

CyELT Journal

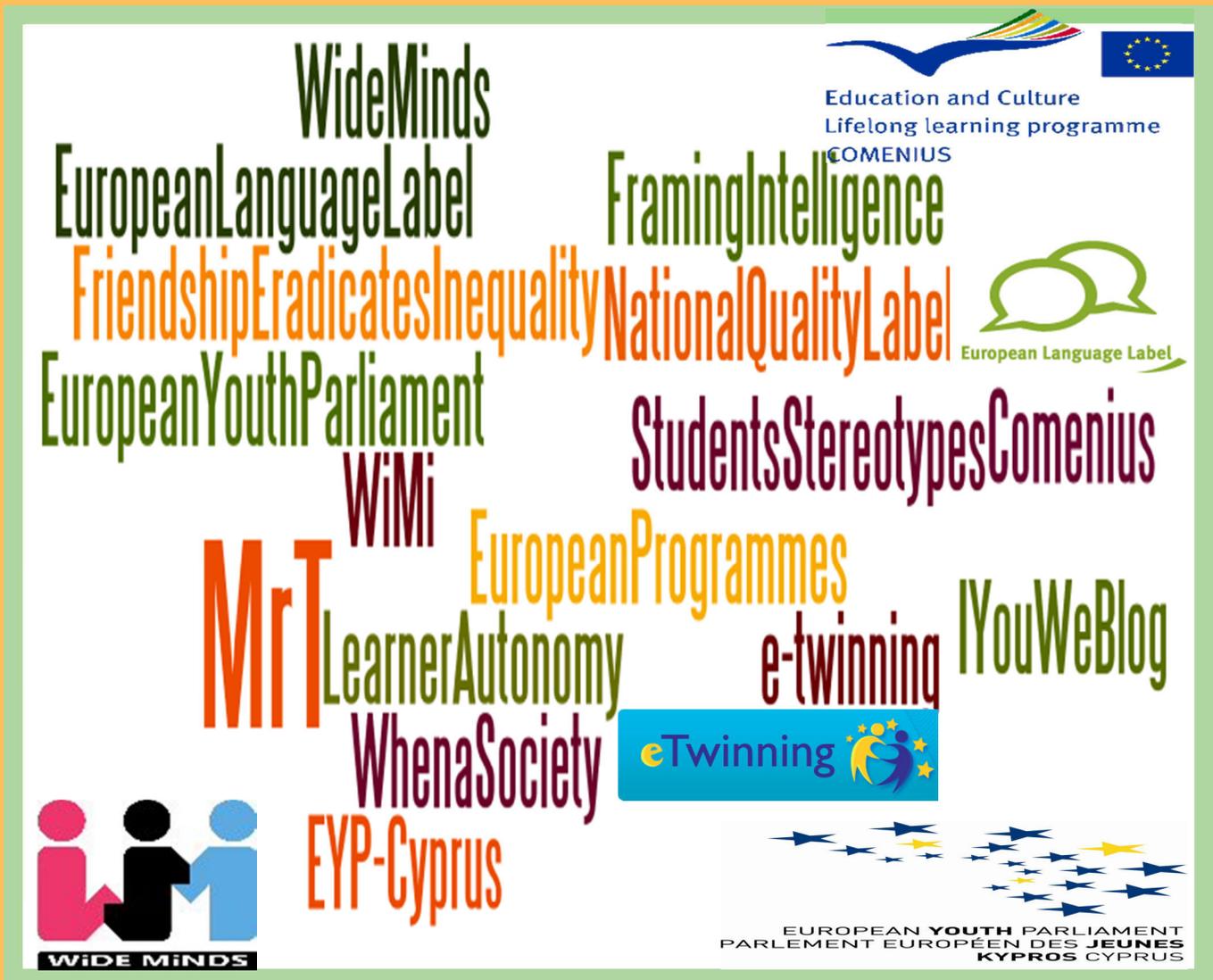
Pancyprian Association of Teachers of English
O.E.L.M.E.K

Year 3

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Bringing teachers of English together



CyELT Journal

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Contents

	Page
1. <i>Address by the Chair</i>	1
2. <i>Address by the Inspectress</i>	1
3. <i>Friendship Eradicates Inequality, European Language Label, 1st Prize 2010</i>	2
4. <i>I, You, We Blog, e-Twinning, National Quality Label</i>	3
5. <i>Challenging Experiences via Comenius Programmes</i>	4
6. <i>Hosting the 4th National European Youth Parliament – Cyprus, Livadhia Lyceum</i>	7
7. <i>4th National European Youth Parliament, Ayios Neophytos Lyceum Participation</i>	10
8. <i>Wide Minds, The European Forum for the Sharing of Best Practice Among Educators</i>	12
9. <i>Students, the Heart of the Matter</i>	14
10. <i>Introducing Mr T and the 90/100 Principle</i>	17
11. <i>Learner Autonomy, Problems and Solutions</i>	19
12. <i>Framing Intelligence</i>	20
13. <i>When a Society Moves Forward</i>	23



The qualities of an effective teacher!

'Address by the Chair

Dear colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our first, brand new electronic version of our CyELT journal!

Our aim is to connect, link and cooperate with EFL teachers in Cyprus and in other countries and provide a forum where we can all exchange ideas and teaching experiences and learn from each other.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who were kind enough to send us very interesting contributions varying from reports on participation to European programmes to articles that challenge ideas concerning EFL teaching today.

Special thanks also to a very dedicated team that is Elena Paraskeva, Eudhokia Anastassiou, Maria Lyssiou, Maria Iakovidou, Christos Christou, and Panagiota Roussou who continuously strive to make our stated aims and objectives an everyday reality for all Public School EFL teachers in Cyprus.

Therefore, Connect! Link! Cooperate! Our audience is growing! Our work and our journal are now accessible and can be viewed by the global EFL teaching community.

We invite you to visit our site regularly and send us your work whether an article, an interesting lesson plan, a report on a school activity or your suggestions and ideas. We look forward to your support and feedback.

Wishing you all personal happiness and a very productive school year.

See you soon online!

Chloe Paikou, B.A., M.A.
(Lifelong Learning, Dist.)

Chair of the Pancyprian Association of English Teachers
(O.E.L.M.E.K.)

Address by the Inspectress

It is with great pleasure that I address this publication of the English teachers since it offers the opportunity for the development of a dialogue among educationalists and particularly English teachers. Generally, such an endeavour aims both at the upgrading and updating of the profession.

Additionally, I consider this attempt as a thought-provoking and demanding undertaking which requires determination, persistence and perseverance. Nevertheless, I am sure that these qualities are present within the committed professionals involved in this task. I congratulate and urge them to proceed with the hard work and assure them that they will always have my encouragement and guidance. Moreover, I would like to add that apart from my personal commitment to such enterprises the institutional encouragement and appreciation is and will always be there.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my praise and my unrenowned support.

Stella Conti - Theocharous
Inspectress of English

Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture

'Friendship Eradicates Inequality~ Rationale' European Language Label -1st Prize 2010

*Eleni Gavrielides-Kouta
Ayios Neophytos Lyceum-Paphos*

The project 'Friendship Eradicates Inequality' was prepared by a group of students under the supervision of their English teacher Mrs Eleni Gavrielides Kouta from the Lyceum of Ayios Neophytos, Paphos. Its intention was to enter the competition of the 'European Language Label 2010' within the Ministry's aim of the year 2010 - **to fight social exclusion**. Students prepared a newspaper on-line on the site

<http://friendshiperadicatesinequality.moonfruit.com>



Students felt that they had no other means to fight inequality but to use language as a vehicle to eradicate it. Once they stated their objectives they thought of the appropriate activities and tools to support them. Some of these included an authentic role play (written and acted out in class), video-taped interviews (from foreigners living in Cyprus), dined out (teacher and students), organized a lesson in nature and in class, prepared interactive games, cartoons, quizzes and so on.

In order to make this newspaper functional they created tabs and subsections to host their activities. They incorporated tabs of Home, News, Sports, Lifestyle, Education, Quizzes, Interviews and the Editorial team.



