence and autonomy are the most important elements in the development of intrinsic motivation whereas the need for relatedness is crucial when transforming external motivation into autonomous motivation and supporting the internalisation process. All three needs are important and must be balanced. When one of the needs is not fulfilled, intrinsic motivation is less likely to be developed (Emery, Toste, & Health, 2015).

Can the community help? Using community–school collaboration to foster autonomous motivation and prevent ESL

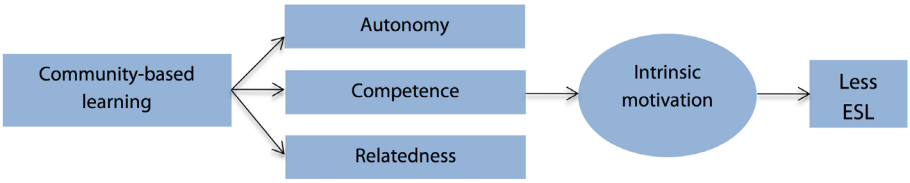

Figure 4. Proposed conceptual model of the role community-based learning plays in ESL

Intrinsically motivated learning can be greatly influenced by social environments (Ryan & Deci, 2009). One of the social contexts (besides the home and school environment) that can influence motivation (by supporting autonomy, competence and relatedness and targeting key features of amotivation) is the local community. From an ecological perspective, students' academic outcomes are also affected by the local communities in which they live (Ellias & Haynes, 2008). School–community collaboration occurs when groups or agencies come together to establish an educative community. The educative community is composed of a multitude of educating entities such as school, home, places of worship, the media, museums, libraries, community agencies, and businesses (Drew, 2004). When these entities take part in a common goal (education), students may see more meaning in education and be less likely to leave school. School–community collaboration can entail many types: (a) information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programmes or services (provided by community agents); (b) information on community activities that are linked to learning skills and

talents, including summer programmes for students; (c) collaboration on common goals through partnership involving school, civic, counselling, cultural, health, recreation and other agencies and organisations, and business; (d) service to the community by students, families and the school (e.g. providing recycling, art, music, drama and other activities for seniors or others; (e) participation of alumni in school programmes for students and as mentors for planning for college and work (Epstein et al., 2009). Some of the positive results found at schools practising extensive community–school collaboration are improved reading and maths performance, better attendance rates, a decrease in suspension rates and a reduction of the ESL rate (Sanders, 2009; Schargel & Smink, 2004). Research on the impact of community collaboration on academic achievement is an emerging field.

We can use positive and ongoing school–community collaboration as a source of activities (for instance with project work and different assignments in a partner institution on the local level, such as museums, hospitals, parks…) that can foster a student's self-perceived autonomy, competence and relatedness. When students become actively involved in the community, under proper conditions this fulfils one or more of their basic psychological needs that foster the development of self-determined motivation. Involvement of the community in the form of mentoring institutions supports a student's competence (giving meaning to their knowledge) and relatedness (new social bonds, friendships, a sense of belonging to the broader community and being a vital part) and autonomy (independent project work). For instance, giving choice and supporting autonomy in organising and conducting project work fosters their sense of autonomy. By experiencing that their knowledge and skills come of use on the local community level students fulfil their need for competence. One example of this type of collaboration would be, for instance, project work on agricultural planning for planting local green areas in which representatives of the local community would cooperate with biology teachers and students of a local school. With students planning the whole project, their autonomy would be supported, by taking advantage of their biology knowledge their competence would be supported, and by actively taking part in teamwork their sense of belonging and relatedness (on the school level with their peers in the project team and on the community level with representatives of the local community) would increase. These types of activities (mentoring and tutoring programmes, contextual learning and job shadowing) also have research support (Epstein et al., 2009). The need that can be addressed to

the greatest extent is the need for relatedness. Involvement of the community enhances the feeling of worthiness in students. Social support fosters a feeling of social connectedness which is required in order for children to internalise social standards (for instance, the value of education) and to develop respect for social institutions (including school) (Ellias & Hayes, 2013). In collaboration with the community, students build their own social network, social capital that is just as important an indicator of well-being as is material capital (Morenoff & Sampson, 2008). Even if a child or adolescent possesses the required skills for school success, the motivation to use them is related to the perception of social support for school-related activities (from their parents and the community).

The local community can provide a setting in which the autonomy of students can be supported, especially since school–community collaboration moves learning activities out of the typical hierarchical learning environment of the classroom.

Besides support for basic psychological needs, community-based learning can target some of the interrelated aspects of amotivation. For students prone to ESL the typical motivation is amotivation. Amotivation is a complicated construct comprising four interrelated aspects (Reeve, 2015): low ability (a sense of incompetence and the belief that one lacks sufficient ability to perform a certain task), low effort (a lack of desire to spend energy on a particular task), low value (a lack of perceived importance or usefulness of a certain task) and unappealing task (a perception that a task is personally unattractive). In school–community collaboration, low ability can be addressed by exposing students to practical assignments with a direct benefit for their local community and therefore their sense of ability (whatever their initial level of ability is) can be supported. Something similar applies to low effort. Low value can be targeted with the same activities. When students observe that their knowledge is of direct use they can develop a better sense of value of school-related knowledge. When schools collaborate with the community and address the needs of the community (e.g. teaching computer skills to elderly people in the community) the school curricula become more relevant and meaningful. Meaningful and relevant curricula related to students' own interests and goals promote greater school engagement and intrinsic motivation in all students (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013). When framing school learning material in a community context it can become more interesting. The last characteristic of amotivation, attractiveness of the task, demands some extra effort from the school – when

connecting individual students with selected school–community collaboration tasks. When their interests are considered to be important, they can perceive that a task is more attractive to them. To conclude, when trying to move from amotivation to extrinsic or possibly even intrinsic motivation we have to change the perception of school work as something not worth doing into something worth doing.

Conclusions

As pointed out by Ryan and La Guardia (1999, in: Ryan & Deci, 2009), the importance of autonomy and competence support needs to be recognised in ESL prevention even more since the first response of teachers and parents in situations of anticipated ESL is to add more controls and apply additional pressures to the students, which in a way closes the door for intervention and even reduces their motivation to stay in school. Involvement in community work can support the intrinsic motivation to learn and stay in school by introducing community–school collaboration. When schools are engaged in community-relevant activities these can affect the relatedness (sense of belonging to the community, being involved with peers, being involved with members of the community outside of schools), autonomy (designing and managing their own community-based project work) and competence (putting the formal knowledge gained at school into practice and use on the community level) as well – increase students' motivation to learn and continue their education. By knowing the trajectories leading to ESL such as self-evaluated amotivation and extrinsic motivation (perceived control and external regulation), we can screen students (self-evaluation questionnaires) and identify those who are more at risk and then include them in more autonomy-supported activities (also related to community collaboration).

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2.3 cooperation at the level of multi-proffessional teams

2.3.1
Team Cooperation in Addressing ESL – Lessons Learnt from Health and Social Care and Education

Maša Vidmar and Nika Knez

Synopsis

The many lessons from health, social and education settings for multi-professional teams dealing with ESL have been well researched (e.g. team training, sufficient time, funding and resources). Moreover, specifically for ESL teams, discussing how they approach ESL prevention, their understanding of ESL as well as creating an educational alliance are important. However, putting the recommendations into practice remains a challenge.

Summary

The aim of the article is to review the literature on multi-professional teams in health, social and education settings, including multi-professional teams dealing with ESL – what are the conditions for them to function successfully, and to identify any caveats. Based on the lessons learnt from these settings, recommendations to ensure the success (or continued success) of multi-professional teams working in ESL are provided. The most noteworthy and overriding recommendation is to ensure the provision of team training. This will help address any ethical dilemmas that might arise from different professionals working together (e.g. the student's privacy) as well as develop respect for the potentially different professional and organisational values seen among professionals. In the long run, inter-professional education for professionals working in and around schools should

become the norm. Lessons drawn from multi-professional teams in schools show the issue of sufficient funding, time and resources (to avoid work overload) is crucial as is clarifying the roles and responsibilities. Continuous attention to minimise the amount of bureaucracy related to teams' functioning is important. Moreover, the issue of using the school as the place for delivery of the service and institutional resistance to external teams working on-site in schools should be discussed.

One study shows that most European countries have established a multi-agency partnership ESL practice made up of multi-professional teams. Based on limited studies, it is recommended that team members discuss their ways of approaching ESL prevention (e.g. like preventing absenteeism only or focusing on any education, health or social difficulties) and their understanding of ESL (e.g. does it stem from the student's lack of investment or inadequate teaching, learning, parental involvement). Another important issue is the need to develop educational alliances on multiple levels, including teachers (to create bonds with teachers).

The recommendations concerning ESL multi-professional teams that are presented here bring together lessons from diverse settings and are also very closely aligned with scientific findings from the literature on small teams. Yet going beyond these recommendations and putting them into practice may pose a challenge.

Key words: early school leaving, multi-professional teams, cooperation, health care, social care, education

Introduction

Establishing multi-disciplinary[1] or multi-professional teamwork is one way of addressing complex cross-cutting social issues as members of a range

1 There is wealth of research and publications on the topic of multi-professional, inter-professional, cross-professional, multi-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary in relation to cooperation, collaboration, partnership, practice, work, communication coming from a range of fields, e.g. aviation (e.g. Thomas, Sherwood & Helmreich, 2003), health-care/medicine (e.g. Leathgard, 1994; Daly, 2004), social care (e.g. Frost, 2011), education (e.g. Downes, 2011; Edwards & Downes, 2013; Markle, Splett, Maras, & Weston, 2014). There are issues of defining the meaning and wide array of alternative terminology is used and debated, that can be concept-based (e.g. inter-disciplinary, multi-professional, holistic), process-based (e.g. teamwork, partnership, collaboration, cooperation, liaison, alliances) or agency-based (inter-agency, inter-sectoral). For example, there is an on-going debate on differences between

of professional and occupational groups, including education, work towards achieving social inclusion targets (Willson & Pirrie, 2000). Multi-professional teams ensure the coordination of assessment and treatment activities to best meet the complex mental, physical and social needs of service users (Deane & Gournay, 2009), and for this they require the cooperation of the team. The importance of multi-professional collaboration in health and social services as well as educational settings is shown in several publications (e.g. Cheminais, 2009; Leathard, 1994) and has grown in significance in all areas of work, including the issue of addressing ESL (European Commission, 2013).

This article aims to review the literature on multi-professional teams in health, social and education settings – what are the conditions for them to successfully function and whether there are any caveats. The role of educational alliances is highlighted. Finally, we examine the current situation of multi-professional teams dealing with ESL and provide recommendations to facilitate their functioning based on lessons so far learnt about multi-professional team cooperation in various contexts.

Methodology

The publications included in this literature review were found using computerised searches in the Arizona State University Library search engine (which includes several databases, e.g. PsycINFO, Academic Search Premier (EBSCOhost), ERIC (Proquest), JSTOR Arts and Sciences, ProQuest, SAGE Premier, Science Direct) and in other online resources (e.g. ResearchGate, institution webpages). We used the following key words in the searches: multi-professional, multi-disciplinary, inter-professional, cooperation, collaboration, health services, social services, education, early school leaving etc. In the next step, we examined references cited in the articles (i.e. "backward search" procedures). Original scientific articles and monographs as well as reports for or by the European Commission are mostly considered.

