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## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING MATTERS**

Newsletter of ENSEC (European Network on Social and Emotional Competence)  
Issue 13: December 2016

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- Carmel Cefai, Director, Centre for Resilience & Socio-Emotional Health, University of Malta, [carmel.cefai@um.edu.mt](mailto:carmel.cefai@um.edu.mt)

## Welcome!

On behalf of my four co-chairs, our founding chairs, and myself I would like to welcome you to the 13th issue of the ENSEC newsletter.

As usual, we supply you with information around conferences and events from ENSEC member countries. Check the website for the **ENSEC conference 2017** to be up to date with who the keynote speakers are; what symposia and workshops you can attend, and guidelines for paper submission, as well as registration. Find out more in this issue! **Please note the new early bird registration date: 15 January 2017!**

In this issue, you will also find:

Niva Dolev calls for expression of interest to collaborate in an ERASMUS+ RESEARCH PROPOSAL. Markus Talvio provides updates on the International Lions Quest Evaluation Project. Tamsin Ford presents the “How I Feel About My School” (HIFAMS) questionnaire on children’s happiness in school. Veronica Ornaghi, Alessia Agliati and Ilaria Grazzani created a format for reading stories as an intervention programme to stimulate conversations with young children around emotions.

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

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

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

Thank you!

## NEWS FROM THE ENSEC BOARD OF CHAIRS

Next year will mark 10 years of ENSEC since its foundation after the First European Conference on Social, Emotional and Behaviour Competence and Difficulties in Children and Young People held in Malta back in 2007. It is incredible how the network has grown over this last decade.

In relation to membership, we currently count 295 full members in 32 countries and territories in Europe, including Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Turkey, UK. We are proud to add 90 associate members from 18 countries and territories beyond Europe, including Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Canada, Cayman Is, Egypt, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, and USA. Professional collaborations and friendships across the globe are at the heart of ENSEC aiming to improve the social and emotional competences of all children and young people.

We look back with pride to five successful conferences held biannually. In June 2017, we will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ENSEC with a special conference venue. The Örebro University, Sweden together with The City of Gothenburg, Sweden are organizing the 6<sup>th</sup> ENSEC conference on a cruise ship between the two capitals, Stockholm and Helsinki. Reflecting the challenges of the current times, the conference will take a diversity perspective on children and youth. Are you as excited as we are?

We have also started to communicate to members via social media. Please have a look on our facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/enseceurope/> . We hope to create a wider access to our community using several platforms, as well as improving our newsletter system. For 2017, we aim to use a system such as Mailchimp. It is crucial that you update your contact details to stay informed and connected. Please email us ([carmen\\_huser@web.de](mailto:carmen_huser@web.de)) if you wish to be contacted through another email address.

Many thanks go to the editorial board of the International Journal of Emotional Education (IJEE) which is published by the Centre for Resilience and Socio-Emotional Health (CRES) at the University of Malta in collaboration with our network. IJEE has provided ENSEC members with ongoing opportunities to publish their work. We look forward to future collaborative issues.

The board of chairs wishes to thank every member for their contributions to our community, may it be through volunteering as a country coordinator, through delivering information, publications, conference presentations, call for interests for partnerships and joint research projects, and strengthening research and practice in many other ways.

We wish you a peaceful end of 2016, and all the best for 2017. We hope to see you in Sweden for the next ENSEC conference, and/ or other events.



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## UPCOMING CONFERNCES & EVENTS

### UPDATES: 6<sup>th</sup> ENSEC Conference: Diversity

**Date:** 7-9 June 2017

**Venue:** Stockholm, Sweden and Helsinki, Finland

Registration is open. Get in quick – the **early bird registration deadline is 15 January 2017**. Do not miss this great discount!

<https://www.oru.se/om-universitetet/konferenser/ensec/committee/>

There is still time to **submit abstracts** for symposia, workshops, individual papers, and posters. **Deadline for proposal submissions is January 31, 2017**. More information on abstract guidelines: <https://www.oru.se/om-universitetet/konferenser/ensec/conference-venue/abstract-guidelines/>

Have you visited the conference website yet?