Entering the site the visitor can see the date, the calendar and the weather of Cyprus on that day.

Furthermore, he/she has the chance to read the European News on a rotation form and watch video clips from the most famous landmarks and attractions of Cyprus.



By using this contemporary method of a newspaper on-line the students basically wanted to cross geographical boundaries and draw awareness on the crucial social issue of inequality. Simultaneously, they wanted to make it accessible 24 hours a day to serve the visitor's convenience.

Undoubtedly, this project had a positive impact on the participated students. Not only did it help them learn to exercise their communicative skills through the application of the multiple intelligence tasks but use EQ (Emotional Intelligence) in their interactions to understand themselves and others as well.

Over all, the project 'Friendship Eradicates Inequality' has helped students to belittle stereotypes and discrimination and enhance openness and equality in their lives.

The committee of the European Language Label awarded it with the first prize for the year 2010 in April 2010.

'I, You, We Blog'

e-Twinning Programme- National Quality Label

Georgia Iosif
Geri Gymnasium- Nicosia

We are pleased to inform you that Geri Gymnasium "Iona and Kolokasi", under my name, Georgia Iosif, as a teacher of English and coordinator of the programme, has secured an important distinction; the 'NATIONAL QUALITY LABEL' from the Cyprus National Support Service (NSS).

Specifically, following evaluation, our school received the 'National Quality Label' from the Cyprus National Support Service (NSS), which is a concrete recognition to teachers and schools of the high level for their eTwinning activities.

For pupils, this offers a boost to their work efforts and for the school in general, a public affirmation of their commitment to quality and openness in European collaborative work.

The National Support Service (NSS) in each country evaluates applications from schools for the National Quality Label. The following criteria are necessary because a project has to broadly achieve excellence in these areas:

- (1) Sustainability,
- (2) Use of ICT (Information Communications Technology) within the project,
- (3) Results and benefits,
- (4) Curricular integration,
- (5) European dimension,
- (6) Innovation / creativity, and
- (7) Overall quality.

It is noted that only two countries – Spain and Cyprus (namely our school) - of the five (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain) which were participating in the project, have received the certificate.

Geri Gymnasium, had been taking part in the eTwinning programme "I, you, We blog!" since 27/09/09. This was published on a monthly basis in English and tackled various specific subjects. Our school was taking part only with a 3rd class - students (aged 14-15).

Project Details - Short description:

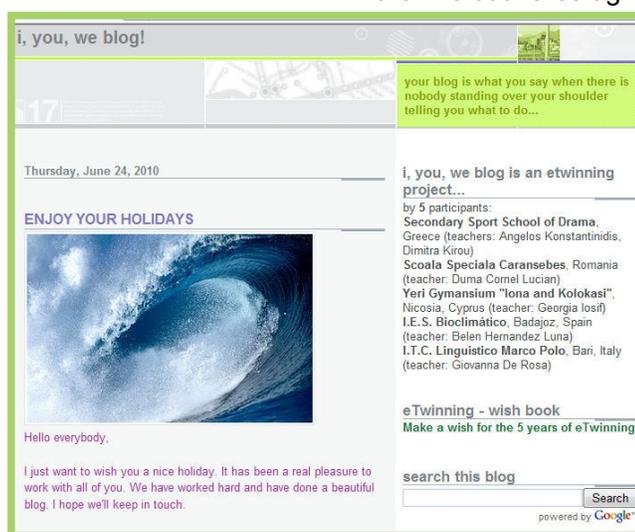
To develop a blog where students (ages 13-15) could share their ideas and experiences. They could post stories, photos, quizzes, videos, etc. on a chosen topic, and got feedback via comments from other students in the project.

Pedagogical / Innovation and Creativity:

We developed a collaborative blog. We used a free blogging service, such as blogspot. We registered at <http://iyouweblog.blogspot.com/>.

All the five countries agreed on the topics

we would work on and the type of items the students could post on the blog (stories, descriptions, list of favourites, quizzes, questionnaires, links to websites, pictures, videos, sound files).



‘Challenging Experiences via Comenius Programmes

Chrysanthi Nicodemou
B Regional Gymnasium - Nicosia

European programmes such as Comenius provide challenges for students and teachers not to mention the school Principal and the local Community. They bring students, educational staff and the local community not only close to each other but also close to the project partners from other countries. Such projects entail considerable amount of work and time but also great challenges that should not be missed as they provide lifelong learning experiences to the people involved. Parallel, they perfectly match the new curriculum which is student centred, project based, research driven and incorporates multiple intelligences, technology and multimedia.

My recent involvement as the Cypriot project coordinator in a Comenius multilateral project named “Health Education reflected on food and sport issues” at Aradippou lyceum during the years 2008-2010 with Spain and Germany has enabled me to see the full potential of the presence of a European programme at a school.



The multifold impact on the school members must be mentioned so as to inform other teachers on the benefits that such projects offer and encourage them for future involvement in these. Not only the teachers and students who were in the project but also the Special Education Unit

and practically all students in the school were involved in project activities.

The impact on the students in the project:

Students in the project have learned about the partner countries, cultures and food via email exchange, student exchange and attending presentations and events carried out at local and mobility level. They have formed great friendships with their partners and they have learned about the foreign schools’ curriculum especially in the subject of Physical Education. They have learned and practised new ways of exercising and movement and tried to improve their eating habits.

Also, they exemplified innovation and creativity in their learning via the creation of Pedagogical materials such as a board game, a Treasure Hunt, a song, a recipe book and art objects such as posters, painted T-shirts, an apple tree and a wheel of fortune.

They have used the English language extensively in email/student exchange and project products and activities, publicizing their work and experiences in the school newspaper/magazine, their blog and translating from Greek to English and vice versa. They have also learned some German on their own initiative.

What’s more, they have developed and increased ICT skills with the use of Excel, the Internet, Microsoft Word, moviemaker and others. They learned to collect data, analyze statistics and interestingly enough, they learned through various creative activities and playing.

They have shown motivation to learn by undertaking time consuming tasks such as organizing and implementing large projects on their own initiative. Also, they have increased their self confidence via their contact with people from other countries and performances/presentations they made. They were made to feel proud

of their heritage and rich culture owing to the feedback they received from the partner countries.



The impact on the teachers:

We have come in close contact with the German and Spanish culture and have formed friendships with our partners. We have used ICT skills extensively and have worked with web2.0 and guided students on the use of ICT. We have used English extensively and have learned basic words/phrases in Spanish and German. We have increased our skills in producing questionnaires and brochures and developed management skills since we had to guide students in project work, distribute work and materials, meet deadlines and report to others. We have used innovative methods and variety in our teaching and have taken the role of partner with the students. Also, increased motivation was evident via the various project tasks we have undertaken - research, organising events such as Healthy Breakfast and an Apple Day. Increased creativity has been demonstrated in designing leaflets and producing ideas of products to be fulfilled by students and us.

The impact on my English classes:

My involvement in the project has inevitably brought many of my classes in contact with the foreign students during the two Cyprus meetings. I made weekly schedules for the meetings in Cyprus for the students which also included visits to my classes.

My students did a project on sports and nutrition and made presentations which were peer assessed. It goes without saying that my students got a larger

audience than the usual - foreign students and teachers – and did the project for the purpose of learning about the specific subject by using the Internet for information and creating power point presentations to present in class.

Also, my English classes got the chance to work in groups with the foreign students to create recipes for wellness for the Comenius recipe book, cook with them, play a Treasure Hunt game and go on a day trip. They were very pleased that they got to know our visitors.

The most incredible of all, was that some of my students responded to my invitation for writing a song related to the Comenius project. They worked several hours in the library and outside school and they produced the “Healthy life” song - lyrics and composition exclusively by them. Generally, my classes showed additional motivation in their own learning even though many of them were not involved in the student exchange nor directly involved in the project. It is evident that the project has made my students more creative!