Multi-professional teams in health and social services

About two decades ago, the issue of inter-professional collaboration, its development and challenges was on the rise in the health, welfare and caring domains (see, for example, Leathard, 1994; 2003; Molyneux, 2001). Over

cooperation and collaboration in different sectors (e.g. Kirschner, Dickinson, & Blosser, 1996; Kozar, 2010; Nissen, Evald, & Clarke, 2014). However, for the purposes of this article the terms are used interchangeably.

this time, there has been a large expansion of multidisciplinary settings that involve several social and health care and related professionals (e.g. in hospitals, children's centres, child/adolescence mental health services; Frost, 2011; nursing and residential homes, day care services; Leathard, 2003). Teamwork in the healthcare environment is recognised as being beneficial not only for patients, but also for healthcare professionals. While working together, a healthcare team can find solutions and create strategies that will improve a client's function, activity and participation (Borrill et al., 1999; Huss et al., 2013).

Despite the acknowledged potential of multi-professional team cooperation, various authors see several challenges to its successful functioning. Hardy et al. (1992) identified barriers in joint working and planning across the health and social services, including problems associated with competitive ideologies and values; professional self-interest; competition for domains; conflicting views about users; as well as differences between specialisms, expertise and skills. Several ethical dilemmas (e.g. boundary issues, confidentiality, consent, safety, involuntary treatment and restraint; Leathard, 2003; Thistlethwaite & Hawksworth, 2015) may occur where there is diversity amongst team members in terms of personal, professional, and/or organisational values (Thistlethwaite & Hawksworth, 2015). Approaches used within health and social care settings were identified to create and conduct interventions (e.g. team training, quality improvement initiatives) to improve inter-professional teamwork (Reeves et al., 2010).

On a similar note, lessons arising from introducing multi-professional teams in health care (primary, emergency mental) teach us that attention to team development (e.g. extensive consultations with relevant staff groups), team management (e.g. a team coordinator in charge of leadership, managing the budget, communication), training for the team coordinator and team members as well as ongoing support is needed. This brings a series of benefits for the functioning of the team (e.g. a climate of cooperation, more integrated care for patients, improved quality of life of team members; Borrill & West, 2001; behaviour change, Mazzocato et al., 2011; Morgan, 2001). Collaboration on health care shows that communication between groups of professionals is the linchpin of successful collaboration, along with patient-centred care (as opposed to power struggles), inter-professional learning and the localisation of budgets (Daly, 2004). Parallel to this, workload, increased bureaucracy, inter-professional and interpersonal conflicts were the biggest problems identified in community mental

health teams (Carpenter et al., 2003). The point was reiterated by Felkner et al. (2004) who observe the importance of addressing communication issues, client expectations of care, and understanding of the roles in the multidisciplinary team. Similar issues were discussed in a model of interdisciplinary collaboration in social work, e.g. interdisciplinary collaboration depends on one's professional role, structural characteristics, personal characteristics and history of collaboration (Bronstein, 2003). The identified issues and approaches that need to be overcome may be very informative while discussing multi-professional ESL teams.

Another very important lesson emerges from the health sector – inter-professional education in healthcare has been developed (Bridges et al., 2011; WHO, 2010). Inter-professional education is a collaborative approach to developing healthcare students as future inter-professional team members. Complex medical issues can best be addressed by inter-professional teams. Training future healthcare providers to work in such teams will help facilitate this model, resulting in improved healthcare outcomes for patients. The didactic programme emphasises inter-professional team-building skills, knowledge of professions, patient-centred care, service learning, the impact of culture on healthcare delivery and an inter-professional clinical component (Bridges et al., 2011).

Multi-professional teams in education

The body of research on multi-professional teams in the USA shows this has become the norm (taking a variety of names and functions) rather than the exception in schools (Markle et al., 2014). The authors review some of the scarce evidence suggesting school multi-professional teams can have a positive impact on individual students, teachers, school psychologists, schools and school districts, but identify the following barriers to effective functioning of the teams: limited funding and resources, the marginalisation of school teams (compared to support for academic instruction directly targeting better achievement), misunderstanding of the roles and responsibilities (e.g. duplication of services, sense of undermining one's role), turnover rates, lack of time (e.g. for regular meetings), the need for problem-solving tools (best practices or evidence-based procedures (ibid.). Not so much evidence is available on the efficacy of multidisciplinary teamwork in educational settings as there is for health and social services (Wilson & Pirrie, 2000).

Multidisciplinary teams in schools (e.g. learning and behaviour support teams) are important for improving the support structure provided for children and teachers (Downes, 2011). Schools as universal services are well placed to identify early signs of vulnerability in a student and work with other professions to explore the extent of that vulnerability and to develop a joint response. Schools have long referred students with specific individual needs to discrete external services which give specialist support. These services, for example, include school psychology, mental health services, speech therapy and counselling (Edwards & Downes, 2013). Schools can help to build local capacity and parents' social capital through paying attention to how they help foster local networks and engage with parents (Edwards & Downes, 2013). Such services usually target general issues of child welfare (e.g. Every Child Matters – ECM, UK, Cheminais, 2009; Behaviour and education support teams – BEST, the Netherlands, Downes, 2011).

Educational alliances

Recently, the term educational alliances rather than multi-professional teams, cooperation or partnership has emerged in the educational setting, including with regard to the ESL issue (Thibert, 2013). Educational alliances have been identified as one of the return-to-school factors (for details of the concept's development, see Allenbach, 2014). Gilles, Potvin and Tièche Christinat (2012) propose three levels of educational alliances: macro (institutions, regions), méso (different professionals/experts) and micro (relations within the class and with the family). Meso-level alliances correspond to more internal (within-school) educational alliances, but can also include professionals external to school, while macro-level are external educational alliances as they include a variety of external partners (inter-agency partnerships).

In relation to internal educational alliances, it seems the biggest challenges of a multi-professional service are maintaining student/family privacy and confidentiality. There are also other problems of using the school as the place for delivering the service (e.g. resistance from school personnel to students missing classes, the clash of the emotional climate of an individual session and the classroom environment); this shows the need for emotional support services at locations apart from to the school and the need to address the confidentiality issue (Downes, 2011). However, schools should remain involved because schools are the only universal service (Edwards & Downes, 2013). Moreover, institutional resistance (perceived

lack of parity of esteem between teachers and other professionals) to external teams working on-site in schools has also been observed (Downes et al., 2006). In this respect, the role of the school leader is emphasised (Downes, 2011). The authors emphasise that the provision of mental health (socio-emotional, behavioural) support and bullying prevention are a vital part of the team's tasks as well as their role in outreaching to marginalised families and children. In a similar vein, Suldo et al. (2010) addressed problems inherent to using schools as the site for service delivery in relation to mental health intervention and emotional supports for ESL prevention. These barriers include space constraints, scheduling problems, maintaining student privacy, resistance from school staff to students missing classes, the school's accountability for academic success only.

External educational alliances require school staff and multi-agency frontline practitioners to work collaboratively. The following has been mentioned as providing the conditions for the good functioning of these alliances: sufficient well-trained, high-quality frontline multi-agency practitioners, more inter-professional training, sufficient time to invest in building quality relationships between school staff and the multi-agency frontline practitioners, clearer and improved information for schools on where to refer children and who to seek specific expertise from, including the voluntary sector, the sharing of good practices of external educational alliances, greater support in relation to evaluating the interventions for improving a student's outcomes (GTC, 2007, in Cheminais, 2009).

Multi-professional teams addressing ESL

The use of multi-professional teams has also been proposed for the ESL context. The potential of multi-professional teams and team cooperation for ESL is recognised by the European Commission which has identified multi-professional teams operating at the local level (school or community) as a form of cross-sectorial cooperation; namely, one of the key conditions for successful policies against ESL (European Commission, 2013). Putting ESL in the context of multi-professional teams indicates that ESL is not seen as only a teacher-related problem. Placing ESL in the setting of cross-sector team cooperation (i.e. professionals working under jurisdictions of different sectors like education, health, justice, social welfare and business; from the private and public sector) shows that ESL is not only seen as an education-related problem.

There is an impression that such multi-professional team cooperation in European countries is a recent phenomenon. For example, Edwards and Downes (2013) state that a great deal of inter-professional collaboration in and around schools is "work in progress" without any robust evidence of outcomes for children and young people. However, the study shows that many European countries have a well-established multi-agency partnership practice for tackling ESL at the school or community level (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014). Where it is well established, it may: (1) take the form of a legal obligation to form the partnership (e.g. Spain) – even though the legal framework does not guarantee effective partnerships; or (2) be an institutionalised partnership practice (where teams work together in a structured and institutionalised way, e.g. France, Luxembourg, Slovenia). In other countries, (3) these partnerships may be developed within projects (e.g. Latvia) or (4) the partnerships are just beginning (e.g. Hungary, Norway) (ibid.). Generally, these partnerships are not necessarily established specifically to address ESL but within a wider action framework (in any case, the partnerships are reported as contributing to ESL prevention and/or intervention). The professionals involved vary between countries, but school heads and teachers are the key professionals in all European countries. Psychologists and education and career counsellors are present in most countries (either based in schools or as part of external organisations), social workers (usually external to the school) and youth workers are also important partners. The team works together locally to identify the most suitable support on a case-by-case basis – both the composition and scope of the teams vary according to each student's needs (Thibert, 2013).

There is a lack of research on the evaluation of such teams and how they function. The TITA project aims to fill this gap. As an exception, ongoing research work in France on ESL multi-professional teams has identified four types of collaborative work within ESL prevention groups in secondary schools: Narrowly based collaboration; Structured, collaborative preventive effort; Broader approach to prevention; Whole of the school community (Maillard, Merlin, Rouaud, & Olaria, 2016). These types differ in how they approach the prevention of ESL (e.g. a focus on absenteeism only or a wider focus on any difficulties in education, health and social domains as well as a lack of academic success and perseverance) and their understanding of ESL (e.g. does it result from the student's lack of investment, inappropriate choice of school or inadequate teaching and learning, or the lack of parental involvement).

Another exception is research work on educational alliances and ESL. In Switzerland, Allenbach (2014) conducted interviews with professionals already involved in collaborative practices (specialist teachers, psychologists, nurses, meditators, speech therapists and psycho-moto therapists). The professionals identified the following practices as being crucial for building an educational alliance with teachers: (1) the quality of the listening (to be interested in the emotions and needs of the teacher); (2) distancing oneself from the figure of expert, because positioning oneself as an expert is an obstacle to the development of collaborative practices (instead of sharing, reflecting, and planning actions together); (3) negotiating all the multiple alliances (with the child, other actors, and hierarchical instances that appointed him/her, as well as alliances between other actors). Studies (e.g. Desmarais, Merri, Salvà, Cauvier, Moriau, & Dionne, 2014; Poirier, 2015; Blaya, Gilles, Plunus, & Tièche Christinat, 2011) show the effectiveness of educational alliances between schools and community organisations that share the mission of educating young people. Youngsters in the situation of ESL are referred by school professionals to special centres providing pedagogical, psychological, social, legal, health support, including their own educational programmes. They accompany youngsters on their entry to school after having stayed at their organisations. There is a lively debate in these alliances – several members (stakeholders) are convinced the student should be prevented from creating a distance from school, while others believe entering the labour market will allow them to mature and return to school later. These alliances allow for new opportunities in the educational career of the youngsters and provide for the (re)construction of identity. Another study (Liechti et al., 2014) showed that teachers within educational alliances are turning to different stakeholders and consider different actions depending on the profile of the students at risk of ESL; for 'disruptive' students, teachers are more likely to turn to external actors from a different professional sphere, while for a 'quiet' student teachers turn to both actors working in their sphere as well as external actors. Moignard (2015) studied educational alliances and observed the strengthening of the traditional school forms beyond school boundaries and a logic of outsourcing, that illustrate the injunctive character of the new partnership forms. Studies also show that teachers assign little weight to some internal organisational and structural factors in the school system (strongly associated with ESL and mendable by schools), suggesting that efforts

should be made to inform and educate school personnel about the importance of these variables in the ESL process (Angelucci et al., 2014).