You can find information about the four keynote speakers, <https://www.oru.se/om-universitetet/konferenser/ensec/abstract/>:

- Håkan Stattin, Professor, Örebro University, School of Law, Psychology and Social Work, Sweden
- Peter K. Smith, Emeritus Professor of Psychology, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
- Mari-Anne Sorlie, Researcher, Atferdssenteret, Oslo, Norway
- Dan Olweus, Professor of Psychology, Bergen, Norway

A range of invited speakers has announced their symposia and workshops:

Chair	Title
Sevgi Bayram Özdemir, Ph D, Senior Lecturer	To be announced later
Sven Bremberg, Ph D, Associate Professor	Might SEL programmes affect mental health at the population level? A roundtable discussion
Carmel Cefai, Ph D, Professor	Enhancing teacher education to promote inclusion and resilience

Helen Cowie, Ph D, Professor and Carrie-Anne Myers, PhD	Does diversity in society inevitably lead to a rise in bullying, intolerance and discrimination?
Kathy Evans, Ph D, Senior Lecturer	To be announced later
Björn Gislason, Psychologist and Lars Löwenborg	"Stegen" - a research-based curriculum for creating good conditions for children to learn and grow together. A workshop
Neil Humphrey, Ph D, Professor	Assessing children and young people's outcomes across the full SPECTRUM. A workshop
Carmen Huser, Ph D candidate	Children's demonstration of their competences and agency in research participation Research symposium
Alli Klapp, Ph D, Senior Lecturer	To be announced later
Renata Miljevic-Ridicki, Ph D, Professor	RESCUR in kindergarten. A Research Symposium
Annalisa Morganti, Ph D, Associate Professor	Improving inclusion: An evidence based, social emotional approach
Celeste Simoes, Ph D, Professor	Social emotional learning practices across ages in Portugal
Ylva Svensson, Ph D, post doc researcher	Truly diverse school classes - what can we do? A Research Symposium

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

**WELLBEING AUSTRALIA'S INAUGURAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
STRENGTHS, CIRCLES AND SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

**Date:** 3 & 4 March 2017  
**Venue:** Cairns, Australia

If you are concerned with young people's wellbeing in your profession, this conference will provide you with keynote presentations and symposia, interactive workshops and opportunities to network.

The conference presenters include National Children's Commissioner Megan Mitchell, Associate Professor Erica Frydenberg, Dr Helen Street, Dr Brenda Dobia, Associate Professor Sue Roffey, Kerry Bird, Dr Denise Quinlan, Marg Thorsborne, Ali Palmer, and Sam Kourakis.

Themes will encompass Social and Emotional Learning and children's rights, coping and resilience, the importance of context, respect for indigenous culture, teaching shared humanity, relationships and sexuality education, strengths-based approaches in schools, Circles and restorative practices, teacher strengths, and Circles in the early years.

For more information: <http://wellbeingaustralia.com.au/wba/cairns2017/>

## NEWS FROM ENSEC MEMBERS

### CALL FOR PARTNERS FOR ERASMUS+ RESEARCH PROPOSAL

#### *Summary:*

The project aims to develop a programme for the integration of social emotional education into higher education. While it has been widely argued that emotional intelligence (EI) and social emotional skills are highly important for academic and professional success, especially in contemporary realities, EI training has been utilized far less in academic settings. Structured evidence-based programs to develop students' and teachers' EI skills in higher education, are scarce. Moreover, although EI is related to high quality teaching and to effectively developing students' social emotional skills, EI, to date, is not part of pre-service or in-service trainings for teachers in Israel. Thus, knowledge on how to design effective EI programs suitable for Israeli students and faculty, is lacking.

#### *Objectives:*

Design a high quality and methodical training program for the higher education context which will serve two complementary means:

- 1) Providing faculty with opportunities to develop their awareness to EI and its impact on teaching and learning, as well as, to develop their EI. This will allow them to enhance their effectiveness, personal well-being, their ability to function as a role model for students, to cope with today's classroom challenges and to increase their ability to approach students' social, emotional and cognitive needs.
- 2) Designing and setting up students' learning environments that support the development of social-emotional skills and emotional intelligence, and training faculty to support this process, within any teaching subject.

#### *Deliverables:*

- Building a social emotional training/mentorship program for faculty to meet the needs of a multi-cultural institute of higher education in Israel.
- Building an EI training program for students that can be incorporated in different academic teaching subjects.
- Developing best practices for the assessment of EI implementation in higher education.

We feel that such a programme can contribute to the constant improvement in higher education and the efforts to equip students with the skills required to coping with the



changes and challenges of the 21st century and becoming positive and contributing members of society.

