



# esa magazine

JUNE 2019

## Professional Development



European School  
Heads Association

# COLOPHON

ESHA magazine is the official magazine of the European School Heads Association, the Association for school leaders in Europe. ESHA magazine will be published four times per school year. You are welcome to use articles from the magazine but we would appreciate it if you contacted the editor first.

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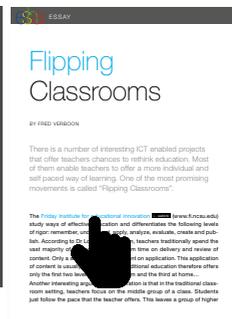
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Some articles in this issue contain direct links to websites. **Simply click on the coloured text and you'll be automatically linked to a specific website or videopresentation.** Try it yourself and enjoy.



# AGENDA/EVENTS 2019

|                        |   |                     |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Aug 30</b>          | Deadline <a href="#">submitting</a> articles<br>ESHA Magazine September |                     |
| <b>Nov 18</b>          | European Education Policy<br>Network (EEPN) event                       | Jyväskylä (Finland) |
| <b>Nov 18 &amp; 19</b> | General Assembly European<br>School Heads Association                   | Jyväskylä (Finland) |
| <b>Nov 26 - 29</b>     | <a href="#">EAPRIL conference</a>                                       | Tartu (Estonia)     |
| <b>Nov 29</b>          | Deadline <a href="#">submitting</a> articles<br>ESHA Magazine December  |                     |

# An international perspective on school leaders' professional development

BY: ELLEN DANIËLS, LOES VAN WESSUM, WOUTER SCHENKE, JAN HEYSTEK, EVE EISENSCHMIDT & LEEZAN VAN WIJK.

## INTRODUCTION

School leaders matter and are important in influencing student performances and the overall performances of the school <sup>(1, 2)</sup>. We know quite a bit about what successful school leaders do <sup>(3, 4, 5, 6)</sup>. We know almost nothing about how they learn to become successful. Surprisingly little is known about school leaders' professional development activities (PDA) and its impact <sup>(7, 5)</sup>. Since school leaders' influences on student outcomes are indirect (mediated by the school culture and classroom practices), it is difficult to find effects of school leaders' professional development activities. With regard to effects, research is concerned with formal PDA's, mostly concerning preparation programs <sup>(8)</sup>. Since school leaders prefer on the job learning <sup>(9)</sup> and because a blend of both formal and informal learning contributes to school leaders

continuous learning <sup>(6)</sup>, this is a big drawback. Backed by a growing research base, policy makers have increasingly recognised the significance of school leadership for effective teaching and learning <sup>(10)</sup>. The four countries presented in this article Belgium, Estonia, the Netherlands and South Africa have developed different initiatives to strengthen the leadership capacity of their schools. We will elaborate on these initiatives in our EAPRIL-session. We will shine some light on PDA's in these countries.

## BELGIUM – FLANDERS

In Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium), a teaching qualification is sufficient to apply for the position of school leader. Hence, mostly experienced teachers become school leader but do not always feel prepared for the job since it has a high degree of task diversity <sup>(11)</sup>. Job turnovers are ubiquitous <sup>(12)</sup>. PDA for school leaders are not mandatory but recommended and organised by different organisations (umbrella organisations, regional school networks). Umbrella organisations organize trainings varying from 1-3 years for newly recruited school leaders.



**Photo from OVSG – Flemish Educational Umbrella Organisation of Cities and Municipalities.**

A survey research of Daniëls, Hondeghem & Dochy <sup>(13)</sup> revealed that most of the school leaders in Flemish primary education (94 %) participate in PDA's every year. They prefer to learn via participating in one-day training sessions, informal consultation of colleagues, via networking and trainings spread over multiple days and years. School leaders favour conversations with fellow school leaders, asking colleagues and teachers for feedback and reflective learning. The survey also revealed the most favoured topics: coaching teachers, staying informed about educational trends, motivating teachers, implementing vision and mission and promoting teachers' well-being.

## ESTONIA

In Estonia, schools are highly autonomous hence, leadership is very influential. However, the requirements to become school leader are quite flexible since 2013. There are two criteria: 1) any master level education and 2) proved leadership competences to apply for the position of school leader <sup>(14)</sup>.

Since 2016, the school leaders' competence model is adapted. This model is used for leadership training and leaders' evaluation, which creates a shared understanding and a good basis for improvement in school leadership. School leaders have several training possibilities arranged on national level <sup>(15)</sup>. School leaders' annual conferences focus on current leadership issues and offer opportunities for networking and collaborative projects.