Recommendations for the future

On one hand, there are recommendations stemming from lessons of multi-professional teams in the health, social and education sectors. On the other, multi-professional teams at the school/local level (either specifically tackling ESL or within another framework, but contributing to a lower level of ESL) have already been established in many EU member states, Thus, although there is very limited research evidence examining these teams or alliances, some lessons can still be learnt.

The most noteworthy and overriding recommendation from the social, health and education sectors is to ensure the provision of team training (for members as well as the coordinator). This would help address any ethical dilemmas that may arise from different professionals working together (e.g. maintaining student/family privacy and confidentiality) as well as develop respect for the potentially different professional and organisational values often found among professionals (to prevent conflicts) and to help develop constructive communication (i.e. interaction patterns). Some of these barriers can also be overcome when practitioners in the local community have the opportunity to meet regularly over several years to share issues emerging from their practice. Successful multi-professional working develops, in geographical terms, in relatively small areas over longer periods (Glenny & Roaf, 2008). In addition, procedures such as quality improvement can support successful team cooperation. In the long run, inter-professional education for professionals working in and around schools (e.g. developing team competencies, leadership for becoming future inter-professional team members) should become the norm.

Issues facing multi-professional teams in schools include sufficient funding, time and resources as well as the need to clarify roles and responsibilities. Thus, allowing multi-professionals time to function as part of the team (and not to view their team cooperation as being just another new task on the existing list of tasks – to avoid work overload), to designate enough and the right type of professionals as well as to provide adequate training is needed. Continuous attention to minimising the amount of bureaucracy related to the teams' functioning is important. The issue of location (whether the school is the right place for service delivery) as well as

institutional resistance to external teams working on-site in schools should also be discussed.

Regarding multi-professional teams established to deal with ESL, it is recommended that team members discuss how they approach ESL prevention (e.g. preventing absenteeism only or by focusing on any education, health, social difficulties) and their understanding of ESL (e.g. is it the result of the student's lack of investment or inadequate teaching, learning, parental involvement). This holds strong implications for their work. Another important issue is how members of multi-professional teams develop educational alliances at multiple levels (with teachers, amongst themselves, among institutions). Creating bonds with teachers through attentive listening and stepping out of the role of expert helps develop an education alliance with them. Awareness-raising concerning school-related ESL factors that schools can influence is warranted (since teachers assign little weight to these factors).

Moreover, reframing ESL as a (mental) health issue has the potential to bring new players into the effort – parents, health institutions, young people, civil rights groups. An explicit link has been drawn between emotional counselling services and their role in preventing ESL. A counselling service is established at school that deals with problems that may lead to leaving the education system early but there is a belief that the class teacher is the one who is first responsible for addressing such problems. He/she is the one creating the class climate, recognising early signs of individual problems and able to react before their full escalation (Ivančič et al., 2010). This may encourage public officials to think of the ESL problem as being central to community health and as a long-term solution beneficial to the population's health (Freudenberg & Ruglis, 2007).

Conclusion

'Better multi-professional working' is a very popular recommendation made for improving services that support vulnerable children and young people. Yet it seems to be very difficult to achieve the long-term benefits for children and young people that are expected of it, particularly in teams covering a wider range of fields (Glenny & Roaf, 2008). Ongoing commitment to the effectiveness of such collaboration should be provided, so that the time taken in developing and maintaining the partnerships does not lead to disappointment and frustration (ibid.). The findings from health and social care (e.g. Daly, 2004; Frost, 2011) as well as education (Downes,

2011) show that a lot of time and effort must go into developing the knowledge and understanding of other partners (institutional culture, language, practices etc.), agreeing on process, structure, governance and desired outcomes as well as into building trust to overcome barriers to cooperation.

It seems there is a consensus across settings on what the barriers to successful teamwork are, and many authors propose recommendations to improve this (e.g. Cheminais, 2009; Downes, 2011; European Commission, 2013). Inter-professional working is largely considered worthwhile, although studies reveal that much awaits to be addressed so as to enable effective outcomes. The concern and effort regarding inter-professional cooperation should not only focus on those who are actively involved and their educators, but also those who lead the professions, manage services and determine policy. As Edwards and Downes (2013) put it, it is not enough just to designate a desk for these different services in schools. Moreover, there is a need to minimise the fragmentation that sees various services 'passing on bits of the child' and family (Edwards & Downes 2013).

To conclude, the recommendations for ESL multi-professional teams that are presented here draw together lessons from diverse settings and are also very closely aligned with the findings of other authors or our own findings arising from the large body of theoretical and empirical literature on small groups and teams. To ensure successful implementation, simply putting people together in a team is not enough – at least some of these recommendations should be considered; they may seem demanding and challenging, but only in this way will ESL teams be able exploit their potential to prevent ESL.

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2.3.2

Theoretical, Empirical and Practical Insight into Team Cooperation from the Perspective of Group Processes, Part I: Factors that Shape, Leverage or Align Team Processes

Maša Vidmar

Synopsis

When introducing local ESL multi-professional teams, consideration should be given to designing the team in accordance with the institutional context, shared vision, the development of the team and task competencies of team members, adequate team composition, the required training of team members and the development of leadership expertise.

Summary

Multi-professional teams at the local level have been recognised as important for tackling ESL, but many challenges still lie ahead. Two interrelated and complementary articles aim to bring forward expertise from the teams and small groups literature to help deal with challenges and contribute to awareness of what is needed for teams to function effectively at the micro-level: this first article focuses on the factors that shape, leverage or align team processes (part I), whereas the second article looks at the team processes (including emergent states) per se (part II). Findings from this article show that ESL teams are complex, dynamic and cyclic systems that operate at multiple interacting levels (individual, team, organisation). Teams are characterised by the interdependence of members' action, shared responsibility, common goals, specialised roles and positioning within a broader organisational context/school (Cannon-Bowers & Bowers,

2011; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). The article identifies several factors that influence team processes. Team design means that teams have to be designed in accordance with the general institutional (system) context (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Team composition and competencies refer to the fact that ESL team members require adequate task- and team-related competencies; moreover, the composition of competencies across members is to be considered as well as the non-equal influence of members (Mathieu et al., 2014). Leadership expertise should also receive attention (Burke et al., 2006). Finally, team training has been proven to impact different team-related variables (e.g. Salas et al., 2008) and thus needs to be embedded in an ESL team via various training media (e.g. videos and exercises that replicate or simulate the task context). Based on this, the following recommendations may be emphasised to ensure ESL teams function effectively: (1) development of members' task competencies related to ESL; (2) development of members' team competencies (i.e. social and interpersonal knowledge, skills and attitudes); (3) utilisation of cross-training to improve how well team members know and understand each other's positions; and (4) keeping the size of the team below 10.

Key words: team design, team composition, team diversity, team competencies, team size, team training, team leadership

Introduction

Multi-professional teams operating on the local level (in and around schools) are a grassroots form of cross-sectorial cooperation aimed at tackling ESL (European Commission, 2013). In the present article, we review scientific theoretical and empirical findings about the micro-level approach to teams (groups)[1] rather than the macro-level approach of cross-sector collaboration at the policy (system) level (for a framework of cross-sectoral collaboration also see Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Hood, Logsdon, & Thompson, 1993). The reason for promulgating the scientific findings on teams (groups) is twofold: (1) cross-sectoral collaborations show many characteristics that are common to all groups; and (2) the integration of the critical concepts from the group literature is missing in the cross-sector collaboration literature (Hood et al., 1993). Since the body of literature

1 In this article, the terms "team" and "group" are used interchangeably because – as stated by some researchers (e.g. Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2011) – the distinctions between the terms has neither been consistent nor widely accepted.

on the topic is very large and the topic of cross-sectoral team collaboration lies in the focus of the TITA project, we decided to present an overview of key scientific findings in two separate yet interrelated articles. In this first article, we focus on the factors that shape, leverage or align team processes (part I), whereas in the second article we concentrate on team processes (including emergent states) per se (part II; see Figure 21).

As depicted in Figure 21, the science of teams (groups) acknowledges the importance and embeddedness of the team within the environment, organisations or wider system, but focuses on aspects of team functioning and team effectiveness at a micro-level. Thus, the aim of the present article is to examine the impressive body of theoretical and empirical literature on small groups and teams to help understand (multi-professional) teams' daily functioning at the grassroots level and thus help deal with the challenges.

We begin our article with the contemporary conceptual framework for understanding teams. This is followed by a review of factors that shape, leverage or align team processes and a team's emergent states. In addition, how knowledge can be applied to the field of ESL multi-professional teams is presented; these practical insights are marked in italics.

Methodology

First, we conducted computerised literature searches in electronic sources (PsycINFO, PsyArticles, ScienceDirect, ABI/INFORM Complete and Google Scholar) using a variety of relevant key words, e.g. team composition, team processes, team competencies, team leadership, team conflict, team performance, team effectiveness, small group research, group dynamics, meta-analysis. Second, we examined references cited in other articles (i.e., 'backward search' procedures). Third, we examined relevant chapters in major handbooks of work, organisation and industrial psychology.

The focus was on examining meta-analytical and review articles; this was complemented by examining individual empirical studies. Emphasis was on recent literature published in the last two decades (since 1995). Most of the reviewed work builds on or integrates previous theoretical and empirical work. The methodology for this article and its continuation in the second article was common.

Conceptual framework: contemporary perspective on teams[2]

Figure 5 illustrates the contemporary perspective on teams and explains the article's focus (the top rectangle). Environmental dynamics and complexity influence the team's task. The focus in this article is on factors that affect team processes and emergent states. Together, this results in team effectiveness. Team effectiveness, in turn, influences the environment in ongoing cycles. This represents the theoretical framework and relevant empirical studies are reviewed below.

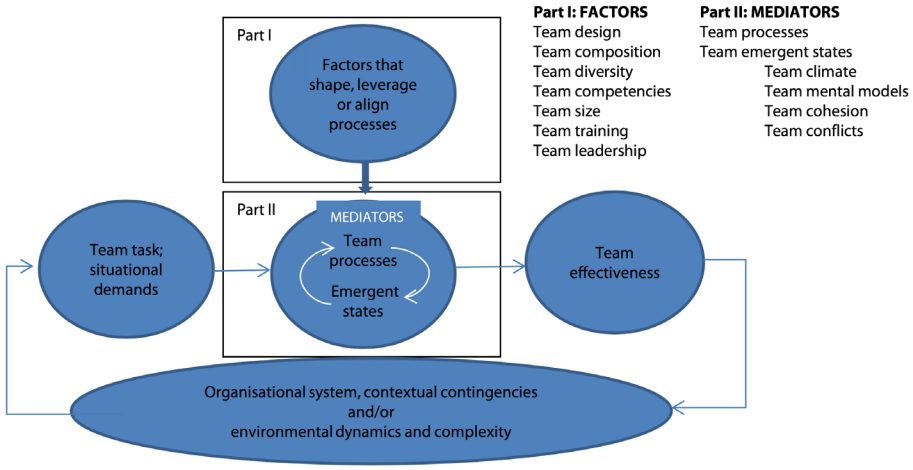

Figure 5. Conceptual framework for understanding team effectiveness (Adapted from Ilgen Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005; Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006)

There are many definitions of teams, but they generally all emphasise similar features:

- two or more members;
- the interdependence of members' action (one member cannot resolve the issue alone; members depend on each other in their workflow);
- shared responsibility (members are brought together to accomplish a task, outcome);

2 In this article, the general term "team" is used rather than multi-professional collaboration to denote that aspects presented here are based on the science of teams in general and hold for teams in general.