Conclusion:

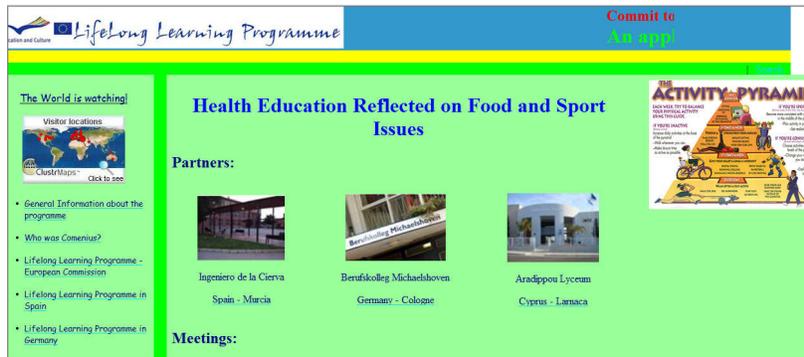
The project has given a European dimension to the school which will continue with further involvement in European programmes. It has been a very productive cooperation among the three countries.

Events such as Healthy Breakfast and Apple Day can take place at the school in later years and project products (a questionnaire on exercising and eating habits, a food diary chart and leaflets, comparison of PE curricula among the three countries, a recipe book, video clips on health, “Healthy life” song, Our Comenius photo calendar 2010, Evridiki’s treasure hunt) can be used not only by the schools involved but also any other school which is interested.

Our project results are available at:

1) http://www.est-llp.org.cy/search_p_detail.php?id_project_base=2008-1-ES1-COM06-00004

2) www.tinyurl.com/cqscomenius



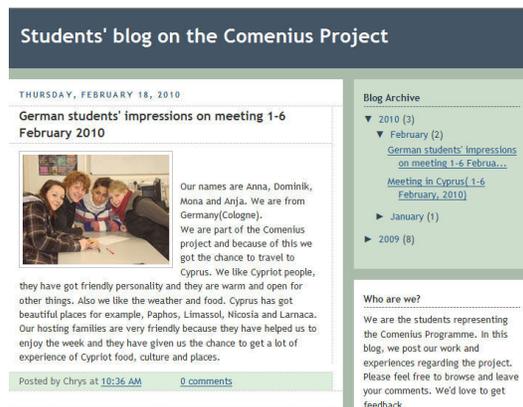
My two year experience in the project is posted in the blog:

<http://www.aradippoucomeniusproject.blogspot.com/>

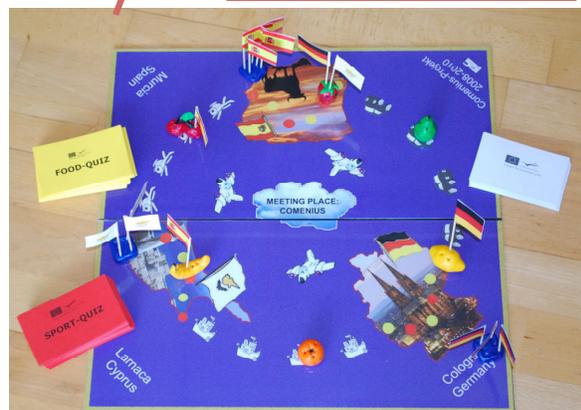


Students' experiences and reflection are posted in:

<http://www.studentsblogonthecomeniusproject.blogspot.com/>



Board game
Meeting place:
Comenius



Hosting the 4th National European Youth Parliament-Cyprus

Andri Poullidou

Livadhia Lyceum-Larnaca

After we had received the proposal to organize the 4th national session of the EYP at our school, Livadhia lyceum, I did not know exactly how much work and effort was needed to do this. I was glad to accept this challenge but I had not really realized how much trouble I was in.

Though I do not regret a minute for this, I must admit that organizing such an event at a public school is not a straight forward procedure.

The organizing committee, the principal of the school Ms K. Andronikou as well as me since I was the representative of EYP at school, had to make huge efforts to overcome all the bureaucratic procedures and get the final permission to use the school facilities for the 4th EYP National Session.



The session was held from 2-5 September 2010 and all the activities except from the party and the Euro concert took place at our school. The delegates came from 15 public and private schools and stayed at Henipa Hotel on Dhekelia road.

Participating Schools

American Academy Larnaca

Foleys

Falcon

Pascal English School Limassol

The English School-Nicosia

Pascal English School Nicosia

GCE School of Careers

Linopetra Lyceum – Limassol

Ayios Neophytos Lyceum– Paphos

Livadhia Lyceum – Larnaca

Laniteio A' Lyceum' – Limassol

Laniteio B Lyceum' – Limassol

Solea Lyceum – Evrihou

Ethnomartiras Kyprianos Lyceum – Nicosia

Arch. Makarios III, Dasoupolis – Nicosia



There were also representatives from many European countries who were organizers or journalists. I have to admit that the head organizer Mikaela Kantor did a great job despite being so young! The session started with team building activities for the organizers, the delegates and also the teachers.

These three days were really full of activities.



But it was not only work! On Thursday 2nd September there was a theme party. Its theme was "Inside out" and of course everyone was free to express himself wearing his clothes inside out!

On the second day the delegates could participate in the Euro concert where they could sing, play a musical instrument or

dance. The delegates proved that they have many talents!

On the final day the most important venue, the General Assembly, lasted the whole day. It was an exciting experience for all of us, delegates, organizers and teachers. The committees presented their resolutions to the general assembly. There were many debates and lots of questions. Finally most of the resolutions got a positive vote from the majority of the delegates.

But this, in my opinion, was not the most important thing for such venues. What really matters in this case is the precious experience each delegate gets from his participation in an EYP session and what is more, the new friends s/he made during the session.

As for the teachers who accompanied the delegates was another great experience. But what I found disappointing was the fact that I saw the same teachers I met last year during the 3rd National session in Limassol.

It is high time that more teachers got involved in this kind of events. It is worth any effort as you get your students' smiles of satisfaction as a reward!

Visit

<http://eypcyprus.wordpress.com/2010/08/20/4th-eyp-national-session/>

This year's theme was **Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion**

and these were the

COMMITTEE TOPICS:

1. Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI)

"If farmers' yields were still as low as those of the 1950s, we would need nearly three times as much cultivated land to feed

today's global population". Dominic Dyer – chief executive of the UK Crop Protection Association

It seems obvious that innovative agricultural practices will be required in the future to increase the amount of grains, fruit and vegetables that we produce. Which direction should EU agriculture take towards this?

2. Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)

"But no alliance can afford to stand still..."

Barrack Obama, President of the United States of America, speech in Prague, 4/5/2009

18 months on from the election of Barack

Obama as US President but with no substantial improvements in US-EU relations, what can the EU do in order to ensure productive future relations with the USA?

3. Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON)

"Prevention is better than the cure." Proverb

With all eyes on austerity measures introduced in Greece in return for a 110 billion euro rescue package and the national outrage and general strikes that followed, what measures can the EU take to prevent such situations developing in other Member States in precarious financial positions?

4. Committee on Employment and Social Affairs I (EMPL I)

"The European Union is one of the richest areas in the world, but still 17% of EU citizens have such limited resources that they cannot afford the basics", European Commission website. With 2010 being the European year for combating poverty and social exclusion, what measures can



national governments adopt in an effort of building a fairer society by bridging the gap between the rich and poor?

5. Committee on Employment and Social Affairs II (EMPL II)

“The immigrant concerns, as the person with identities, with cultural and religious backgrounds, with aspirations, with all the complexities, have been largely disregarded.” Assia Bensalah Alaoui, academic

First race now class: how can European governments work together to ensure that social and economic exclusion prevalent in immigrant communities is not the public problem of the 21st Century?

6. Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI)

“We must convince and empower people to adopt the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity as their guiding principle,” Klaus Töpfer, founding director of the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, Germany

In view of the 2010 Convention on Biological Diversity summit in Japan this October and with the 2010 target of significantly curbing the global rate of biodiversity loss unattained, how should the EU move forward in tackling European diversity loss and propose additional measures?