School leaders understand their position as focusing on the schools' vision, planning changes in the school culture and supporting teachers' professional development. However, they still focus predominantly on managerial issues and every-day problem solving <sup>(16)</sup>.

The position of school leader is perceived as unattractive and compensation is inadequate. Also, no systematic mechanism to provide professional feedback to school leaders is available. The challenge is to develop appraisal processes, frameworks and conditions that do not require an excessive investment of time and effort, that serve as an effective tool for improving practices and that are perceived as useful and relevant by school leaders <sup>(17)</sup>.



## THE NETHERLANDS

In the Netherlands, to become a school leader in primary education, completion of a certified leadership program is obligatory. In secondary education, a formal leadership program is strongly advised. Since 2018 school leaders in both primary and secondary education must comply with the competences of the earlier composed national standard <sup>(18,19)</sup>.



A growing segment of the primary and secondary school leaders is registered in the national school leader registry. School leaders register by compiling a portfolio in order to demonstrate their professional development. After four years, school leaders in primary education are required to re-register. A majority of the school leaders in primary education re-register by finishing several professional development courses or through informal ways of professional development. Three percent of the people re-register through a formal Master's degree <sup>(20)</sup>.

In secondary education, an annually returning monitor research on professional development of school leaders shows that approximately 90 percent (n=351) engages in PDA's. They attend multi- or single-day conferences, peer reflection meetings and peer coaching. Most school leaders indicated that they are developing their personal view on leadership, their leadership competences, and their skills and knowledge on the school as a learning organisation. A quarter of the school leaders said to encounter barriers to professional development, caused by a deficiency of time or money <sup>(21)</sup>.

## SOUTH AFRICA

There is no official requirement for leadership training or qualification to become a school leader <sup>(22)</sup>. School leaders start their careers as teachers and through a diverse range of tasks and roles, they progress into leadership positions. This aids the view that a teaching qualification and experience in teaching is the only requirement for school leadership <sup>(23)</sup>.



There has been an academic qualification, the Advanced Certificate in Education Leadership, which was supposed to be an official qualification, but it was never officially granted the status or requirement of an official qualification. There is a legislated 80 hours of professional development for school leaders, which is not always effective in practice. According to Mathibe <sup>(24)</sup>, professional development programs for school leaders in South Africa are fragmented and not coordinated. Different teacher unions, non-governmental organisations, universities and private companies offer trainings, but they are not required nor compulsory for becoming a school leader. There is no directive from the Ministry of Education.

## LOOKING FOR WAYS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION THROUGH DEVELOPING A KNOWLEDGE BASED ON SCHOOL LEADER DEVELOPMENT

These four countries seem to value school leaders as key-players differently and therefore differ in their approach to improve education through school leaders' professional development (for example by requiring qualifications and registration). They seem to use a different theory of improvement; what do they believe will contribute to school leadership development contributing to educational quality? If policy makers are driven by a wish for managerial accountability, they will strive for formal appraisal of school leaders. Finding the right balance between a managerial or a professional accountability approach <sup>(25)</sup> seems to be a struggle for all countries. How can school leaders develop professionally considering the different contexts they are working in? What theory of improvement do school leaders use? What are efficient professional development activities, effects of PDA's and PDA's across countries? We will address these questions during the EAPRIL conference (Tartu, Estonia). The authors will organise a discussion session in which school leaders, researchers and policy makers having expertise in school leadership can participate. The aim is to network and to arrive at ideas about a theory of improvement for the professional development of school leaders.

**Please join us at the EAPRIL conference in Tartu (Estonia), 26-29th of November 2019 for the Session 'An international perspective on school leaders' professional development'.**

For more information take a look on [EAPRIL](#) or [Cloud 12 – Leadership in Education](#)

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# Playful learning; the role of leadership

BY ESZTER SALOMON - ESHA ARTICLE BASED ON LECTURE 1ST  
INTERNATIONAL TRUE PLAY CONFERENCE, ANJI (CHINA), MAY 2019.



Anji Play organised the 1st International True Play Conference in Anji, China between 12 and 15 May 2019. True Play is a well-established, research-based principle for play-based learning and not only for very young children, built on the notion of flow by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi. The conference has fit the global discourse on the need to fundamentally reform education and the role of professionals in it very well. One of the most important threads of discussions was on the role of leadership in implementing such programmes in an inclusive way. One of the moderators, Frances Rust EdD defined the aim of formal education: to enable the learner to develop autonomy and to enculture a young generation for a knowledge-building civilisation.