- common goals (members have one or more meaningful and valued goals to achieve);
- specialised roles (members have different roles or functions); and
- positioning within the broader organisational context (with boundaries and linkages to the broader system that presumably affects their performance) (Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2011).

Teams are complex, adaptive and dynamic systems that affect and are affected by a number of individual, task, situational, environmental and organisational factors as they perform a task over time (ibid.; for a review of the team's ecosystem, see Bryson et al., 2006; Hood et al., 1993). Team tasks and team capabilities are not fixed (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006) and team functioning is not linear, consecutive or static. Teams can be observed at multiple levels (i.e. individual, team) and these levels interact with each other. The life of a team is cyclic (Ilgen et al., 2005) which can be brief, recurring or enduring (Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2011). Teams are often engaged in multiple tasks that vary in duration and are at different stages of their development (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

ESL teams clearly fit into the described conceptualisation. They are embedded within the school/community and are composed of several members who have a shared goal and responsibility to prevent ESL. To achieve this, they need to align their actions. The work of the team depends on the characteristics of each member (e.g. teacher's competence), the task (e.g. to understand and stop a student's increased truancy), the situation (e.g. an especially difficult personal and family history of the potential ESLer) and other environmental/organisational factors (e.g. new regulation adopted at the school level, renovation of school building; national strategy against ESL adopted) and these variables all influence each other. This process is cyclic, meaning that a similar cycle occurs every time a new student is introduced to the ESL team (at the same time the work with other potential ESL students continues, hence the team is engaged in multiple tasks). The process is constantly changing over time as new conditions are introduced (e.g. a new team member; another (potential) ESLer).

Factors that shape, leverage or align team processes

In the following sections, we present the factors that influence the processes and emergent states that occur within a team.

Team design

Even though this may seem obvious, it is important to ensure that the team is designed in accordance with the organisational context (does the organisation/government provide rewards, education/training and information at the individual and team level for team work) and has support and resources (competence and finance) to accomplish the task (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). This is not only important at the time of establishing the team, but throughout its lifetime.

With regard to ESL teams, this means they have to find (be given) their place in the school functioning – they have to be embedded in the school life, but also in the wider education system. Team members and the team as a whole have to be given relevant information as to what is the ESL team mission (task) and some guidelines on how to accomplish it (how to organise their work, how to address specific problems, which responsibilities and jurisdictions they have etc.). Their appropriate training and financial incentives also have to be provided for (being a member of an ESL team requires time – either this is paid separately or other workload is decreased).

Team composition

Team composition research examines the attributes of team members and how combinations of these characteristics across team members influence processes, emergent states and outcomes (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, Donsbach, & Alliger, 2014). These researchers have posited the four different theoretical models about team composition listed below; in parentheses empirical studies supporting each model are listed. In the area of team composition, one must simultaneously consider all four different aspects/models:

(1) the level of individuals' task-related competencies (high levels of task-related skills are better; Devine & Philips, 2001; Cooke et al., 2003);

(2) the level of individuals' team-related competencies (high levels of teamwork competence are better; Stevens & Campion, 1994; Morgeson, Reider, & Campion, 2005);

(3) the combination of relevant characteristics across members (e.g. what does each member bring in relation to the other members – the 'strongest' and the 'weakest' level of a characteristic, the

average, the heterogeneity; Bell, Villado, Lukasik, Belau, & Briggs, 2011; Jackson, Joshi, & Erhardt, 2003);

(4) which competencies are possessed by members in core versus peripheral roles ('critical team member', 'core' team roles; Bell, 2007; Humphrey, Morgeson, & Mannor, 2009).

In addition, these aspects are dynamic and change over time:

(5) at different stages of the team's cycle different aspects of the team composition are significant (e.g. early in the team's cycle, the team's average and variance of uncertainty avoidance is relevant; later in the team's cycle average and variance of relationship orientation is important; Cheng, Chua, Morris, & Lee, 2012);

(6) members' position and roles may change over time as does the importance of the position/role; and

(7) team memberships change over time (on one hand, membership adjustment allows for better alignment with the demands but, on the other, membership changes also disrupt team functioning; Summers, Humphrey, & Ferris, 2012) and histories of members working together are important (Mathieu et al., 2014).

In ESL multi-professional teams each team member has competence related to their profession – task-related competence (i.e. technical competence required by the job; e.g. guidance counsellor knows a variety of out-of-school-programmes in the community available to the youngster); each member also possesses a certain level of competencies relevant for working in the group – team-related competence (i.e. knowledge and skills about teamwork – social and interpersonal requirements; e.g. emotional intelligence). Taken together, all members form a team profile that can be described by average or variance (heterogeneity) or minimum or maximum (mean level of general cognitive ability, the level of minimum disagreeableness, average preference for teamwork etc.). Moreover, some members may be more influential (for different reasons) than others – e.g. the school head's suggestions may be taken more seriously due to their position, or the counsellor may make a good conflict manager due to their professional expertise or the teacher/nurse may have specific relevant information about or experience with a student. Further, the influence of a member may change over time (e.g. depending on which competencies are needed in each stage).

It is expected that some members will be more permanent (school counsellors, school heads) while for others (e.g. school nurses, teacher)

memberships will perhaps be more flexible to reflect the needs of the potential ESLer. The level of disturbance caused by these changes depends on the relative task- and team-related competencies of the leavers and arrivers and how they fit in with the team profile and which position they occupy (Mathieu et al., 2014). Thus, when replacing a team member, the strategy should not focus only on 'position requirements', but also on the other aspects described above. For example, if a 'temporary member' possesses an attribute relevant for team functioning and no other member can take this role (e.g. good at managing conflicts), the team leader may decide to keep the person in the team even though the professional may not be directly linked to the potential ESLer or his/her situation. Considering the two types of members in ESL multi-professional groups, it seems that permanent members are more crucial in terms of team functioning and this should guide the team composition and decisions regarding the necessary professional development programmes (training), feedback and team building. Some team members are likely to have already worked together and this experience may positively or negatively influence working in ESL teams.

The key message from team composition is that while the right mix of people in a team sets the stage for team effectiveness – the 'right mix' is not a static property. In addition, awareness of the described aspects/models in team composition can make the decisions in this regard more transparent (e.g. when assigning members to teams; when targeting human resource efforts – e.g. training) or, perhaps more importantly, can help anticipate problems and take preventive actions (Mathieu et al., 2014).

Team diversity

Team composition is linked with the concept of diversity; it refers to how homogenous or heterogeneous is the composition of a team with regard to different features. Multi-professional ESL teams are by definition diverse in their demographics, i.e. functional background (e.g. teaching, administration, counselling) and educational background (e.g. degree in psychology). Theoretical classifications describe this as highly job-related (Weber & Donahue, 2001) and surface-level diversity (Bell, 2007). Both attributes reflect a team member's type of knowledge, attitude and perspective that the member brings to the task and both are expected to lead to a broader task-relevant perspective, thus increasing the team's success (e.g. teachers are expected to contribute with their teaching and pedagogical experience

and with insight from the classroom concerning a specific student). Indeed, a meta-analysis of empirical studies by Bell and colleagues (2011) examined demographic diversity and performance; and functional background diversity had a positive (albeit small) relationship with general team performance as well as with team creativity and innovation, while educational background variety was related to team creativity and innovation.

Team competencies

Authors (e.g. Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2011) highlight two separate tracks of activities within the team: task-work (what it is that the team is doing) and team-work (how they are doing it with each other – social interactions, the relationship among members). This is linked to the two sets of competencies – task(work) competencies and team(work) competencies.

Based on the work of other scholars, Cannon-Bowers and Bowers (2011) summarise the team competencies that have replaced the personality-based approach. Competencies are essentially composed of knowledge, skills and attitudes (i.e. KSA) and are easier to influence (via selection or training) than trait attributes. Team competencies are:

(1) Knowledge: knowledge of teamwork skills, knowledge of team roles

(2) Skills:

a) adaptability (reallocation of team resources),

b) interpersonal factors (conflict resolution, ability to negotiate, cooperativeness, desire to help others, interpersonal trust),

c) team management and leadership (task motivation, goal-setting abilities, ability to establish roles and expectations, organising abilities),

d) assertiveness (sharing ideas clearly and directly),

e) mutual performance monitoring (ability to give, seek and receive feedback), communication (ability to clearly and accurately exchange information),

f) cross-boundary factors (ability to build links with organisation or other teams); and

(3) Attitudes: a preference for teamwork (inclination to be part of a team).

Along the same lines, Steven and Campion (1994, 1999) identified interpersonal and self-management KSA as important for teamwork. These KSA should be considered in the processes of selection, training, performance appraisal, career development, compensation and job analysis (Steven & Campion, 1994).

In ESL teams, first, task analysis is warranted at least at some general level to identify the competencies required to perform team- and task-related tasks (Burke, 2005). Team-related competencies in this context refer to knowledge about interpersonal relations and teamwork as well as to skills on how to interact with other team members effectively and a positive attitude to working together; other team members have a different educational background and different experience, the role in the school, their position may be hierarchically below or above one's position – all this makes team competencies much needed. Task-related competencies in this context are specific ESL competencies, i.e. knowledge and understanding of ESL, skills that help prevent/re-integrate ESLers, preference for working with ESLers. When designing the ESL team, task and team competencies must be considered, although it appears that team competencies are often neglected.

Second, some systematic approach to developing teamwork competencies is needed (taking the team composition model described above into account). Third, when possible it would be worth taking teamwork competencies into account for future candidate selection (to some degree these team competencies are generic; Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2011). Fourth, a system for monitoring effectiveness and allowing for appropriate compensation for the team members must be put in place.

Team size

There is no straight-forward answer concerning the question to the optimal size of the teams, perhaps because the answer depends on the task, purpose and responsibility of the team (Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2011). However, scholars indicate that as the group grows larger this has negative effects on various dimensions, e.g. member satisfaction, cooperation (Forsyth, 2010; Levine & Moreland, 1990). Parker (2003) recommends that for cross-functional teams 6 to 10 members is the optimal team size, indicating this would be an optimal size also for ESL multi-professional teams.

Team training

Every team training or training intervention needs to specify the objectives (what has to be learnt – e.g. knowledge, skills, changes in attitudes). Training objectives depend on the team goals, job design and training needs – at the individual or team level (Campbell & Kuncel, 2005). Training needs are aligned with the required teamwork and taskwork competencies (see above).

There are many ways to build teamwork competencies. The focus can be on the individual (e.g. assertiveness training), the team (e.g. cross-training) or both (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004). The training can be delivered via specific instructional methods and training media, e.g. lecture, synthetic experiences (simulation, exercises) (Campbell & Kuncel, 2005; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Empirical evidence in a meta-analysis showed that team training fosters team cognitive and affective outcomes (i.e. emergent states), teamwork processes, and performance outcomes (Salas et al., 2008) – essentially, it affects factors that shape, align or leverage team processes, team processes per se as well as team effectiveness directly. Attention to post-training procedures (training evaluation, transfer and application of newly gained KSA of training) is also needed (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001).

The most important implication for ESL multi-professional teams is that team training is effective and should thus become an integral part of the team's existence. For ESL multi-professional teams, cross-training (i.e. exposure to and practice on team members' tasks), specifically positional clarification (explanation of team members' general position and responsibilities) and positional modelling (duties of each member are discussed and observed) are the most relevant (see Day et al., 2004). This means that upon establishing the ESL team some sessions (meetings) would be devoted so that each member (e.g. teacher, external actor) explains their general role and responsibility in the ESL team and that these are discussed; such cross-training helps avoid future misconceptions and false expectations about what other ESL team members can or should do. Thus, cross training can be beneficial for the team's communication and coordination strategies as well as improve the team's anticipatory behaviour (Day et al., 2004). Team self-correction training through which the team is taught to diagnose, design and implement solutions to its team functional problems also seems worth considering. Assertiveness training (i.e. to communicate effectively when offering or requesting assistance, offering a potential

solution, or providing feedback) is also called for. This is essentially training in communication for ESL team members that helps the members express their thoughts in an unoffending way and also receive others' ideas without being offended.