7. Committee on Fisheries (FISH)

“It is vital that governments recognise the changes that have taken place and set stock protection and recovery targets that are reflective of the historical productivity of the sea.” Simon Brockington, Marine Conservation Society, UK

Fish the new Oil?: Is Europe at a risk of irrevocably altering its oceanic biodiversity? How could states balance the necessity of large scale fishing with environmental considerations?

8. Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)

“It is about whether one company will be able to exploit its current monopoly in order to control access to, and commerce on, the Internet,” Orrin Hatch, US Senator

Feeding consumer demands for access or protecting against monopolies: how can data protection, competition in the market and the freedom of information be balanced with the desire to benefit in full from the powerful tools web technology offers today?

9. Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI)

“Long unresolved problems disappoint young people: the lack of meritocracy, corruption in everyday life, a sense of social injustice” Former Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis

On the question of corruption: with citizens’ trust shaken and general disappointment expressed on the corruption still prevalent in parts of Europe, especially in this time of crisis, what measures should be taken to regain public trust and eliminate corruption?

10. Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)

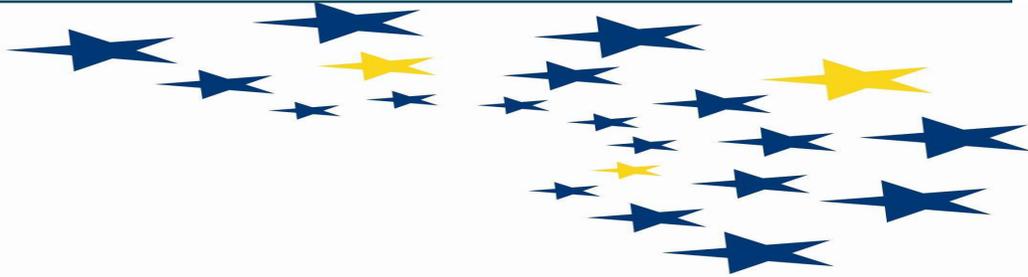
“You must be conscious of the fact that if you leave people walking on the street without the possibility for the other persons to recognise their face, this is a problem of safety, a major problem” Jean-François Copé, French politician

With France, Belgium and Italy recently taking steps towards a law banning women from wearing the full Islamic face veil in public and critics calling it an infringement of liberty of religious expression and a prelude to social exclusion of religious minorities in Europe, how should the EU react in light of this divisive issue?



'4th National European Youth Parliament Ayios Neophytos Lyceum Participation~

*Eleni Gavrielides-Kouta
Ayios Neophytos Lyceum-Paphos*



EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN DES JEUNES KYPROS CYPRUS



Ayios Neophytos Lyceum was invited to participate in the 4th National European Youth Parliament (EYP) 2010 that took place in Livadhia Lyceum in Larnaca from the 2nd to the 5th of September 2010.

A group of students under the guidance and support of their English teacher Mrs. Eleni Gavrielidis Kouta participated enthusiastically and successfully. The EYP commissioners selected three schools based on students' performances in the General Assembly Debate, to represent Cyprus in regional sessions (in Europe) and two schools to represent it on the international sessions 65th and 66th.

The 4th National EYP 2010 Session in Larnaca was composed of 8 Private Lyceums and 6 Public ones. Ayios Neophytos is the second of the three Lycea chosen for the regional sessions and the only one from the Public sector.

Now the young delegates and their teacher will soon represent Cyprus in a European Parliament Session in Europe.

Students' experience from the 4th National EYP Session

The group felt that the EYP 2010 in Larnaca was undoubtedly an inspirational experience which gave them the opportunity to work in teams and cooperatively construct their perceptions

which eventually were composed into their committee proposals in the Resolution Booklet. This event ended when all participants gathered in the General Assembly Debate where they considered their fellow delegates' clauses and took a stand on the predetermined Committee topics on European issues and institutions. Students voted 9 out of the 10 resolutions which verified the outstanding job they prepared in their team building activities.

In their spare time students engaged in organized multiple intelligence games where they had lots of fun.

Additionally, teachers were also given the chance to participate in their own EYP 2010 debate simulations on the Education System in Cyprus in correlation to the European laws.

Their diverse and similar perspectives generated constructive dialogue that brought them closer and broadened their perceptions on the issue.

Moreover, the group along with their English teacher would like to express their appreciation to the Cypriot Ministry of Education stakeholders and the headmaster Mr. Savvas Kokkinos for embracing this innovative event.

Last but not least, they would like to thank the organizers of the EYP 2010 who indefatigably made this happen and indelibly invested in the participants' memories.

Comments and impressions

"EYP 4th National Session was a life time experience and we will cherish every moment of work, fun and friends we made over there!"

Christina Joseph (FISH)

"EYP was the best experience ever!

We learned to work together as a team with complete strangers and made friends for life! I loved it!"

Emanuella Constantinou (AFET)

"It was amazing, and I will definitely try it again!"

Rafaëla Christodoulou (ECON)

"It was an incredible event, just to think that we cooperated in a team with students that we hadn't seen before!"

Nicolas Poyiatzis (ENVI)

"The EYP Cyprus 4th National Session was a wonderful experience. I think everyone should have the chance to feel it."

Skevi Christoforou (LIBE)

"It was an amazing experience. I made friends that I missed already!!"

Georgia Mavrokordatou (JURI)

"I had a great time at EYP. I want to thank everyone who organized it and gave us the opportunity to be part of this amazing program. I would definitely take up this challenge again, and this is what I am going to do next year!"

"Savvas Fytides (AGRI)

Surname	Name	Class
<i>Iosif</i>	<i>Christina</i>	<i>B03</i>
<i>Constantinou</i>	<i>Emanuella-Valentina</i>	<i>B02</i>
<i>Christoforou</i>	<i>Paraskevi</i>	<i>B04</i>
<i>Mavrokordatou</i>	<i>Georgia</i>	<i>B01</i>
<i>Poyiatzis</i>	<i>Nicholas</i>	<i>B04</i>
<i>Fytides</i>	<i>Savvas</i>	<i>B04</i>
<i>Christodoulou</i>	<i>Rafaëlla</i>	<i>B06</i>

'Wind Minds- WiMi'

The European Forum for the sharing of best practice among Educators

Elena Paraskeva
Deputy Head Pancyprian Gymnasium, Nicosia
WiMi Crew Member/ Sept. 2008- Aug. 2010



Education and Culture

Lifelong learning programme

COMENIUS

The lifelong Learning Programme Wide Minds Network Project: The Human Face of Digital Learning started in 2008 and lasts for three years (2008-2011). It is funded by the European Commission and coordinated by the Department of Education and Community Services, Ceredigion County Council located in West Wales. It consists of Regional Coordinating Centres based on 14 European countries including Cyprus which is represented by The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute.

The prime objectives of the Programme are:

- ✚ To act as a forum for the sharing of best practice and expertise in different methodologies, such as e-learning and blended learning among teachers of English and other subjects
- ✚ To provide the guide and support mechanisms for schools to develop their use of digital learning in the existing context of international projects
- ✚ To bring about a change in ethos in schools so that they engage in multilingual, intercultural dialogue with local, European and global communities
- ✚ To give a voice to the learner in designated areas on the online platform and magazine

- ✚ To train coordinators and crew members who in turn provide quality in-service training for their teachers in their field

WiMi is developing as a pan-European forum for innovation and best practice in the area of digital learning. Its partners share the conviction of the benefits of engaging whole-school communities in meaningful international projects and believe that providing locally-based training and support as well as holding international conferences will be the key to the success of the network.

Each year WiMi holds a Conference in European Partner Countries in an outmost concern to create the links for the development of International Projects among participant teachers.

The first International WiMi Conference entitled: **The Human Face of Digital Learning** was held in Elblag, Poland in October, 2008 and was attended by over 70 participants and partners. Its prime aim was to provide the real context for intercultural dialogue and use of ICT. It included workshops on videoconferencing, filmmaking and animation as well as hands-on training in using WiMi's Moodle-based online learning community. It's important to mention here the presentation of the new e-learning platforms created by the Universities of Surrey, Tuebingen and Murcia. These platforms contain useful

real life- situation activities for EFL teachers who want to use authentic, motivating material for their students. The Conference was agreed by all to have been an overwhelming experience!