### **RISK IN PLAY AND ITS ROLE IN BUILDING AUTONOMY**

Play-based learning is a learner-directed and regulated activity. According to the Anji definition, it has 5 characteristics: Love, Risk/Adventure, Joy, Engagement and Reflection. The largest question mark is probably around the risky nature of playful learning, especially in Europe (and the United States) where child safety measures have been at the heart of creating environments for children. Speakers have provided a strong body of evidence around the importance of providing opportunities for risk, including robust global statistics by Dr. Mariana Brussoni, an injury research specialist from Canada on the relative safety of old-style playgrounds and risky play opportunities like climbing trees. Interestingly enough, the number of fatal injuries related to play has not decreased since the introduction of safety measures and overprotective methods like helmets and preventing children from activities natural for children some decades ago. 80% of child injuries are very minor, most of them do not even need medical treatment. At the same time research shows the paradox of overprotected children being much more likely to take risks and suffer more serious injuries as they lack risk-management skills. It was amazing to

see how careful and supportive even 3-4-year-old were to each other in kindergartens implementing the risky play curriculum in Anji.

### **ADULT LEADERSHIP IN LEARNER-LED PLAYFUL LEARNING**

Lawrence Cohen PhD, a well-known psychologist specialised in play and play therapy, defined the most important elements of adult leadership in providing education in a playful way. His starting point was – very much in line with the above-mentioned issues around risk – that children will recover more from a broken arm than being timid. On the one hand adult leadership is essential in creating the environment and opportunities, in shifting parents’ and teachers’ attitudes and in introducing these practices in daily school life – this is primarily a school leader’s role. On the other hand, the leadership of teachers is also important to ensure the experience is inclusive and a reality for every child regardless their special education needs or background.



He also emphasised that the opposite of seemingly omnipresent adult worry is not calm serenity, but trust – in children’s abilities, in

relationships and in resilience. It is the role of the leader to create the circumstances, but of course they also have to believe in it. It is also their role to ensure engagement that can only happen if the learner is tuning in – and is not distracted or restricted (by a 45-minute lesson or a classroom). His message was echoed by Prof. David Whitebread who also shared his own research showing that less structured time leads to much better self-regulation, thus the global trends of continuous adult supervision (that is highly characteristic of school) leading to nearly only structured time is not beneficial for children and their learning. When talking about his research about risky play he offered evidence on it being instrumental for developing resilience, self-reliance, risk management skills, but also for well-being and mental health. Children not given opportunities to take risks become fearful and neurotic.

The role of playful adults is also crucial, thus school leaders should also encourage the playful learning of teachers and their playful co-learning with their students. Leadership is necessary to recognise, ensure and balance the full range of playful activities: physical play, play with objects, symbolic play, pretend play and games with rules. It is also crucial to offer more outdoors opportunities to all our students.

### **PLAYFUL LEARNING IS LEARNING IN THE STATE OF FLOW.**

According to Csíkszentmihályi's research people are their most creative, productive, and happy when they are in a state of flow. He has used the term "flow state" because many of the people he interviewed described their optimal states of performance as instances when their work simply "flowed" out of them without much effort.

Csíkszentmihályi describes eight characteristics of flow:

- 1** Complete concentration on the task;
- 2** Clarity of goals and reward in mind and immediate feedback;
- 3** Transformation of time (speeding up/slowing down);

- 4** The experience is intrinsically rewarding;
- 5** Effortlessness and ease;
- 6** There is a balance between challenge and skills;
- 7** Actions and awareness are merged, losing self-conscious rumination;
- 8** There is a feeling of control over the task.

Anybody who has seen children deeply engaged in play will recognise these characteristics. In Anji, after transforming their kindergartens to risky play ones, they are currently working on introducing this in primary school in the region. The experience of teachers is that although kindergartens do not follow a set curriculum, children arriving from these institutions have much better developed skills than others. They also see that these children only thrive when given autonomy and the opportunity of self-directed learning. Being offered traditional teaching, they stop learning. Their answer is to change schools to give children the opportunity to learn in their own speed and in an autonomous way. This will mean not only abolishing end-of-lesson bells, but also a more holistic approach to learning outcomes and the time they are due. If you don't measure children against pre-set expectations in the first few years of schooling and/or too often, they are more likely to become successful and confident adults rather than consider themselves failures.





# Scaling up social innovation education in Europe Empowering the young with social innovation skills

Seven countries work together in a European education project called NEMESIS. This project aims to develop a pedagogical learning framework for social innovation education and a ready-to-adapt methodology including necessary educational resources for schools that embeds the competences and philosophy of social innovation in schools. In collaboration with primary and secondary schools from Greece, Spain, United Kingdom, France and Portugal, the NEMESIS framework and resources were developed and tested in the last year. A second pilot phase will take place from September 2019 to June 2020, in which more schools will be invited to join the project. NEMESIS

expects to involve 400 students and 100 teachers in a direct way and to involve more than 5000 students and 2000 teachers in an indirect way.