The design of ESL multi-professional team training is based on the assumption that members have already received adequate training and education in their discipline (e.g. teachers, nurses). However, it is important to note that these trainings generally do not include team competencies, potentially leading to difficulties in functioning of the ESL team. Team competencies of ESL team members should be systematically developed.

Team leadership

Leadership in teams matters for team performance outcomes (Burke et al., 2006) as well as for supporting a range of team processes (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Contemporary theoretical perspectives on team leadership view it as an outcome of team processes that provide resources for better team adaptation and performance in subsequent performance cycles; this perspective complements the perspective of leadership as an input to team processes and effectiveness (Day et al., 2004). The key point is that both leadership and team processes influence each other (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). Team leadership is considered a dynamic process in which the leader's behaviour changes/adapts (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

In the theoretical framework leadership behaviours are classified in four large categories: information search and structuring, information use and problem-solving, managing personnel resources, and managing material resources (Fleishman et al., 1991). Other types of leadership in the context of cross-sector team cooperation also exist (e.g. Bryson et al., 2006; Hood et al., 1993). Leadership behaviour can also be seen along two dimensions: task-focused leadership (dealing with task accomplishment) and person-focused leadership (dealing with team interaction and development, i.e. with socio-emotional aspects; Burke et al., 2006). Meta-analyses of empirical studies (Burke et al., 2006) showed that both types of behaviour contribute significantly to team-perceived effectiveness and also to team productivity.

Recently the idea of distributed /shared leadership has received increasing attention, including distributed leadership in education (Day et al., 2004; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamon, 2000). Distributed leadership conceptualises leadership as something that emerges within a team (it goes

beyond the attributes of the individual/leader; Day et al., 2004); it is not concentrated in one person (the leader), instead leadership behaviour is performed by multiple team members (Nicolaides et al., 2014). Meta-analysis of empirical studies demonstrated that shared leadership has important effects on performance over and above the effects of vertical leadership (ibid.).

Two complementing implications arise for ESL multi-professional leadership. On one hand, team leaders need to be trained in both task- and person-focused types of behaviour. On the other hand, the whole team rather than an individual leader may be the most appropriate target for developing leadership expertise, i.e. behaviours, mind-set, actions (Spillane et al., 2000). Given the nature of ESL teams and their functioning within the school system, it seems that task- and person- focused leadership are more appropriate – thus, the leader deals with the task as well as with the socio-emotional aspects of the team.

Conclusion

ESL multi-professional teams have emerged as a promising measure against ESL. However, it seems that findings from the science on teams have not been taken into consideration when implementing (or advancing existing) teams designed to address ESL. Empirical studies show that teams have to be designed (not just put together) and, in designing them, several factors should be given attention: is a clear, valued and shared vision established, do teams fit into the general institutional (system) context, do team members have the required team- and task-related competencies (have they received adequate training, been given information or instructions on dealing with the task), is the team composed of relevant actors, is the time and financial aspect of team functioning accounted for, what kind of leadership is needed for the functioning of teams and who is doing it.

ESL teams have no easy task to deal with, but when attention to these aspects is provided their work is facilitated. It makes it more likely they will be successful in accomplishing their mission. Based on the review of the scientific literature on teams and the context of ESL multi-professional teams, the following recommendations can be emphasised: (1) development of members' team competencies (i.e. social and interpersonal knowledge, skills and attitudes); (2) development of members' task competencies related to ESL; (3) utilisation of cross-training to improve how well team members know and understand each other's positions; and (4) keeping the size of the team below 10.

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2.3.3
Theoretical, Empirical and Practical Insight into Team Cooperation from the Perspective of Team Processes, Part II: Team Processes and Emergent States

Maša Vidmar

Synopsis

Different team processes are prominent in the forming/transition phase (e.g. planning) than in the functioning phase (e.g. team adapting) of a team's cycle. Interpersonal processes are present throughout. Emergent states (e.g. team climate, cohesion and conflict) reflect team processes and also influence them.

Summary

ESL multi-professional teams operating within or around schools are a grass-roots form of cross-sectorial collaboration which has been recognised as important in tackling ESL. To help deal with the challenges of its implementation, two interrelated articles review theoretical and empirical scientific findings on the topic of teams with a practical insight for ESL teams. With its focus on team processes and emergent states (part II), the present article complements the first article which looked at the factors that shape, leverage or align team processes (part I). Team processes describe how members interact with other members and their task environment to achieve the team's goal. Team processes prominent in the forming (transition) phase are setting the mission and goal, trusting (i.e. developing trust among team members), planning (of task accomplishment) and structuring (i.e. establishing norms of behaviour and interpersonal patterns). In the active phase, task processes (i.e. activities

leading directly to goal accomplishment) and monitoring processes take place alongside team adapting (e.g. performance in new conditions) and team learning (e.g. discussing errors). Interpersonal processes (e.g. a strong sense of rapport, managing conflict, affect management) are prominent in all phases. Emergent states are seen as products of team members interacting with each other and with the task over time, but are not processes in themselves; instead, they tap qualities related to members' attitudes, values, cognitions and motivations. Among cognitive emergent states, team climate has been recognised as the most potent for team effectiveness and also mental models and transactive memory. Among interpersonal/motivational/affective emergent states, team cohesion and efficacy and low levels of interpersonal conflict have been shown to contribute to team effectiveness. Team regulation is an important behavioural emergent state. Adequate training and leadership are necessary as they impact many team processes and emergent states.

Key words: team processes, team emergent states, team development, team effectiveness

Introduction

Cross-sectoral collaboration has been recognised as a promising approach to combat ESL (European Commission, 2013) and ESL multi-professional teams operating within or around schools are a grass-root form of such collaboration. These teams are the key elements of the policy experiments in the TITA project. Generally speaking, such cross-sectorial multi-agency partnerships are recent and many challenges still need to be overcome (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014), although the situation varies between countries.

The present article focuses on a micro-level approach to multi-professional teams (as opposed to the macro-level approach of cross-sectoral collaboration at the policy (system) level (for a framework of cross-sectoral collaboration, also see Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006; Hood, Logsdon, & Thompson, 1993). It reviews scientific findings on the topic of teams; specifically, it focuses on team processes and emergent states. It is the second of two interrelated articles in which we deal with theoretical, empirical and practical insights into team cooperation from the micro-level perspective of team functioning. The present article with its focus on team processes and emergent states (part II) complements the first article which looked

into the factors that shape, leverage or align team processes (part I). As indicated in the first article, the reason for concentrating on a micro-level approach to multi-professional teams is that many of the findings from the scientific team literature apply to such teams. Thus, in this article we examine a large body of theoretical and empirical literature on small groups and teams to help understand how (multi-professional) teams function in their daily operation at the grass-roots level and thus help deal with the challenges.

We begin our review by presenting the conceptual framework for understanding team processes (including emergent states) and how these relate with other elements of team functioning. This is followed by a review of team processes and emergent states and its relationship with team effectiveness. To help the reader apply these sometimes quite abstract findings to ESL multi-professional teams, practical insights are provided (marked in italics).

Methodology

We first conducted computerised literature searches in electronic sources (PsycINFO, PsyArticles, ScienceDirect, ABI/INFORM Complete and Google Scholar) using a variety of relevant key words, e.g. team composition, team processes, team competencies, team leadership, team conflict, team performance, team effectiveness, small group research, group dynamics, meta-analysis. Second, we examined references cited in other articles (i.e. 'backward search' procedures). Third, we examined relevant chapters in major handbooks of work, organisation and industrial psychology.

The focus was on examining meta-analytical and review articles; this was complemented by looking at individual empirical studies. Emphasis was on recent literature published in the last two decades (since 1995). Most of the reviewed work builds on or integrates previous theoretical and empirical work. The methodology for this article and its predecessor in part I was common.

Conceptual framework for understanding team processes

Team processes are embedded in the contemporary perspective on teams[1] (see Figure 6). In the figure, the focus of our review is explained (in the

1 In this article, the general term 'team' is used rather than multi-professional collaboration to denote that the aspects presented here are based on the science of teams in

blue circle). Team processes and emergent states occur in the complex and time-varying interrelations among the variables listed in the figure. It can be seen that team processes and emergent states in turn influence team effectiveness in ongoing cycles. This represents the theoretical framework and relevant empirical studies about team processes and emergent states are reviewed below.

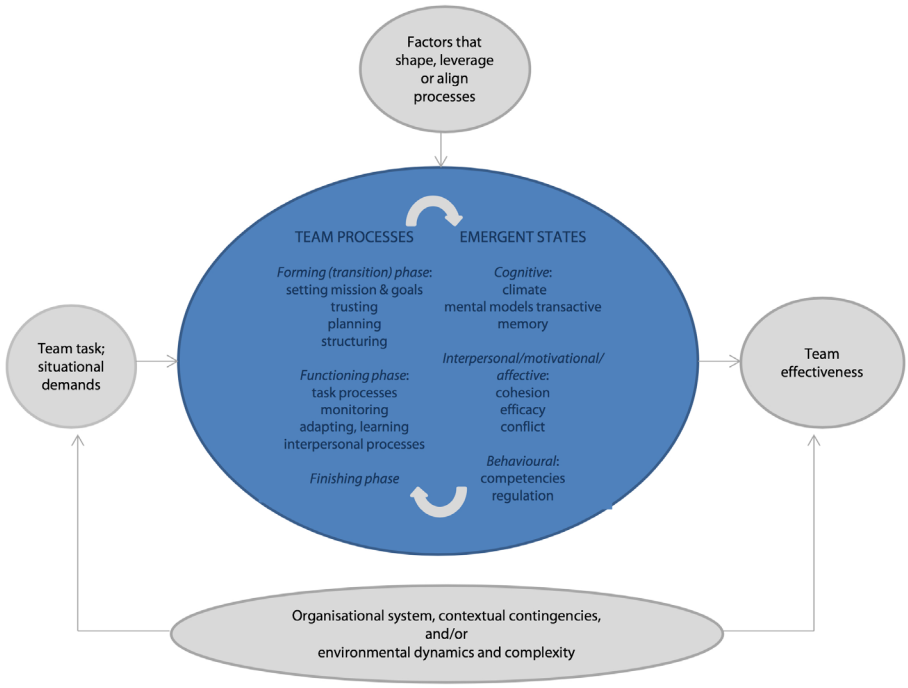

Figure 6. Conceptual framework for understanding team effectiveness (Adapted from Ilgen Hollenbeck, Johnson, & Jundt, 2005; Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006)

Team processes describe how inputs are converted into outcomes; i.e. how team members interact with other members and the task environment and how they combine and coordinate their resources (knowledge, skills, efforts) toward organising task-work to achieve collective goals (Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). In the classic work on teams, the model in which inputs lead to process that in turn lead to outcomes (the I-P-O model) has been emphasised; however, this

general and hold for teams generally.

model fails to capture the complexity and adaptability of teams (Ilgen et al., 2005). In a more contemporary conceptualisation, 'processes' (P) have been replaced by 'mediators' (M) that broaden the conceptualisation of the processes to include other variables (the IMOI model: input-mediator-output-input; ibid.). Research findings show that many mediators that link inputs with outcomes are in fact not processes, but so-called emergent states (Marks et al., 2001)[2]. Moreover, IMOI categories are not necessarily linearly and causally linked as is implied in the I-P-O model (Ilgen et al., 2005). This contemporary framework also introduced cyclicality in the model by adding an extra I at the end, indicating that outputs also serve as inputs for subsequent team cycles in the sense of cyclical feedback loops.