The second Conference entitled: **Speaking your mind**, focused on the significance of multilingualism and took place in Murcia, Spain in October, 2009. Here, one was also offered the opportunity to get acquainted with other foreign language teachers and get informed about Moodle activities and the innovative use of mobile phone technology. Once more, the 78 participants who attended were extremely positive in their responses to the WiMi evaluation survey.

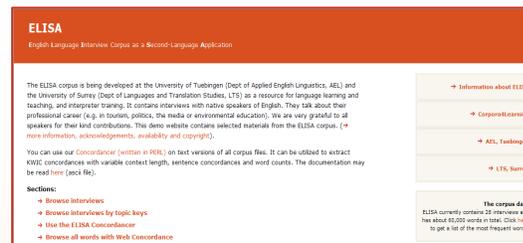
The third WiMi Conference, **Caring for Europe and the World**, was held in the Finnish city of Oulu from October 12-17, 2010 and two Members of P.A.E.T. Association attended.

For those who are interested in acquiring more information about the Conferences or would like to read through all the six editions of Kaleidoscope online magazine or even search for new European Partnerships can visit WiMi website: www.wideminds.eu.

Last but not least, since sharing of information and teaching material should be, I believe, one of our main objectives, I urge you to surf through the new e-learning platforms below. Just click on the given site and search through for interactive activities that will allow for more student autonomy, meet the needs and preferences of each learner and ultimately permit our students to flourish in surprising ways.

New e-Learning platforms

ELISA: Interviews with American, British, Irish and Australian speakers of English from different walks of life / www.uni-tuebingen.de/elisa



SACODEYL: interviews with British, French, German, Italian and Spanish pupils between 13 and 18. Interview topics include home and family, present and past living routines, hobbies and interests, holidays, school and education, job experiences, plans for the future and open discussion topics / www.um.es/sacodeyl

Steinbeis Transfer Center Language Learning Media / www.sprachlernmedien.de



'Students- The Heart of the Matter'

Rebecca Shekkeri

Panos Ioanou Gymnasium- Kokkinohoria

Sometimes we love them, sometimes we hate them. Yet, one thing is for sure. We cannot imagine a working day without them. For students are, indeed, the core of a teacher's working life.

There are, however, times that we feel that we could be better off without them. How often have you left a classroom feeling that you never want to go back to it? I have found myself on a number of occasions touching those tears of vague desperation rolling down my cheeks. When I deliver a lesson that I prepared for with such joy and anticipation and as I enter my class I see that Costakis would rather doze off and Yianoulla really find exchanging ideas about the latest fashion nails far more intriguing than a discussion on team sports, self remorse cunningly sneaks in.

"It's my fault.", I utter to myself. "I should have prepared something more challenging, something that young people enjoy. I'm so far behind my times." There are, indeed, occasions that it is actually my fault, but other factors leading to a lesson's success or failure should be taken into consideration. One of these factors has to do with students' characters or stereotypes. I know that most of you would totally disagree with such a term. You would probably refer to students' labeling with all the obviously undesirable consequences.

Well, in this article we are not trying to solve serious students' issues. We are merely trying to get thinking by having some fun too. Having worked in a private institute for more than 15 years and in a public school for a mere couple of years, I find it difficult to separate students into stereotypes. Still, I can see that there are certain classical types of students. Why don't we find out a few things about them?

The Macho type

Does the title ring a bell? Is there even a single Lyceum class that doesn't include

such a person? He is the one who chooses to sit in the middle of the class in a seat that puts him under the limelight. He is fond of wearing tight white or black T-shirts even in the winter months making sure that he shows off those muscles. His hair which is the epitome of the latest fashion trends is at most times spiky with lots of hair gel piled on it. He sometimes carries a mirror with him as a most vital accessory which helps him retain his image of "macho" perfection.



He is also the one who likes starting fights as he considers his involvement in "sorting out minor differences the hard way" a further way of enhancing his image. Guess where he spends

his afternoons. Need I ask? To the gym, of course. He is the type of student that we sometimes find intimidating because we think, God forbid, should a fight begin he is the first to set the first punch. This is not usually the case. "Mr Macho" might have the muscles and starts a fight like a rebel without a cause, but further along seems unwilling to mess his perfectly set hair for the sake of a stupid fight. So though he is the initial protagonist of a fight, he is not the one to get caught right in the middle of it.

The Holy one

His or her "Holiness" always likes sitting at the back of the class preferably behind a "Mr Macho" or a "Mr Noisy" one. There is an obvious reason for this. His or her holiness enjoys setting the whole classroom into flames and getting away with it. He acts carefully and cunningly like a well trained fox leaving behind no trace. How could a teacher ever suspect this sweet angel who sits down quietly wearing an immaculate school uniform and having

beautifully styled hair, miles away from any fashion trends? Why, is he or she every teacher's dream? Or should I say every teacher's nightmare? For every time we cast an eyelid on that angelic face who apparently throws little pieces of paper all over the place, he shrugs off his shoulders in disbelief. "I haven't done anything, Miss."

The next step is an automatic watering of the eyes and, yes, we have those tears moving down his or her cheeks. Angels cannot be blamed for any kind of sin and if you as teachers have the guts to think so, then you are clearly mistaken. The angel raises his or her head slightly asking his classmates for a tissue and throws in the crucial question "Can you prove it?" Well, Detective Hercules Poirot must obviously have had easier cases with far more clues leading to solving the puzzle of a crime than us. Well, can we? This is the point in which the whole class starts rioting in support of a fair cause. His or Her "Holiness" simply smiles ironically gazing at us with an innocent look that could mean "Can you prove it? NO? You see, I told you so!"



The Beauty Queen

The Beauty Queen is the one who gives final school proms any meaning. Indeed, she seems to have been born with that particular occasion on her mind. And when the time is ripe, instead of worrying about university entry exams and her future, she plans and preplans her hairstyle, her dress and her manicure for that particular event. He has to be perrrrrfect for the prom. She



keeps talking about the prom in class at least two months before it and she exchanges opinions about it with all the other

"Beauty queens" at school. They set off the conversation looking at each other thinking about possible competition and assessing the horrific possibility of wearing the same outfit at the prom.

These students like English as they find it the language of fashion and modern trends. They listen to a lot of music in English and occasionally use certain expressions in English in order to appear cool in front of their friends. What could be a major disaster for them? If they blemish a perfectly manicured nail, then it is time of lament and personal tragedy. The beauty queens are also keen on criticising their teacher's hair and outfits at a glance. As soon as you enter a classroom, you will catch their critical eyes screening you from head to toe. They comment on your appearance and if you pass the scrutinizing test, then there is hope for you. In a way, even a mild one, you become one of them. Personally, I love the beauty queens as not only do they beautify the classroom with their presence, but are usually good- hearted and rather easy-going.

The "I know it all"

The sad truth is that the student who claims to know it all, does in reality know only very little. He always likes bragging about his knowledge to his classmates, but when it comes to tests, he fails. His fellow students know who he is and often make fun of him by asking him questions on various topics which he answers without hesitation. Whether his answers are correct or not is another story. The "I know it all" type is the first to doubt the validity of what you tell him. He tends to look at you scornfully if you mispronounce a word and bursts into laughter if you make even the slightest mistake. He checks the spelling of every single word you write and I personally have made it a habit to spell words wrongly to get his attention and thus get the whole class to focus on what I write when he triumphantly shouts "Aha! You've made a spelling mistake!"

This person is actually a teacher's best friend though he sometimes gets on my nerves. His favourite hobby isn't stamp

collecting. He is fond of what I teasingly call “word collecting”. For every time he has the opportunity he looks funny words



up in the dictionary and gives you, his teacher the ultimate test. He looks at you in sheer joy as he innocently asks you to explain the meaning of the word “unfathomable” or “nondescript”. He needs to have an immediate answer as this is crucial to his dad who told him to get his English teacher to translate. Lovely? Well, those of you who have been through such an experience know what I am talking about.