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEMESIS AT DUTCH SCHOOLS**

In cooperation with the Dutch association of entrepreneurial schools, a professionalisation programme for teachers has been developed. This programme aims to support the implementation of social innovation education in Dutch schools.

## **WHAT DOES THE PROGRAMME LOOK LIKE?**

Before the start, teachers and school leaders from each school will complete a questionnaire, which tests the school's willingness to change. After sharing the test results with NEMESIS partners, the schools will be advised about how they can implement social innovation education in their school organisation taking into account the needs and possibilities of the specific school. The overall purpose of this approach is that social innovation education becomes part of the school's identity and is supported by all school members. Their commitment is essential for the success of the implementation.

Two training sessions in which all schools come together will take place after completing the test. The joint training sessions stimulate discussions between the participating schools and the exchange of experiences and best practices.

The two important themes of the first training are:

- The school and the social challenges
- Social innovation projects and classroom activities.



The second training deals with:

- Collaborating in co-creation labs
- Working together with schools in Europe.

After the training sessions, the schools will receive on-site guidance in order to improve the implementation of social innovation projects and classroom activities. The professionalisation programme will be ended with a final event. This event for students and teachers focuses on sharing social innovation projects and classroom activities between participating schools. In the coming year, we will experience how the professionalisation programme is received by schools. However, it is not a fixed programme. If schools want to change it, for example through practical (im)possibilities, then the programme will be adapted. In this way, NEMESIS tries to meet the needs and possibilities of the participating schools as much as possible.



Are you a school member and do you also want to implement Social Innovation Education in your school? Feel free to surf [the web](#) and drop us a line or fill in our [contact form](#).

Are you a social innovator who - as those mentioned here- would like to collaborate with a school? Click [here](#) for more information on how to become a mentor.

# Improving Staff Retention in Schools

Findings from a  
UK study with  
10,530 school  
staff members

BY: ERNEST JENAVS

Amidst the growing staff retention problem in schools, there is an urgency to better understand the motivations behind those resigning their posts and to implement solutions that work on a large scale.

Between September 2018- April 2019, schools and school groups across England participated in the **Edurio Staff Wellbeing and Working Conditions Survey** that was designed to provide actionable insights to the participating schools, but also to better understand what schools across England can do to improve staff retention.



With 10,530 respondents it has become England's largest independent study of the driving forces behind school staff staying in or leaving their posts. 40% of school staff - and 46% of teachers - said that they have considered resigning from their current post in the past three months, highlighting the magnitude of the challenge. The full report can be downloaded at [home.edurio.com/retention-report](http://home.edurio.com/retention-report).

# “How often have you considered resigning from your current post in the past three months?”

Designed by Edurio in collaboration with research experts at University College London Institute of Education, the survey asked respondents about six key factors shown to have the greatest influence on retention:

- Workload
- Professional support
- Career development
- Leadership dynamics
- Staff relationships
- Student behaviour



Analysis showed that each of the six factors has a significant impact on whether or not a staff member is at risk of resigning. Leadership dynamics had the strongest link with staff retention, showing that retention is highest in schools where relationships with school leaders are based on fairness, respect and staff engagement.

The report identifies common trends and key takeaways that may provide insight to school leaders and policymakers alike:

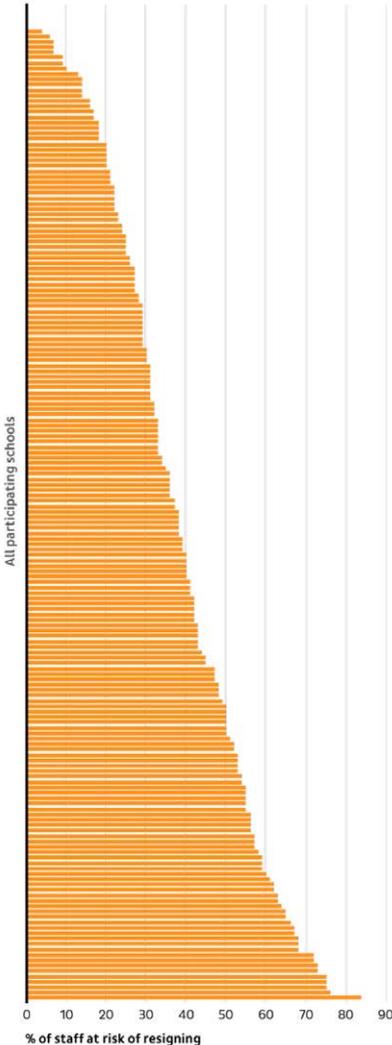
## **The extent of staff at risk of resigning is a school-by-school issue**

Across the 322 participating schools, the percentage of staff at risk of resigning ranged from 0% in some schools to a staggering 84% in others. Although there were some differences between different

types of schools and respondent groups, those were relatively minor and insufficient to explain the wide variation. This suggests that improving retention is within the control of each individual school.