Team processes

There are several theoretical taxonomies that organise team processes (e.g. Marks et al., 2001; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). A number of categories of processes have been identified; these are closely related to the phases of team development[3] – in each stage, different processes (mediators or mediating factors) are prominent (Ilgen et al., 2005; Marks et al., 2001), although they often blend into one another (Marks et al., 2001). The taxonomy (see Ilgen et al., 2005; Marks et al., 2001) holds implications for which team processes are critical in specific phases:

(1) Forming (transition) phase processes:

a) Mission analysis and goal specification: refer to interpretation of the team's mission and identification of the main tasks.

b) Trusting: refers to team members' trust in team competence to accomplish a task (team efficacy) as well as their feeling of (psychological) safety.

2 Introduction of the concept of emergent states may lead to confusion with regard to terminology as it is not always clear in which cases team processes refer to a broad concept of mediators and which cases to team process in the narrow sense (excluding emergent states). The literature on team processes does not consistently distinguish between these two concepts, thus some team processes listed in the section on team processes overlap with emergent states.

3 Team development is an informal process by which team members create social structures and work processes. There are different models that describe team development. Tuckman's stage model (1965) is one of the classic ones and describes four stages in team development: forming, storming, norming and performing.

c) Planning: is related to gathering information and, based on that, to developing a strategy to accomplish the task.

d) Structuring: includes the development and maintenance of norms, roles and interaction patterns.

These processes take place either in early stages of team development (forming) or between two performance episodes or cycles (transition).

In the forming phase of an ESL team, it is important that trust is built among team members – on one hand, that they believe that as a team they are up to the task (e.g. to agree on adequate support for a particular ESL student and to provide it) and, on the other hand, that they feel safe as individuals in the team (e.g. feel free in expressing a new or different idea about a certain ELSer's situation and appropriate strategies, are not afraid of being judged, belittled because of it). In this phase, it is important that relevant information is gathered (e.g. what kind of student's behaviour was detected, what are other contextual factors – recent events in the school or family, what are the student's and parents' expectations regarding education etc.) and prepare a strategy for tackling the situation (e.g. plan to meet with the student, plan to outsource the counselling service, plan to work with teachers). In this phase, the team's norm (i.e. fairly rigid rules about acceptable behaviour) and interaction patterns also develop; because in cross-sectorial ESL teams the norms are likely to vary for professionals coming from different sectors this may lead to dysfunctional conflicts (Hood et al., 1993). This indicates that special attention to these elements should be given in the forming phase; perhaps even by inviting an external expert who would help establish constructive normative, trust and communication patterns.

When this phase denotes a transition from one team cycle to another, evaluation (with regard to team processes and to the support provided for a specific student) is important. Given that the ESL team is engaged in multiple tasks (e.g. it deals with several students), it may be in a transition phase while dealing with one student, but in an active phase while dealing with another student. As already mentioned, previous cycles (phases) serve as an input for future cycles (e.g. trusting or planning can be changed based on previous cycles).

(2) Functioning (active) phase processes:

a) Task-work processes: refer to activities leading directly to goal accomplishment.

b) Monitoring processes: refer to monitoring progress toward goals, monitoring of a team (i.e. assisting team members to perform their task) and system monitoring (i.e. tracking the resources of a team and environmental conditions).

c) Bonding and other interpersonal processes: refer to a strong sense of rapport and a desire to stay together, managing diversity and managing conflict, motivating and confidence building, affect management (e.g. frustration, excitement).

d) Adapting: is performance in novel and routine conditions and also includes helping and workload sharing.

e) Learning from other team members: involves seeking feedback, sharing information, experimenting, asking for help, and discussing errors.

Interpersonal processes (managing interpersonal relationships) are listed in the active phase even though they mediate the effectiveness of other processes in all stages (Cannon-Bowers & Bowers, 2011). For example, trusting can be seen as interpersonal process in the forming (transition) phase.

In the active phase what was envisioned in the planning phase is carried out (e.g. meeting with the potential ESL student). Because reality does not necessarily match the plans and may bring unexpected situations and challenges, adapting to the new conditions is an important team process as is members' willingness to learn from each other. Monitoring of progress toward a goal may include checking if a measure agreed at the meeting (e.g. the student starts helping in local business) indeed leads to an improvement in the student's experience and behaviour. Monitoring also involves ascertaining if the ESL team functions well and monitors changes at the policy level concerning ESL (e.g. a law that determines new tasks for ESL teams). Interpersonal processes for which foundations were built in the forming phase are an integral part of the active phase (e.g. how team members manage conflicts).

(3) Finishing phase processes (team termination):

this phase refers to the team's completion, disbanding or decay. There are many reasons for team termination and they may be unplanned (e.g. due to interpersonal tensions between members, task failure) or planned. There is a dearth of empirical studies on this phase.

The finishing phase of ESL teams may occur at the level of a particular school or the system level (e.g. changes in legislation that would abolish ESL teams).

Emergent states

Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) take a slightly different perspective on team processes. They argue that team processes are difficult to capture due to their dynamic nature, so they focus on emergent states that are indicative of the nature and quality of team processes. Thus, emergent states are not processes in themselves; rather they are seen as products of team members interacting with each other and with the task over time that tap qualities related to members' attitudes, values, cognitions and motivations (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Mark et al., 2001). The emergent states reflect team processes, but at the same time can also serve as an input (Kimoski & Mohammed, 1994; see Figure 22). As mentioned above, there are inconsistencies in the literature regarding the distinction between team processes and emergent states; thus some of the emergent states presented below overlap with the team processes presented above (e.g. trusting, bonding and other interpersonal processes are closely linked to emergent states of team cohesion and team conflict).

Authors propose three theoretical categories of emergent states/structures; emergent states for which there is solid empirical research evidence that they are important for team functioning are described below (for a review, see Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006):

1. *Cognitive*: team climate, team mental models and transactive memory
2. *Interpersonal, motivational and affective*: team cohesion, team efficacy, team conflict
3. *Behavioural*: team competencies, team regulation.

Team climate

Team/unit/collective climate is defined as a shared perception of policies, practices and procedures (both formal and informal) and was identified as the most potent cognitive process in teams related to team effectiveness (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). A meta-analysis of empirical studies demonstrated that the affective, cognitive and instrumental dimensions of general

climate influenced individuals' outcomes of job performance, psychological well-being and withdrawal through their impact on organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Carr, Schmidt, Ford, & DeSchon, 2003).

Based on research, Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) identified three factors influencing the strength of the team climate:

1. 'strategic imperatives' (objectives with the highest priority within organisation/team; Schneider, Wheeler, & Cox, 1992);
2. leadership (because leaders shape interpretation of the climate for team members with whom they have good relationships, the quality of the relationship between members, and the team leader plays a key role in developing the nature and strength of the climate); and
3. frequent interpersonal interactions (Rentsch, 1990).

Attention to building a collective climate within ESL multi-professional teams seems warranted. If an ESL team can find its 'strategic imperative', i.e. it can establish a consensus on what is their main goal, this will contribute to team climate and team effectiveness. This may appear easier than it is; professionals with different educational backgrounds and roles in school may have different (even opposing) values, ideologies and opinions on what is the goal of ESL team (e.g. the school head may want to keep a student in school because of funding issues and the counsellor may see the programme as not fitting the student's needs and interests; for details on subgroup conflict, see below). Moreover, it is important that the person who takes on the leadership role is consciously striving to have good relationships with each team member. Providing opportunities for (informal) interpersonal interactions is also necessary (e.g. to organise a social (team-building) event for the ESL team members).

Team mental models and transactive memory

Team mental models are defined as organised mental representations of knowledge or beliefs that are relevant to key elements of the team's task environment and are shared among members (e.g. representations of tasks, of situations, of response patterns or of the working relationship; Klimoski & Mohammed, 1994). A review of empirical studies demonstrated that the sharedness of the team's mental model has a positive relationship with the team's performance (Mohammed, Ferzandi, & Hamilton, 2010), indicating that team members must have accurate and shared knowledge of the team's

missions, objectives, norms and resources (Salas, Rosen, Shawn Burke, & Goodwin, 2009). Norms are embedded in team mental models.

Transactive memory refers to knowledge about who knows what (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006); this means that each member learns what the other team members know in detail. As a result, members direct new information to the corresponding member and also seek necessary information in that way.

For ESL teams team mental models refer to the shared view of how they see the problem of ESL (and the specific student), their planned strategy of how to provide support (which resources to use and how) and their working relationship. For example, a teacher's mental model may be that they only provide information on the student's classroom behaviour if they are prompted – if this is not aligned with another's mental model either the teacher's or the other's mental model needs to be modified. Transactive memory means that e.g. other members know which team member possesses legal or administration knowledge; or that a teacher knows that the counsellor provides information on second-chance education programmes and is able to ask for this information or direct a student to the counsellor for such information. Convergence of team mental models can be achieved through training (Mohammed et al., 2010) and transactive memory by shared experience and face-to-face interaction (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

Team cohesion

Team cohesion has been the most widely studied when it comes to team interpersonal, motivational and affective emergent states. Cohesion (cohesiveness) is defined as 'the resultant of all forces acting on the members to remain in the group' (Festinger, 1950, p. 274). Cohesion has three facets: member attraction (i.e. member's tendency to stick together – interpersonal cohesiveness), task commitment (i.e. members' commitment to the team's task – task cohesiveness) and group pride. Several meta-analyses of empirical studies (e.g. Beal, Cohen, Burke, & McLendon 2003; Castaño, Watts, & Teklab, 2013; Gully, Devine, & Whitney, 1995/2012) have found support for a positive relationship between each component of team cohesion and team performance. The relationship is stronger if a task requires greater interdependence (Gully et al., 1995/2012). Members' personality (extraversion, emotional stability), clear goals and norms seem to help develop team cohesion; however, the research evidence is scarce (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006).

Related to team cohesion is team attachment (i.e. to feel secure within a team and assured that work needs will be attended to; Richardson & West, 2010). The emphasis is on satisfying the fundamental socio-emotional requirements of people working in teams (the need to belong).

For an ESL team this means that the commitment of the head, teachers, other school professionals and external actors to preventing ESL and the commitment to 'be on the same side' as other team members (minimal subgroup identification) is important. Their pride to be members of the ESL team is also important.

Team efficacy

Team efficacy is a construct analogue to self-efficacy at the individual level (Bandura, 1977). It is a shared team-level belief in collective capabilities to achieve desired goals (Bandura, 1997). Recent meta-analyses of empirical studies (Gully, Incalcaterra, Joshi, & Beaubien 2002; Stajkovic, Lee, & Nyberg, 2009) showed that team efficacy is significantly correlated with team performance. Based on the importance of self-efficacy, it has been suggested how to improve team efficacy: to observe effective and ineffective teams, to persuade team members that they can persist and succeed, although more research is needed in this respect (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Thus, the TITA video platform could essentially be used in the process of developing team efficacy (e.g. by observing teams as they perform their tasks).

Team conflicts

Conflicts are a common phenomenon in teams and organisations. Conflict occurs when there are opposing interests, goals, beliefs, preferences, actions or misunderstandings about any of the foregoing (Deutsch, 2003). Authors differentiate between relationship conflict (about values, interpersonal style) and task conflict (about procedures, interpretation of facts) (DeDreu & Weingart, 2003; Jehn, 1995; Jehn, 1997).