The “spasma” type

He or she (at most times it is a she) has specific goals probably set from elementary level and will set aside anyone who gets in his or her way. Thus, his or her most common enemies are the macho type and the beauty queen type who disrupt the peaceful classroom environment with their nonsensical talk. Every time either of them brutally violates the quiet in the classroom the “spasma” raises an eyebrow in contempt and gives the teacher a look demanding his immediate intervention to solve this high crisis.

He is perfect in all ways but one. True socialization in the school environment. The “spasma” has nothing in common with the Macho type. He



knows nothing about gyms and ways to keep fit. Likewise the she “spasma” cannot exchange views on the latest entries to “X-factor 3” or the fantastic sunglasses Rouvas wore at the premiere. These matters are frivolous and a complete

waste of time. What matters is studying, studying and studying in order to pass those University Entrance Exams. The “spasma” type might be the teacher’s pride and joy, but unfortunately misses out on all the fun and doesn’t have a clue about what the real world is like.

The Sleeping Beauty type

Nearly every classroom we enter has its “Sleeping Beauty”. It can be either a “he” or a “she”, though you would probably agree that it is mostly a “He”. The Sleeping Beauty’s favourite pastime is of course “Happy Classroom Sleeping”. The quieter the class is, the happier he will be. He probably spends his nights surfing the net or partying like crazy till the early morning hours. If he doesn’t get to sleep at night, he finds school environment the ideal place to doze off. If you teach a boring subject or if you have a monotonous tone of voice, you will be highly appreciated by the Sleeping beauty type. In fact, you might run for the position of his favourite teacher. What the Sleeping Beauty hates is lively discussions in the classroom or

listening sessions disrupting him from his sleep. The Sleeping Beauty type



doesn’t carry forward any marks for his oral work unless mild snoring can be labeled so. The worst case scenario for him is a teacher’s shrieking voice at a high pitch telling him “Sleeping again, Angelos?”

I could drag on for hours talking about students. Whether we moan or constantly criticize them, we know that life would be absolutely dull without them. As soon as we enter a classroom, we look around for those vital signs that clearly show that all the above types and even more are here. We need to have them for they make our life worth living. Hate them or love them, dispute them or join them, our students are the precious jewels on our dirty, scruffy, odd crown!

'Introducing Mr T and the 90/10 Principle'

Zoe Piponides

Drosia Gymnasium - Larnaca

What have I done now? Look guys, she's picking on me again. She's got it in for me, I told you, didn't I? I haven't done anything and she's looking straight at me again. All you guys are talking and guess who gets the blame? Why is it always me? I wish she'd get off my case. Give me a pen re - I want to knock a hole in this desk...

Yep!

That's exactly it! *He hasn't done anything!* Mr Theatrical with the rolling eyes and jutting lips, the raised eyebrow and sidekick stare – Mr Probably Talented and Intelligent – but who's to know when he doesn't seem to get it right in the hazy abyss of the modern day classroom?

Dear colleagues, isn't modern education supposed to be a colourful adventure ground with state of the art seminars spurring enterprising teachers towards the latest classroom know-how – and *hey kids, I'm going to gift you with an amazing educational experience so pleeeeeease...*

...pay attention!

Maria, what are you up to? Ok, you can pick up your pencil. George, you're fidgeting. What? You want to go to the toilet? Remember to raise your hand Elena! Oops, sorry, you're right, I have misspelt 'October'. Kiriako - Panayioti – what on earth...? Could you please remember to bring your own pencil-case tomorrow, Kiriako? Andri, don't you know mobiles aren't allowed? Now, take out your class work exercise books and write down the date. What's the date today? Monday??? ...Spyro? Come on, Spyro, the classwork exercise book is the big one and the small one is for homework. Now everyone, listen carefully...

I wish I was home

Is it any wonder why *Mr Theatrical and Probably Quite Intelligent (Mr T for short)* is now beginning to itch in his seat? Is it any wonder why he can't be bothered to reach for his bag, never mind rummage for

his pen or his note book? Is it any wonder why he's begun to hum ostentatiously in an effort to block out the intrusive blur of the mundane?

He wants a pen to draw a picture - on the desk will do - because he's beginning to feel so bored, he can't be bothered to do anything else and wishes he'd stayed at home. He calls out to his friend on the other side of the room to throw him a pen. Someone else catches it. *Mr T* threatens to bounce him and gets out of his seat to grab a pen he doesn't really need because he has a whole stack of them tucked at the bottom of his bag. As he returns to his seat, he glares at the one person who could make a difference - challenging Teacher to the ultimate duel.

Please – no more!

Ok, Teacher, you've got the message. It's quite unbearable what some of us have to go through some of the time with some students, isn't it? And I'm sure you want to tell me to ...

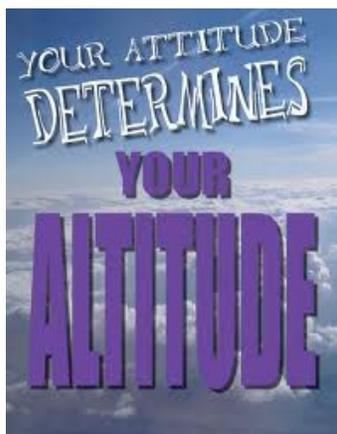
Shoosh!

I keep using this 'word' making my students snigger and fidget even more! I am now wondering how much *I need to shoosh* and start practising the art of listening and delicate observation. In fact, how much do I listen and observe – and I mean *really listen*? Not simply hearing the sounds and noises around us – but also that far hidden - *tiny* - voice inside each of us – a voice called *instinct, intuition, common sense* – a *hey be-a-ware sound!* A sound so penetrating yet not so easily stirred – a sound that needs time to be heard and understood; a sound that reveals itself in a person's eyes...just like the eyes of *Mr T* urging the instructor, the classroom manager - the teacher, *to really look and see.*

Focus: The 90/10 Principle!

According to Dr Stephen R. Covey, author, public speaker, consultant and

management expert, only 10% of life is made up of what happens to you while a staggering 90% of life is decided by *how you react*. 'We really have NO control over 10% of what happens to us. We cannot stop the car from breaking down or a plane from arriving late. 'The other 90% is different. You determine the other 90%.



How?

By your reactions!

Yes! YOU can control how you react.

If someone says something negative... don't be a sponge. Let

the attack roll off like water on glass. You don't have to let the negative comment affect you!

In his self help book, 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People', Dr Covey states that 'a person can be a **change catalyst**...Such an individual is yeast that can leaven an entire loaf. It requires vision, initiative, patience and respect to be a transforming leader.'

How can this help my friend Mr T? How can it help me?

Dr Covey says: "The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing." This makes me think of moments in a roller coaster lesson – the kids having a lowly laugh while Teacher is highly charged, mouth agape – clutching the white board marker, struggling for momentum, not enjoying the ride at all - far removed from *the main thing* which is the purpose of the lesson.

'Live out of your imagination, not your history.'

I think about Mr T and take my thoughts home where I contemplate possible strategies for a positive outcome. I avoid comparing him to other students. I try to understand this special situation, remind myself I'm dealing with an individual, a first year gymnasium student, a pint-sized

twelve year old. I think of his maleness and the fact that he sits alone in the middle desk in front of me having direct eye contact. With every single shuffling move he makes, I am there to catch the moment. I realise that I have the power, the ability, the opportunity, *the choice* to turn the moment either into a problem or I can try to wave a magic wand.

I think of Mr T's recent B grades; his neat handwriting; his spot on answers; his hand stomping on the desk because I hadn't chosen him a third time.

The next morning I locate Mr T in a quiet corner, offer him some juice and ask him how he is. He says he's fine, his family's fine and that he hasn't any complaints about the lesson and that he's going to try to improve. Phew!