**Working Conditions and Relationships are both highly**

STAFF RISK OF RESIGNING BY SCHOOL



**important for improving staff retention**

Both survey themes (Working Conditions and Relationships) show a strong correlation with staff risk of resigning. This highlights the danger with focusing all efforts to improve staff retention on one singular issue.

**Leadership Dynamics in the school is the strongest indicator of staff retention**

Among the six factors explored in the survey, Leadership Dynamics showed the strongest correlation with staff risk of resigning. Leadership Dynamics measures whether relationships with school leaders are based on fairness, respect and staff engagement.

**Many schools can improve Leadership Dynamics by increasing staff engagement in decision-making and welcoming staff feedback**

Within Leadership Dynamics the lowest results were typically in questions asking staff members whether they felt their professional needs were understood by the leadership, whether they were consulted in decision-making, and whether their feedback to leadership had an impact.

**Heavy workload is a widespread concern among the majority of teachers**

When asked how often they feel overworked, two thirds of teacher respondents answered “Constantly” or “Often”, while only 4% said “Rarely” or “Never”. Further analysis points to data input, administrative tasks, and marking and assessment as potential starting points for reducing teacher workload.



# Gender Equality Matters Tackling Gender- Based Violence

**Gender equality is a right for everybody**

In highlighting the cause of GEM - Gender Equality Matters, let me start this second newsletter, in a series of four, with a quote from Ban Ki-Moon, former Secretary General of the United Nations.

To those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender let me say: You are not alone. Your struggle for an end to violence and discrimination is a shared struggle. I say, I stand with you and I call upon all countries and people to stand with you too.



A historic shift is on the way. The time has come.

Ban Ki-Moon  
Secretaris Generaal van de Verenigde Naties 7 maart 2012

In writing this article we intend to give you the latest updates on the milestones we have achieved in the Gender Equality Matters – Tackling Gender-Based Violence project since our first Newsletter from December 2019. The objectives of our two-year GEM project are to raise awareness, change attitudes and promote behaviour changes in relation to gender-based violence generally, with specific reference to violence perpetrated against the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community in and around schools. In this project ESHA has partnered with Dublin City University (DCU - Ireland), Social Action and Innovation Center (KMOP - Greece), Research Group in Educational Technology / University of Murcia (GITE - Spain) and Fondazione Mondo Digitale (FMD - Italy).

Over the past few months we have achieved a lot. The GEM [website](#) is now fully functional and is linked to our five social media platforms (please find the links to our platforms on our website). Our social media activities are on the increase and we are getting more and more likes every day. In March we finished our second meeting at the University of Murcia, where we set the goals for the coming months. The GEM partnership has expanded its network of supporting local and international advocacy groups to further the cause of Gender Equality Matters. DCU arranged for a conference presentation at the Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI) Conference 2019: ‘Education in Times of Change, Choice and Challenge’ in Sligo (Ireland), April 11 – 13. Going into the future DCU will participate in the [World Anti Bullying Forum](#) held in Dublin June 4th – 6th 2019. Free lesson materials and training manuals are now ready for piloting in selected schools in Ireland, Spain, Greece, Italy and Greece.

The first group of teachers in Ireland have already received training in the Gender Equality Matters (GEM) project. The teachers are all based in Wexford which is in the south-east of Ireland. A group of

teachers in Dublin have also received training. These teachers are now going to pilot the GEM classroom resources with their pupils in 5th and 6th grade (age 11-13). We are now moving to work with parents in the pilot schools and hope to update you about this in the next GEM newsletter. In case you are a head teacher, teacher or know of parents based in Ireland that would like to participate in these programmes, please be in touch with our local Irish partner, Dublin City University. You can reach the local coordinator Seline Keating on [seline.keating@dcu.ie](mailto:seline.keating@dcu.ie).

Our Italian partner, Fondazione Mondo Digitale (FMD), is organising a GEM presentation in schools based in Rome, Naples and Milan in order to engage head teachers and teachers in its objectives and training activities. Teachers across Italy interested in taking part in the project are warmly invited to contact FMD. The country coordinator is called Annaleda Mazzucato and she can be reached on [a.mazzucatio@mondodigitale.org](mailto:a.mazzucatio@mondodigitale.org).