Consistent across studies is that conflict focused on interpersonal issues reduces team satisfaction and performance (DeDreu & Weingart, 2003; O'Neill, Allen, & Hastings, 2013; de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012). Regarding task conflict there has been a history of debate on whether task conflict is functional (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006) or disruptive (DeDreu & Weingart, 2003) for team performance. The emerging consensus based on empirical studies is that task conflict is generally unhelpful for teams (yet it can have

a positive effect in specific conditions, see O'Neill et al., 2013; de Wit et al., 2012); instead, teams require a rich discussion in a trusting climate in which members feel free to express their doubts and also require the ability to resist to making compromises quickly (also see Ilgen et al., 2005). Another perspective on conflict comes from minority influence theory – the consistency of minority arguments over time is likely to change the view of the majority (West, 2005).

The key issue with conflict is how to manage or handle it. Strategies to manage conflict can be preventive (i.e. prior to conflict occurrence) or reactive (i.e. working through interpersonal disagreements among team members once they emerge; Marks et al., 2001). Klein, DeRouin and Salas (2006) suggest workplace interpersonal skills (e.g. social skills, social competence, people skills, soft skills) likely play an important role in the process of building team trust, minimising and resolving both task and interpersonal conflict.

Concerning the topic of conflict, subgroup conflicts are also worth mentioning. These are related to subgroup identification, i.e. when a team is informally divided into subgroups according to different factors (e.g. age, gender, professional background – teacher, head etc.; see social identity theory, Tajfel, 1981) in which case a shared vision and goals may be difficult to achieve and subgroup conflicts may occur. Thus, it is important for subgroup identification to be low.

Conflicts are common and will also occur in ESL teams. Because relationship conflicts (e.g. a teacher finds the feedback from the head to be disrespectful) have been related to lower levels of team satisfaction and effectiveness, it is important to have a person in the team composition who is good at managing conflicts (if necessary, training should be provided). Task-related conflicts (e.g. whether a student should be given psychological support or not) are less detrimental to team functioning. Preventive conflict management strategies may involve establishing team rules about the nature and timing of conflict, and a norm for cooperative rather than competitive approaches to conflict resolution (e.g. a conflict is our common problem and it is not about the head winning against a teacher or vice versa) (Mark et al., 2001). Reactive conflict management strategies involve identifying the parameters of a conflict between team members (e.g. why exactly the teacher found the head's feedback to be disrespectful – because of their words, gestures), compromising, willingness to accept differences in opinions etc. (ibid.).

Team regulation

Task episodes are cyclic and consist of: (a) preparation for task engagement; (b) engagement; and (c) disengagement/reflection (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006). Regulation involves setting the goals and task strategies; allocation of team member resources in response to shifting task demands, reflection/feedback on processes, goal attainment and this then serves as an input for subsequent goals and strategies. Feedback is an integral part of team regulation because it affects the setting of the goals as well as the investment of members' resources. However, depending on what exactly needs to be accomplished one has to distinguish individual-level feedback from team-level feedback. Team regulation is crucial for the team's performance (ibid.).

In the context of ESL teams, regulation is especially important in the context of feedback as an integral part of team regulation. After every cycle of team functioning (i.e. dealing with one student), feedback to each members as well as the team as a whole (e.g. about the strategies and resources used, about how well they responded to changes in task demands, about the interpersonal processes) serves as an input for the next cycle (i.e. dealing with another ESL student).

Conclusion

The effectiveness of ESL teams can be conceptualised in three ways: group-produced output (e.g. the number of ESLers who returned to school/training), the consequences for team members (e.g. job satisfaction, improved attitude to working with the ESL student) and an improvement in the team's capability to perform effectively in the future (Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). If we want ESL teams to fulfil this mission, simply putting people together in a team will not suffice. Given the complexity of ESL and ESL teams, the theoretical, empirical and practical insights into team cooperation presented in this and the related article (namely, parts I and II) should be carefully taken into consideration.

Based on the literature review, it is recommended that ESL teams do not rush into their main task – dealing with (a potential) ESL student. Instead, in the formation (transition) phase time and attention should be given to finding an agreement on interpreting the team's mission and identifying the main goal. This may pose a challenge given that members of the ESL team have different professional backgrounds and may come from different sectors. Moreover, in this phase developing trust among team

members, planning task accomplishment and establishing norms of behaviour and interpersonal patterns also take place and should be given appropriate space and time. Once the ESL team enters the active phase, it is important to focus on both the task processes and interpersonal processes. In this phase, team monitoring, team adapting (to perform in novel and routine conditions; helping and workload sharing) and team learning occur (e.g. seeking feedback, discussing errors). The finishing phase of the ESL team denotes its termination (which can be planned or unplanned; at the school or system level). With regard to emergent states, the review of the literature in the present article indicates that the mechanism of expert team performance entails a positive team climate, shared mental models and transactive memory, develop a strong sense of team cohesion ("teamness") and efficacy, have lower levels of (subgroup) conflict, optimise resources by learning and adapting, and engage in the regulation process (the preparation-engagement-reflection cycle) (also see Salas, Goodwin, & Burke, 2009). As already noted in the first article, adequate training and leadership are necessary as they impact on many of the team processes and emergent states (e.g. team mental models can be developed through training, leadership is related to team climate).

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2.3.4
Relational Expertise as a Prerequisite for Effective Multi-professional Collaboration on ESL

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Synopsis

Relational expertise is the ability to recognise and respond to other professionals' standpoints, while at the same time utilising the knowledge that underpins one's own practice. This deepens professionals' understanding of a certain problem and enriches practice, making it an ideal way to help improve the ways multi-professional teams tackling ESL operate.

Summary

Appointed by the European Commission, the Thematic Working Group on Early School Leaving identified multi-professional teams as the key entity for successfully combatting ESL (European Commission, 2013). It is crucial to promote effective cooperation among professionals from various fields. One element seen as vital to fostering cooperation amongst professionals is Edwards' (2005) concept of relational expertise. For this article's purposes, we conducted a scientific review of literature on the topic of relational expertise, with the aim to identify its components, role in multi-professional team cooperation and potential for addressing ESL. Relational expertise is described as a skill that complements one's existing knowledge by properly acknowledging other professionals' standpoints, thereby developing the capacity to work with others on solving complex problems like ESL. For example, relational expertise helps in

coordinating the responses of different practices (e.g. the teacher downplays the demands made in the curriculum so as to accommodate the social worker's support). Three key components of relational expertise have been identified: relational expertise, relational agency and common knowledge. All hold the potential to promote cooperation among multi-professional team members and be used as tools to prevent ESL. Moreover, relational expertise can be learnt as part of addressing the challenges of multi-agency professional learning (e.g. developing new processes for sharing knowledge and new pathways for practice) and parallel to encouraging the various professionals to change their working practices (e.g. such as developing better material and tools, and being more responsive to other professionals and clients).

Key words: multi-professional collaboration, multi-professional teams, relational expertise, relational agency, early school leaving

Introduction

Multi-professional teams operating at the school or community level are seen as an essential tool in the struggle against ESL. Such partnership practices are already well established in some European countries, while in others they are still being developed (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice/Cedefop, 2014). Many different ideas have emerged on how to enhance the way they work with each other and which factors or competencies are required to achieve that. As the European Commission noted (2013, p. 15), one important element of such inter-professional cooperation is the need for members to possess "relational expertise, which enables professionals to recognise and work with the expertise of others".

Those who participate in teams are individuals with a wide range of professional backgrounds, entailing differences in knowledge, mindsets (concerning ESL, but also more generally), vocabulary, main concepts, perspectives etc. The challenge is how to ensure efficient communication among them that is supportive of the individual – communication not in terms of structure (when, how often, where), but content (what). This is what Edwards (2010) refers to as the "relational turn in expertise", defining relational agency as the capacity to work with others to resolve complex problems. The core of this relational expertise is acknowledging and responding to other professionals' standpoints, while also utilising the knowledge that underpins one's own practice. Although the term "relational agency"

is more often used in the literature, in this article we decided to use "relational expertise" as an umbrella term, since that is the term the European Commission (2013) uses.

The aim of this article is to review the literature on the relatively new concept of relational expertise (Edwards, 2005), its possible role in fostering multi-professional team cooperation and potential use in the fight against ESL. Findings that refer to relational expertise training are also highlighted.

Methodology

To conduct this literature review, five academic databases were searched; namely MEDLINE, CINHAL with Full Text, ERIC, PsycARTICLES and Science Direct (Elsevier). The search was confined to relevant English-language articles covering psychology, education and social science topics published between January 1990 and September 2017 using combinations of the following key words: "relational expertise" and "relational agency". In total, 143 records that were available were identified and, after preliminary abstract screening, 137 articles were excluded for irrelevance, leaving 5 articles that passed full-text screening.

In addition, according to Google Scholar, resources citing two initial literature sources on relational expertise (Edwards, 2005, 2010) were identified and exposed to the same selection process. Out of 620 articles, 589 articles were excluded following preliminary abstract screening due to their irrelevance, leaving 31 articles to be assessed for eligibility. As part of that, full-text screening was conducted, leading to a further 16 articles being eliminated after concluding the concepts they used are incompatible with relational expertise. These 15 articles were combined with the 2 articles from step one above (3 of these were then excluded due to duplication). The final sample consisted of 17 articles. Reports and documents for/by the European Commission linking relational expertise with ESL were also considered.

Team competencies

Team competencies have been identified as the primary factor influencing the performance of a team (Cannon-Bowers et al., 1995). If a multi-professional team working on ESL is to be successful, it must possess different team competencies. Team competencies are widely researched in the fields of organisational psychology, medicine and information technology, while

evidence from educational settings is lagging behind. With such a great variety of fields and researchers, there are also many different conceptions about what team competencies actually are – some researchers focus on individual competencies, while others, in their attempt to frame them all, take different approaches.

In our review, we follow the classification of team competencies by Cannon-Bowers et al. (1995). They divide team competencies into knowledge, skills and attitude competencies – KSA. Team knowledge competencies are made up of mental models containing information about how and when to use teamwork skills (Baker et al., 2005). This means that team members consider the value of different behavioural responses and align them with what is required in the current situation. Team skill competencies can be defined as the "capacity to interact with other team members" (Baker et al., 2005), with studies showing they promote team effectiveness (Cannon-Bowers et al., 1995). Eight teamwork skill dimensions that contribute to effectiveness have been identified: adaptability, shared situational awareness, performance monitoring and feedback, leadership/team management, interpersonal relations, coordination, communication and decision-making. Attitude competencies are related to the motivational aspect, composed of "the belief that teamwork is critical for successful performance of team tasks" and the "desire to be a part of a team" (Baker et al., 2005, p. 239).

Stevens and Champion (1999) attempted to identify which specific knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) of individual team members are key to effective teamwork. They highlight the factors that enable team members to work together effectively rather than those that facilitate more effective task-related work. Klein, De Ruin and Salas, (2012) lean in the same direction, promoting the importance of interpersonal skills such as communication skills, interpersonal relationship skills etc. for teams to perform effectively. Moreover, research conducted on multi- and inter-professional teams in hospital, psychiatry and educational settings established that inter-professional communication skills (Goh & Di, Prospero, 2017; Hayes & Omodei, 2011; Nancarrow et al., 2013; Patel Guantalo et al., 2017; Ralew et al., 2016) and interpersonal skills (Hayes & Omodei, 2011) are critical team competencies for ensuring successful team cooperation. In addition, Leggat (2007) believes team management competencies like leadership, respect for others and commitment to working collaboratively are essential for producing positive team outcomes. An emphasis on interpersonal skills as

being key competencies for successful teamwork is clearly visible from the aforementioned studies and, when combined with the call to develop collaborative competency (Manilall & Rowe, 2016), it nicely taps into Edwards' (2010) relational perception of competency and concept of relational expertise. Her focus is therefore on the relational aspect of competence, where the individual competence of one practitioner is inherently bound to the competence of other practitioners (Bing-Johnson et al., 2016).