Do you think sitting with another student would help? He nods his head. And how about changing the place where you sit? 'Not at the back,' he says. I agree. How about at the front, on the right by the window? Does that sound like a good seat? 'Yes, miss.' I'm telling you this now so that you know I am doing this to help you – not punish you. Do you understand? 'Yes, I understand.' And off he goes...

Next lesson, he's arched at the side, enjoying the morning breeze, raising his hand, participating in what seems a safer environment. He copies from the board using his own pen, his books on the desk; his eyes and voice are his own.

'Seek first to understand, then to be understood.'

Dr Covey is right. By *reacting* in a more understanding way, I managed to help *Mr Talented Intelligent Footballer* to understand me too.

Taking time to process information, as Dr Covey says, to 'choose and respond', for a more positive outcome is a creative experience in itself and one that we should strive for every day.

Yes, I know, it is easier said than done, but we can always try and hopefully we can get to say,

'Pleased to meet you, Mr T!'

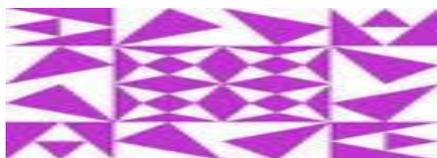
'Learner Autonomy: Problems and Solutions'

Monica Grimaldi-Constantinou

Deputy Head B Regional Gymnasium - Nicosia

It is a good thing to have learner autonomy which seems nearly universal and it never goes out of style.

I can hardly argue with the idea of students becoming less dependent on the teacher and being able to access lots more learning opportunities since I have had and heard of other teachers having many problems with putting those ideas into practice.



Some of those problems, along with the ideas I have read or come up with when trying to cope with them are the following:

1. The dedicated students get in the lead

Students who are naturally more motivated are much more likely to take advantage of suggestions for extra work outside class than students who have less energy or are going through a period of feeling disheartened about their level of English to be improved. This can increase the difference in level between those two types of students, affecting their confidence. On the other hand, the keen student could get bored in a class that has a level they are rapidly leaving behind and also lose motivation to come.

With eager and enthusiastic students it would be a good idea to give them extra work that is not directly connected to the language you will cover. This should ideally be language and skills that they need more than other students in the class, e.g. lots of practice on their particular weakness or something connected to a present or future need that is not really covered in the syllabus of the course such as emailing, travel English, pen friend letters or academic writing.

With the less keen students, one approach is to give suggestions for extra work to the

whole class that you know will particularly appeal to them, for example research projects on particular interests, watching a football match with English commentary, or reading comics in English.

2. Some are already on familiar terms with the language

A solution to the above problem is brainstorming extra vocabulary or example sentences, covering some topics that aren't in the textbook, concentrating on production of the language rather than explanation or grammar practice, and using authentic texts (maybe with easy tasks).

3. Additional work for the teacher

There would definitely be extra work by trying to make the students more autonomous by trying to find suitable online practice for them; finding, photocopying and giving out extra worksheets; marking any extra writing they do; and answering any questions they have that came up in the extra work they did. Solutions include working together with the other teachers who are teaching the same level, and encouraging the students to share their own recommendations with speaking activities about study tips or a class wiki or similar site.

4. Questions in class not everybody is interested in

I always encourage students who are picking up language from outside class to ask questions about it at any time "because everyone else probably has the same question or maybe can help you with your question". I'm always delighted when students do get in a habit of using me as a resource like that, but there are occasional difficulties in making it work. Problems could include: specialist vocabulary that the other students really have no interest in; grammar that you can't or don't want to explain until they are three levels higher;

classes becoming more teacher centred; or simply running out of time for other things. One solution is to make yourself available for student questions at other times by providing your email address and office times or hanging around in class before and after the lesson. Another approach is to get all questions at the beginning or end of the lesson but deal with them at different times, such as, after the lesson with the person who asked the question in person or by email, or in a future lesson.

5. Feeling uncomfortable for not doing extra work

There is a variety in the students' personalities as well as their cultural backgrounds so they may be feeling guilty, and be in the state of emotional pressure from previous teachers or parents. This is again a very difficult situation to cope with, but you should at least make sure that what is really homework, what is suggested and what is entirely optional is clearly pointed out. You can make this

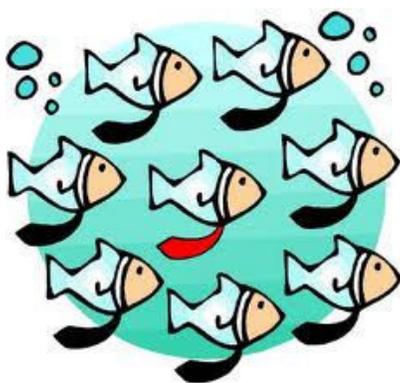
even clearer by always checking their homework, occasionally asking if they found the recommended stuff useful, and never mentioning the totally optional stuff unless they bring it up. Alternatively, you could set things like reading graded readers.

6. Underlining the fact that they are bad students

Particularly vulnerable students who think of themselves as "dropouts" are those who have messed up their previous education experiences through lack of motivation. With such students the last thing you want them to think is that the same experience is about to start again. In order to avoid this is to give different self study suggestions to different people. Another way is to set realistic goals with each student and only check the progress with these rather than comparing them to each other. Make differentiated teaching and provide special assignments to them according to their level of knowledge

'Framing Intelligence'

*Chloe Paikou
Dasoupolis Lyceum-Nicosia*



There is only one certainty about intelligence: that there is no consensus about it within the scientific community. It is one of the most talked about subjects in psychology while its definition and its form of measurement have always been causing heated discussions, disagreements and controversies. Some researchers have suggested that intelligence is a single, general ability, while others believe that the term

intelligence includes a wide range of aptitudes, skills and talents. Numerous theories have emerged during the last century in order to define and explain human intelligence. The following are considered the major theories of intelligence of the 20th century:

Charles Spearman

General Intelligence:

British psychologist Charles Spearman (1863-1945) described a concept he referred to as general intelligence, or the g factor. After using a technique known as factor analysis to examine a number of mental aptitude tests, Spearman concluded that scores on these tests were remarkably similar. People who performed well on one cognitive test tended to perform well on other tests, while those who scored badly on one test tended to score badly on another. He concluded that

intelligence is a general cognitive ability that could be measured and numerically expressed (Spearman, 1904).

Louis L. Thurstone

Primary Mental Abilities:

Psychologist Louis L. Thurstone (1887-1955) from the U.S. offered a differing theory of intelligence. Instead of viewing intelligence as a single, general ability, Thurstone's theory focused on seven different "primary mental abilities" (Thurstone, 1938).

The abilities that he described were:

- **Verbal comprehension**
- **Reasoning**
- **Perceptual speed**
- **Numerical ability**
- **Word fluency**
- **Associative memory**
- **Spatial visualization**



Howard Gardner

Multiple Intelligences:

The theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) was introduced by Howard Gardner in 1983 in his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. Instead of focusing on the analysis of test scores, Gardner proposed that numerical expressions of human intelligence are not a full and accurate depiction of people's abilities. His M.I. theory describes seven distinct intelligences that are based on skills and abilities that are valued within different cultures.

The first seven intelligences Gardner described are:

- **Visual-spatial Intelligence**
- **Verbal-linguistic Intelligence**
- **Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence**
- **Logical-mathematical Intelligence**
- **Interpersonal Intelligence**
- **Musical Intelligence**
- **Intra personal Intelligence**

According to Gardner, these intelligences can be observed and measured.

In 1998 Gardner has nominated three additional intelligences

- **Naturalist**
- **Spiritual**
- **Existential**

Gardner's New "Quintet"

Within the framework of the Lifelong Learning principles, in 2007 Gardner shifted from the term intelligence to the term "minds" in his book *Five Minds for the Future* whereby he predicts what kind of intellectual abilities people will need in the future not only at school but also in the workplace. The cognitive abilities that he describes as prevailing and required in the years ahead are: the disciplinary mind, the synthesizing mind, the creating mind, the respectful mind and the ethical mind.