The University of Murcia is in the process of rolling out “Super Puntalilla: the dawn”. This is a gamified service learning project for children 3 to 12 years old in relation to GEM Project. The school where the project is being implemented is “El Puntal” (Murcia, Spain). The main objective is to work on gender equality directly (each Monday and Friday for two months since May) and transversally (every day under a coeducational paradigm). If you want to know the whole history, you can watch [this video](#). In case you need more information please get in touch with Ms. Paz Prendes at the University of Murcia, Isabel Gutiérrez Porlán on [pazprend@um.es](mailto:pazprend@um.es).

Our Greek partner KMOP will start organising training for sessions educators and parents from September onwards. You can reach Chrysanna Pavlou at KMOP on [pavlou.c@kmop.gr](mailto:pavlou.c@kmop.gr).

Towards the end of 2019 ESHA will organise a Train the Trainer event for 20 trainers for both parents and teachers in the Netherlands. In case you want to be a one of the 20 trainers please contact Edwin Katerberg at [edwin.katerberg@esha.org](mailto:edwin.katerberg@esha.org).

As an educator and/or parent, how do you benefit from all these activities? As you probably know, as per the regulations set by the European Union, all GEM project materials that are generated are delivered free of cost and for general use to the benefit of educators. Therefore keep a regular eye out on [our website](#) for events, articles, information about national initiatives and projects (for students, parents and educators), classroom and school resources (for educators), training modules and manuals (for teachers and teacher trainers) (including self-evaluation instruments for schools/educators), and training workshops (for teachers and parents). In particular the Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) for students, parents and educators that will be held over the summer holidays may be of interest to you.

In case you are interested in lending your support to the GEM cause, we invite all school leaders and educators to consult <http://www.esha.org/esha-projects/> and [www.genderequalitymatters.eu](http://www.genderequalitymatters.eu) and/or to contact GEM partners directly.

We hope that you will participate actively and share your opinions on the GEM social media accounts on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#).

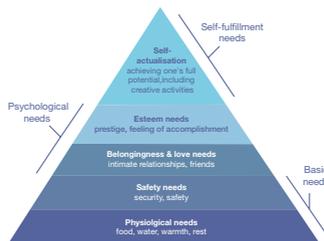
For further suggestions and/or queries please contact Edwin Katerberg, the local GEM coordinator in The Netherlands, at [edwin.katerberg@esha.org](mailto:edwin.katerberg@esha.org).

# The Student's Portfolio

## New Perspectives in Education

BY: MARIA ROSARIA D'ALFONSO, SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF I.I.S. GALILEO GALILEI TREBISACCE, ITALY

One of the many challenges an educator has to face nowadays, be it the teacher, the parent or the school principal is **coping with drop-outs**. Among the many definitions pertaining to the issue, a drop-out may be defined as an **unmotivated learner**. Abraham Maslow and Falko Rheinberg are two authorities on motivation. On one hand motivation concerns one's needs, from the basic to the self-fulfilment: physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, self-actualization (see Maslow's Pyramid).



**Pyramid of Maslow**

On the other, there are motivational models like Vollmeyer and Rheinberg's, which are especially connected to the learning process. In his work "Motivationsdiagnostik", Rheinberg describes one's behaviour as the result of motivation, where motivation itself focuses on individual needs and situational stimuli. When students drop –out, there could be traces, which are rather consequences of feeling unmotivated, unstimulated, neglected or left out.

Thus, we experience:

- Ditching school or Truancy
- Tardiness
- Laziness in the classroom
- School failure
- Verbal or physical aggression

In today's post-modern context, where technology oftentimes and improperly replaces the teacher, unless it is required by the teacher himself, all this is more than likely.

Then, there are the side effects:

- Disagreements with the teacher
- Disagreements at home
- Disagreements with classmates
- Conflicts in general terms

Albert Bandura points to self-efficacy and self-esteem, both focusing on the learner's autonomy. He defines self-efficacy as follows: "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage perspective". Through the Bobo Doll experiment, he proves how important modelling or rather role-modelling may be. The social cognitive theory by Bandura centers on how aggressive models can generate aggressive behaviour, for instance.

For some time, [as a school manager I have considered wellness as a priority at school](#) with new learning environments that are entertaining, relaxing, student-centered and student-modelled. We used Georgi Lozanov's Suggestopedia breathing, relaxing and biofeedback and extended to suggesting colours, sounds, fun things to learn with. In my school in Calabria, for instance, the Inclusion Room for Special Needs includes all this, and we exposed it on Open Day. Our belief is that a welcoming school, open to one's emotions besides nurturing the mind, is essential in order to inspire the learner and allow him to feel at home while at school.