Relational expertise

Edwards (2005) coined the term relational expertise. She sees it as the ability to recognise and respond to the standpoints of other professionals, while at the same time utilising the knowledge that underpins one's own practice. The development of this concept is the result of the relational turn in expertise, shifting from an analytical focus on the behaviour of individual professionals to observing their actions while working with others (Edwards, 2005). This changes the perspective from seeing professionals as the sole repositories of exclusive sets of knowledge, working within well-established practices and procedures, to the 'modern age' professional who is required to work across the boundaries of their own expertise on complex problems with practitioners from other fields or with clients, beyond the safety and comfort of the bureaucratic procedures used by their own organisations. This then forces them, instead of following pre-established organisational procedures, to rely on their own specialist knowledge and expertise while working with others to negotiate common means to accomplish their group tasks. Professional expertise is thus no longer so closely aligned with one's social position, but is something that must be negotiated while working on shared problems. For these negotiations to happen, the expertise of each professional needs to be made visible to others (Edwards, 2010).

The results of various studies Edwards (2005, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016) conducted in the fields of education and social care point to: (1) relational expertise; (2) common knowledge; and (3) relational agency as being "three (interdependent) gardening tools" needed for successful inter-professional work. The gardening metaphor stems from a re-interpretation of professional cross-boundary work whereby professionals are no longer seen as operating like engineers or architects but more like gardeners. Together, these three tools facilitate fluidity, responsiveness and horizontal boundary crossing across diverse areas of expertise (Edwards, 2011).

Relational expertise

Relational expertise is the first tool needed to develop the professional expertise that is crucial for successful collaboration among members of inter-professional teams (e.g. Edwards, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016; Edwards & Daniels, 2012; Hoopwood & Edwards, 2017; Ness & Reise, 2015). It is defined as expertise that complements existing knowledge through the recognition of other professionals' standpoints (Edwards, 2005). All stakeholders bring their own resources and perspectives into the aforementioned interactions that, if properly acknowledged and incorporated, can enhance understanding of the problem for all involved, leading to more successful responses. Therefore, professionals must attain additional expertise that enables them to collaborate with others. This expertise includes professionals' ability to recognise their own specialist expertise and respond to the resources others have to offer. To achieve that, there must be a willingness to get to know each other as a professional, especially when the professionals come from dissimilar professional fields or work in different services (Edwards, 2010). Professionals who possess strong relational expertise are sensitive to the cultural landscape of inter-professional settings, allowing them to strategise which aspects of their core expertise should be brought into play at different times with different people. At the same time, they are capable of showing respect for the core expertise of others, develop opportunities for them to apply that expertise, and are ready to work cooperatively through creative engagement to expand the object on which they are working (Edwards, 2012). In that way, the employment of relational expertise leads to a coordinated response of different practices; e.g. in ESL multi-professional teams the teacher downplays the demands made in the curriculum in order to accommodate the support of the social worker.

Common knowledge

Edwards (2010, 2011) argues that, at the boundaries where practices meet, resources and perspectives from different practices are brought together to expand the understanding of the problem being worked on – this refers to the second tool – common knowledge. It is through cooperation that professionals become aware of the motivations that other professionals or clients (Hoopwood & Edwards, 2017) bring to situation while working on a problem and it is through this that common knowledge is built. The process of learning in these spaces is not about learning 'how to do the work' of others but more to do with learning about 'what matters' for others. The

key to collaboration among different practices is to understand each practice's motivations and to direct professionals in their professional actions (Edwards, 2010, 2011, 2012). However, it is easier to build common knowledge when the new ideas are not so distant from the established specialist knowledge in practice because, as soon as this distance grows, even greater effort in understanding the perspectives that shape each practice is required to build common knowledge. Edwards establishes her definition of common knowledge on the cultural/historical framework of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) and the work of Vygotsky and Leontev who see common knowledge as a resource mediating people's responses and the nature of their collaboration in inter-professional work settings (see Edwards, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016). She argues that knowledge about what others, namely those with whom one is working, hold as their motivations and perspectives facilitates understanding of the reasons for their actions, evaluation processes and responses in different situations (Edwards, 2012, 2016; Edwards & Daniels, 2012). Building common knowledge is evidence of relational expertise and at the same time a foundation and mediator in the development of relational agency.

Relational agency

Relational agency is the third and final tool that completes the toolbox by utilising resources from both of the previous tools (Edwards, 2011). It is defined as the capacity to work with others to develop purposeful responses to complex problems (Edwards, 2005, 2011). Relational agency is a two-stage dynamic process that is co-produced in spaces between people through dialogue and social interaction (Chateris & Smardon, 2017). The first stage concerns cooperation with others to expand on the problem or task related to the work topic, entailing the recognition of the motivations and resources each participant brings to the process. The second stage involves taking this newly acquired knowledge about the motivations and response of others working on the same problem and aligning them with one's own position (Edwards, 2005, 2010). It can be said that is based on a pre-existing or newly formed understanding of specific motivations of others and identified differences and complementary strengths that all stakeholders bring to the table that lead to the incorporation of a wider set of interpretations of the problem. Through cooperation with others, individuals' ability to engage with the world is enhanced (Hoopwood & Edwards, 2017). Another manifestation of this social practice is willingness to explain the reasons

for one's choices and decisions with the intention to persuade other team members to also adopt them (Edwards & Daniels, 2012). Relational agency is learnable and may be seen as some sort of 'safety net', providing the right balance of expertise to accomplish the desired goals for professionals who feel vulnerable and alone without the protection of their usual procedures when acting responsively on tasks and projects (Edwards, Lunt & Stamou, 2010). In practice, relational agency can become visible when participants build and implement a professional strategy or action that is connected to the specific problem they are working on (Duhn, Fleer & Harrison, 2016).

To develop these concepts successfully, professional practitioners are required to provide quality core expertise as a basis (Edwards, 2010), they need to display openness, curiosity and respect towards the motivations and perspectives of others (Ness & Reise, 2015) and to feel a sense of ownership to the problem, specific practice or local community at hand (Duhn et al., 2016).

The role of relational expertise in tackling ESL

Based on research conducted by Edwards (2005, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016) in the fields of education and social care, we can identify three tools as being necessary for successful inter-professional work in these areas. In her research, she highlights the need to build relational links among different professionals and services to ensure the creation of child-centred systems oriented to good outcomes for children, young people and their families (Edwards, 2012). Relational tools have also proven to bring positive outcomes for inter-professional collaboration among professionals in many other fields, such as the hospital setting (Nuttall, 2013), participatory design setting (Dindler & Iversen, 2014), rural advisory setting (Phillipson, Proctor, Emery & Lowe, 2016), innovation processes (Ness & Reise, 2015), trainee teacher education (Kidd, 2012; McIntosh 2015) and in the generation of new learning environments (Chateris & Smardon, 2017).

Relational expertise is seen in the European Commission report (2013) as a prerequisite for inter-professional cooperation that enables professionals to recognise and work with the expertise of others. They state that reducing ESL requires the active involvement of key representatives from various fields and policy areas such as teachers, students, parents, governmental officials, social workers, school psychologists and other experts. Each of these brings different and valuable perspectives that are needed to better understand the ESL process. They can all add value by developing solutions and

addressing the different factors that lead to ESL. Cooperation is seen as a key active solution in second-chance education where learners require comprehensive support since they often face multiple problems inside and outside the learning process (European Commission, 2013). Concerning this issue in the EU, Edwards and Downes (2013) state in their NESET report it is important to enhance professional expertise in inter-professional work, which means for expert practitioners developing their relational expertise and, for those practitioners without the necessary knowledge base, undertaking additional training to meet the minimum qualifications entailed.

If we think back to the descriptions of common knowledge and relational agency, we could argue that, when combined with relational expertise, they form a set of conceptual resources that are vital for successful cross-boundary collaboration to occur (Hoopwood & Edwards, 2017). When professionals work on ESL while also applying their relational expertise, they dedicate their time to developing an understanding of the motivations, practices and knowledge of different professionals (e.g. teachers, counsellors, heads of ESL teams). Collaboration in inter-professional teams is optimal when practitioners understand what is important for others when working on ESL – meaning that via the interactions among them common knowledge emerges as a resource that mediates both their interpretations and responses to complex problems. Different professionals from different fields may entail many different viewpoints, which help expand understanding of the ESL problem at hand and a broader and more specialised set of responses to it are considered and put into action (Hoopwood & Edwards, 2016; Edwards, 2012). Based on aforementioned, we may argue that relational expertise plays a crucial role in inter-professional teams' work on ESL.

How to develop relational expertise

Due to relational expertise's valuable contribution to multi-professional work and the fact it can be learnt, it is extremely important that every professional is given opportunities to learn about and develop it. A great contribution in this sense was made by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme – TLRP (Smith et al., 2008) in Great Britain, which studied the professional learning process after the Children Act of 2004 called for practitioners from different backgrounds to work together on preventing social exclusion among children. It is one of very few programmes seeking to

develop relational expertise to be conducted and evaluated. Based on their findings, conclusions on how to develop relational expertise have been developed and are presented below.

The TLRP established that the existing professional training does not equip practitioners with the tools and knowledge they need to work successfully outside of their established organisational practices. To work successfully in inter-professional teams for preventing social exclusion, practitioners need to acquire new forms of expertise. As their working environment changed from more institutionalised forms towards more cooperative ones under the Children Act 2004 initiative, they learned to become more responsive to all actors involved, present their purpose and be open to the ideas and alternatives of others, they learned they are allowed (to some extent) to bend the rules to meet the versatile requirements of situations and that they have to adapt existing materials, conceptual tools and develop processes for sharing knowledge since the old ones are outdated. But, most importantly, from the relational perspective, practitioners learned to identify their own values, develop fluency about the implications of a multi-agency environment for them, and learned how their expertise can contribute to their ability to question and enhance their practice in relation to other professionals. All of this learning emerged naturally as a by-product of the cross-boundary cooperation among the practitioners in this newly formed working environment, and can be used to develop tools to develop relational expertise among practitioners. Moreover, through various workshops the TLRP also identified key measures to adopt to develop this concept. In these sessions, professionals were confronted with contradictions in their everyday understandings of practice through an analysis of data researchers had gathered from them. The aim of the sessions was to address the challenges of multi-agency professional learning by identifying areas where a need to change the work practices arose. Those challenges could also be resolved by suggesting ways to re-conceptualise the efforts and resources professionals brought to bear concerning these tasks. Later on, through various sessions the research group established that relational expertise can also be developed by encouraging professionals to think about how to develop their working practices, about structural tensions and contradictions in their ongoing practice, and whether there are any new forms of practice that could support innovation in multi-agency working. According to that, relational expertise can also be developed by re-conceptualising the tasks and resources to overcome the challenges.

They also highlight the importance of a positive organisational climate for professional decision-making as a prerequisite for learning multi-agency work. Some of the already mentioned prerequisites for developing relational expertise are openness, curiosity, respect (Ness & Reise, 2015) and the sense of belonging among professionals (Duhn et al., 2016).

Conclusion

Relational expertise is a relatively new concept and holds the potential to promote cooperation among multi-professional team members. Moreover, it is a type of expertise that can be learnt through addressing the challenges of multi-agency professional learning (e.g. developing new processes for sharing knowledge and new pathways for practice) and encouraging the professionals involved to change their working practice (e.g. to develop better material and tools and be more responsive to other professionals and clients). As such, relational expertise can also be utilised as an important tool for improving the way multi-professional teams that deal with ESL function.

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