In an effort to defend his "quintet", as he calls it, he talks about "an understandable confusion" which might originate from this book in relation to his M.I. theory and he differentiates between the intelligences and the five minds proposed in this new book. He states that "the five minds are different from the eight or nine human intelligences. Rather than being distinct computational capabilities, they are better thought of as broad uses of the mind that we can cultivate at school, in professions, or at the workplace. The five minds make use of our several intelligences..."

Robert Sternberg

Triarchic Theory of Intelligence:

American psychologist Robert Sternberg defined intelligence as "mental activity directed toward purposive adaptation to,

selection and shaping of, real-world environments relevant to one's life" (Sternberg, 1985, p. 45). Although he agreed with Gardner that intelligence is much broader than a single, general ability, he suggested that some of Gardner's intelligences are better viewed as individual talents. Sternberg proposed what he refers to as 'successful intelligence,' which is comprised of three different factors:

- **Analytical intelligence:** This component refers to problem-solving abilities.
- **Creative intelligence:** This aspect of intelligence involves the ability to deal with new situations using past experiences and current skills.
- **Practical intelligence:** This element refers to the ability to adapt to a changing environment.

The M.I. Theory: Popular yet criticized.

It seems that within the Cyprus educational system, the most popular theory is Gardner's work on Multiple Intelligences. However, one cannot underestimate the fact that, even if the M.I. theory has been "a great contribution to the field" (Morgan 1996), it has also been greatly criticized by the academia world. It is interesting to note that "during a series of seminars sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Cyprus from May 27-28, 2009, renowned Harvard University Professor of Psychology Howard Gardner engaged in a lively discussion with the Minister of Education of Cyprus Dr Andreas Demetriou - also a developmental psychologist - on subjects ranging from the nature of the human mind to their shared view that educators must prepare the next generation to overcome inter-group conflicts".

Gardner's work has been described as "suspicious" by some scholars in the sense that it resembles earlier work. It seems that he has failed to persuade his peers

A. as to the originality of his ideas,

B. as to the way he uses the term intelligence where others use the term ability or talent and

C. as to the research evidence that supports his theory.

The fundamental criticism of the MI theory is the belief by scholars that each of the seven multiple intelligences is in fact a cognitive style rather than a stand-alone construct (Morgan, 1996).

Morgan argues that Gardner's theory has a "striking resemblance" to earlier work by factor theorists of intelligence like L.L. Thurstone. Morgan, (1996) refers to the description of the nature of each intelligence by Gardner with terms such as abilities, sensitivities, skills and abilities as evidence of the fact that the "theory" is really a matter of semantics rather than new thinking on multiple constructs of intelligence.

Other criticisms include the notion that the M.I. theory is not empirical, is incompatible with g (general cognitive ability), heritability, and environmental influences, and broadens the construct of intelligence so widely as to render it meaningless. Gardner (1995) defends the empiricism of the theory by referring to the numerous laboratory and field data that contributed to its development and the ongoing re-conceptualization of the theory based on new scientific data.

Opponents of multiple intelligences say the theory doesn't promote the teaching of a "core knowledge" of essential information students should know, that the "intelligences" are abilities educators have always acknowledged, and the intelligences are not well defined.

Other arguments against the theory are that culture contributes to the intelligences and that it is difficult to measure the intelligences.

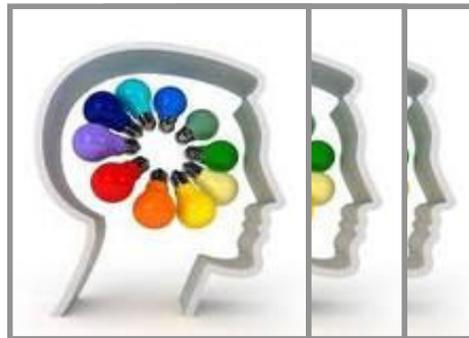
Daniel Goleman

Emotional Intelligence theory

Although different theoretical models have been developed on Emotional Intelligence, the most popular one is Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence theory (1995) which

argues that the “traditional measurement of intelligence” through the IQ (Intelligence Quotient) is too narrow. The E.I. theory emerged mostly as a behavioural model in an attempt to understand and assess people’s behaviours and attitudes while it is mostly related to the workplace. Evidently, there appears to be a link between the E.I. theory and the M.I. theory by Gardner. This theory has also accepted criticism as “not new”. In fact, “Goleman did never claim otherwise”.

In conclusion, the attempt of researchers to gain insight into intelligence and reveal the complexity of the human intellectual abilities still constitutes a challenging task. It seems that the vast potential of the – currently unframed- human mind will be on the research agenda of psychologists, biologists and neuroscientists, just to name a few, for a long time.



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‘When a society moves forward...’

*Christos Christou
 Ayios Georgios Lyceum- Larnaca*

When a society moves forward, it does not do so as a whole. Groups of people, teams and individuals remain behind, in a situation of inactiveness, in a sort of inertia, aiming towards protecting their interests and benefits, against the will of the social majority. In this country, there has been an urgent need of change in various areas of social activity, education being one of these. Our society has moved forward in various ways, yet education remained the backwaters of our society for quite some years now.

The president of the Republic in his initial statement (July, 28th, 2008), at the first meeting of the Education Council said that

“As a new Government we believe that for Cyprus, education and culture are constructive and foundational elements for our survival”.

It is a fact that the previous and present governments, especially the present one, undertook the responsibility to plan and materialize an educational reform as it was more than crystal clear that the “Existing educational system is a highly conservative and centralised one and it is under an urgent need of a direct reform and modernization”. This was the ascertainment of the Committee of Reform (August 2004). This of course was and is the situation as the students, teachers and

parents experience for a multitude of unproductive years. The Reform - Committee simply coded this, in the most official way.

Ours is a system where initiative is condemned and lack of freedom reigns and prevails. The most distinguished characteristic is the almost stagnant and hard to move impersonal and centralised – authoritative bureaucracy which is represented by a tiny minority of bureaucrats, resulting thus in a undemocratic and anti-productive and inefficient education which simultaneously is inflexible and almost impossible to show any motion and thus consequently backward with an attachment to hierarchy and formality-ritualism of monumental scale. If things were not so tragic they would be extremely funny.

At the same time our educational system is a- one- direction class orientated one and thus the outcome, in what concerns the young people involved, is people without critical thought, who consequently do not know how to solve in an efficient way, the problems that are likely to spring in front of them in their later life. It is an educational system that stands apart from our era in a festal way, depriving thus our society from cadres who could lead the social evolution forward in an efficient and productive way. Of course it is beyond saying that when a society moves forward it leaves behind the attrition and debris, that is the control mechanism that held society tied in the past, degeneration and decadence. The proposal for an educational reform was therefore a correct move, for it is about the multi-dimensional character of the educational system and its very core, that is the administration, the structure, the teachers in what concerns their right and duty to lifelong learning, the students and their actual needs, the analytical programme, the teaching methods, the actual and essential introduction of technology in the system, from administration to the single class, and finally the assessment of the system and its main parts that is the administration, the teachers, the students, the schools and everybody and everything involved in the process.

The final goal was and still is the development of the democratic public school, where a democratic education is offered without any seclusion whatsoever; under democratic conditions in a way that it creates democratic citizens with a creative personality, ready to offer in the social process and developing civilization, culture and technology. In this way they will help the process of leaving behind the static and past-loving Cypriot society and transforming it into a society of knowledge and development.

Steps have been made, especially in what concerns the new curricula and we approve them, but on the other hand there is a significant delay that concerns the rest. This forces us to face the whole effort for the reform with skepticism, especially if we consider that there are social sub-wholes that react to any kind of reform with all their strength, as they do not want to let their grip go from education. We remain to see the decisiveness of those who govern in fulfilling the reform task. In any case a successful reform should be accompanied by a generous increase in financial support in order to upgrade the infrastructure of the system, increase the number of universities and last but not least fight back para-education.

We have the feeling that the majority of our society is present and ready to support this effort because deep at heart people know that anything leading to the opposite will condemn our society to withering, sending us back to a cultural and underdeveloped medievalism.



"We share,
develop!!!!",
collaborate and