[The Italian school system is only one of the many worldwide that fortunately focus on the student-centered approach and on the learning-teaching process](#), with its reminiscences of the Montessori Method which was centered on the observation of the child. Nevertheless, the curriculum is yet to be defined thoroughly on these terms. The "what's" are most often prioritized and not the "how's". Unfortunately, many teachers still experience the anxiety of completing programs, and principals check even too often on this and not on student-effectiveness. Somehow, school policies are still distant from allowing for Meaningful Learning, Wellness at school and a Life Project, beyond the so-called "formative success", in the lifelong learning and being process.

According to the Italian school system upper secondary education is divided into professional and technical schools on one hand and lyceums on the other. In order to lessen the Educational divide or gap here, new norms have been provided for, such as increasing Job Placement experiences. The latter, however, are still relatively effective and are seldom really "hands-on", especially because they must comply with security norms. The point is that for one reason or another high-school students are often well beyond the feeling of

belonging, so that one could rather say that dropping is about feeling being left out and adrift. Front lessons, that are more teacher-centered than student-centered, have not yet been replaced by more interactive activities, like circle time, problem-solving, case study, task-based learning and problem-based learning or other solutions, such as the Peripathetic Aristotelian model (walking around, observing and talking outdoors, outside of the classroom). That is why perhaps increasing numbers of students are often caught “fooling around in class” with technology or other forms of “distraction”. A principal has to cope daily with “black-lists” and “reports” from the teachers, and even complaints from the shareholders (parents), willing to replace this or that teacher, who may be considered either ineffective, too lean, or simply unwanted. Today, principals have to face dozens of issues by the hour and have to think up solutions asap. One could be the opportunity [of the Formative Offer for the New Three-Year Period 2019-2022](#). It is a precious tool in the hands of the Teaching Staff, following the principal’s Mission and Vision. [It is a way to suggest new perspectives, towards a more realistic student-centered approach and student-centered school policies](#)

### **What is the Student’s Portfolio?**

The Student’s Portfolio is an idea already suggested nationally in 2003 with the Moratti Reform, which, if my memory does not fail me, certainly caused a lot of trouble and strikes at the time. I recall one of my students crying out loud in the hallway against the reform: she was dyslexic and had other problems as well. I suppose nobody really knew what all the turmoil was about; it might just have been another occasion for the new generation to go on strike. In reality, it was a breakthrough with an ill fate at the time.

[The Student Portfolio is a self-made program or agenda, where the student takes up compulsory subjects as well as the optional ones.](#)

This could bring about the opportunity to overcome the professional-technical-lyceal barrier, which goes all the way back to the Gentile Reform of 1923 and still prevails today! The Student's Portfolio is a new learning-model far away from the idea that in school "one size fits all". Experimentation, either maxi or mini, is a possibility. The Brocca reform in the 80's had already made it possible for the students to choose their courses of specialization after the first two years of high school and perhaps it could still be taken into account today.

When I first became a public-school teacher, [I was able to experiment it in Naples \(Istituto Tecnico Commerciale "A. Serra"\) with excellent results](#). The students would choose continuity in the three years to follow, when they would "specialize" in one of three fields: Linguistic-literary, Mathematical-scientific, Business and Management. The Student's Portfolio could begin this way through personal choice in the three year following the first two years of high school. Moreover, the students could be left free to choose their own classes and their own teachers, according to a range of solutions within the "formative offer". This could also be done in terms of flexibility "levels", like it is done in some countries like the USA. "Level" is perhaps too much of a word and it could be turned into "pleasure". This means that the teachers ought to understand with the students really want and who they want to be. It also means that syllabuses can be made more challenging and appetizing by grasping true needs. This way the curriculum could become more student-centered. After all, it is in the hands of the teachers to win the heart of the students.

The student's portfolio could also solve economic and organizational problems for the Ministry of Education, for instance like having one principal, with a series of vice-principals at his side: a Project Manager and Chief Executive, working with a number of vice-principals at his side, and with an extended middle-management. Mainly for budgeting

purposes, Italy has been considering re-dimensioning schools for some time, although it has still not focused on “how” one principal could work more effectively and without all the burdens and the burn-out. Up to the present moment, Italian teachers and others worldwide are still not required by law to present their own portfolio, although it would not be difficult to conceive along the way. A Good School is a school of wellness one that respects the learner’s needs, the learner’s pace, the learner’s Life Project. Counselling is always advisable, especially where doubts may persist. **The Student’s Portfolio could change our schools into better ones if only the learner could be free to choose.** Open classes, better-defined curricula, and more engaged teachers could certainly pave the way towards a better future. A student’s portfolio comes kind of naturally in a system of Centrality and one of Transparency where the principal is required to make his own portfolio by July 30th each year. Perhaps a look at the Formative OFFER 2019-2022 (which is published on-line for the I.I.S. Galileo Galilei Trebisacce. Cosenza, following its approval by the Teachers’ Council on December 19th 2018 and then by the School Board on January 7th 2019) could help one to understand our proposal here. You can find the offer here: <http://www.liceotrebisacce.it/>

What is for sure is that the Italian “passerelle” (i.e. passovers from one school to another) could be solved if only syllabuses and curricula were made more challenging and the learning experience could be focused more on individual needs, attitudes and talents. The school of the future is one where you can “do your own thing”, according to your own style. I can recall the Soul Train from my childhood years. Here, everyone gathered around while you were dancing the way you wanted, in a kind of chain



connected by “Each its own”. It was a lot of fun and we were altogether. Isn't that what learning and growing up is really all about?

## **REFERENCES:**

Albert Bandura- Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control

Abraham Maslow: Motivation and Personality

Falko Rheinberg: Motovationdiagnostik

*Also see:*

L'Avventura del Nuovo Dirigente scolastico: Maria Rosaria D'Alfonso

Il Dirigente scolastico e il Case Study: Maria Rosaria D'Alfonso

Dirigere la Scuola Oggi: Tra Piccoli e Grandi Contesti: Maria Rosaria D'Alfonso

# New ESHA staff at the office!

We are pleased to introduce you to our new employees: **Luca Janka László** and **Marlon Pot**. They are with ESHA since the 1st of April this year and we asked them to introduce themselves:



My name is Luca Janka László. I was born and raised in Hungary, Budapest, where I studied Political Science for my BA at Corvinus University Budapest, and Ethnic and Minority Policy MA at the Central European University.

In 2015 I started to work with newcomer asylum seekers and migrants in Hungary (founding and coordinating one of the biggest volunteer groups in Hungary) in order to provide basic humanitarian help to the arriving to the country. This experience made me a committed activist and advocate for human rights, multiculturalism, inclusion and peaceful cohabitation. Between 2015 and 2017 I worked for some Hungarian NGO-s on international sustainable development, and education programs teaching third country nationals.

Between 2016 and 2018 I worked for the European Parents' Association as an assistant to the board, and later as a project manager too. That allowed me to connect with parents, educators and other professionals from all around Europe, working together for a more welcoming and just Europe

and educational system for all families. Since 2018 I also work for Stichting Parents International as a project manager. I currently live in Vienna, Austria with my husband. I work for ESHA as consultant since the 1st of April, and currently I am involved in the UPPER, E-COURSE, NEMESIS and OSOS projects. I am very happy and honoured to be part of the ESHA team!



Hello, my name is Marlon Pot. Some of you may know me as the ESHA host from the last GA in March, which was held at the AVS congress in the Netherlands. Some people asked me if I was new at ESHA and my answer back then was 'no, I'm just your host for today'

But after the GA the ESHA office asked me if I wanted to have a talk about working with ESHA. And now, reading this, you already know my answer...

I'm a Social Psychologist and trainer and will be the trainer for the dissemination of NEMESIS, Child-UP and GEM in The Netherlands. I will also be the one who is responsible for the coming Job Shadowing projects and all the ESHA communication. So, if you have any questions, good ideas, upcoming events, good news, success stories or you just want an article to be published in the ESHA magazine please [e-mail me](mailto:info@esha.org) or send an e-mail to [info@esha.org](mailto:info@esha.org). All together we can make the difference they say, so let's connect and find out!

# Next issue

## OF THE ESHA MAGAZINE

Do you have interesting success stories?

*A perfect programme?*

*Good experiences with the job shadowing project?*

*Liked a seminar you attended?*

Did you do research and found something great?

*Found knowledge you have to share?*

*Found out something great?*

*An answer to all our questions?*

Do you have an upcoming event you want everyone to know?

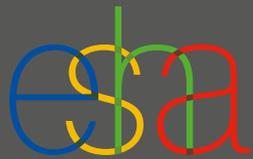
*Something that shouldn't be missed?*

*A thing you have to go to?*

*A date which no one should forget?*

Do you want to read something about a certain theme?

[Please contact us](#) so we can make great next issues of the ESHA magazine for you!



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