Contact person:

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### **International Lions Quest Evaluation Project**

*Authored by Markus Talvio PhD, University of Helsinki, Finland.*

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The Lions Quest program aims to support positive youth development in school settings through health promotion, strengthening social and emotional learning and emphasising service, in addition to teaching and studying SEL skills in the classroom. To maintain the quality of LQ, teachers must participate in the LQ teaching workshop that provides teachers with sufficient knowledge and skills to implement LQ in the classroom setting. Our goal was to investigate the possible benefits for teachers from the Lions Quest teaching workshops in different countries.

We told the readers in the previous newsletter about the three phases of the Project. In conclusion: The intention of the Phase I was to compare the perceptions on LQ goals of the LQ trainers and the LQ country coordinators in different countries. It would seem that the process of LQ implementation was quite successful in maintaining the original goals in the LQ curricula: the perceptions of LQ goals and the official LQ goals were similar internationally. It is thus possible to compare the outcomes of LQ in different countries (Talvio & Lonka, 2013). The intention of Phase II was to develop and test a training evaluation model of the International LQ Evaluation Project. The participants of the study were teachers from Finland. 155 members of the school staff participated in the LQ training. The comparison group consisted of 65 teachers. In addition, there was a second comparison group comprising of 46 teachers and other members of the school staff. The study was a pre-post quasi-experimental intervention study. Teachers participating in LQ rated the goals as more important and relevant after receiving training. Furthermore, participants from the intervention group felt more competent in skills related to the LQ goals than the comparison groups. In addition, it appeared that the evaluation model of the study can be used in measuring the outcomes of teachers' LQ workshop (Talvio, Berg, Ketonen, Komulainen, & Lonka,

2015). In addition, two other studies were conducted about the development of teachers' SEL during LQ. The LQ intervention resulted in a significantly increased coherence in the 'safe environment' and 'promoting SEL' variable pairs among training participants compared with the comparison group. Participating in the LQ training did not, however, increase the coherence significantly with regard to the 'help others' or 'healthy life' variable pairs compared with the comparison group (Talvio, Berg, Komulainen, & Lonka, 2016). In another study, the answers to the open-ended questions were analyzed and the categories were established based on both theory and data. The participants showed more knowledge of the topics taught after the training and were also more capable of applying their knowledge to typical situations related to teacher profession (Berg, Talvio, & Lonka, 2015).

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

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

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

The data from the new countries will be completed in 2017. The negotiations about participation in the Project have been conducted with e.g. Argentina, Australia, Austria, India, and Germany. Their results will be submitted to peer reviewed scientific journals in autumn 2017 and spring 2018.

NEW: website: <http://lions-quest-evaluation-project.webnode.fi/> Here you can find the members of our Project group and the list of the references and more detailed and updated description of each phase.

**'How I feel About My School'; a measure of wellbeing at school for primary / elementary school children**

*Authored by Tasmin Ford, University of Exeter Medical School*

There is a need for simple measures that can be used directly with children to open discussions about their mental health and experience of school and to measure the impact of interventions at individual and class / school level.

Due to the lack of other scales in this important area, we developed the "How I Feel About My School" (HIFAMS) questionnaire as a self-report measure of children's happiness in school (see <http://medicine.exeter.ac.uk/hifams>). The questionnaire was developed for use with children aged 4 to 9 years and is freely available to download at the above website.

We have tested it with children aged 4-9 years old across 83 schools in the West of England and compared them with a small sample of 41 children selected in a study of children who struggle with school. Results available on request from the author.

Tamsin Ford  
Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
University of Exeter Medical School

**The Stories of Ciro and Beba.  
How to enhance conversation with toddlers on emotions**

*Authored by Veronica Ornaghi, Alessia Agliati, Ilaria Grazzani; GRiSC, University of Milano Bicocca, Milan, Italy*

We have developed an innovative format for reading stories to groups of young children. This procedure comprises four phases:

- the creation of a suitable context in which to introduce the activity,
- the reading of a story,
- conversation about the emotion thematized in the story, and
- a windup stage.

The crucial element of the procedure is the conversation about emotions, conducted with small groups of young children. Specifically, the moderator of the conversation draws on the story content to focus on the three main aspects of the construct of socioemotional competence (Denham, 1998; Grazzani, Ornaghi, Agliati & Brazzelli, 2016), namely the expression, comprehension and regulation of emotion, as well as on the dimension of altruistic cooperation (Tomasello, 2009). Conversation is initiated giving a starting point through posing a stimulus question. The stimulus questions are designed to encourage the participation of all the children, giving them the opportunity to “narrate” situations in which they themselves, their family members or friends, or familiar cartoon or story characters, have experienced the emotion being discussed. This procedure, which may seem unusual for use with toddlers, acts a stimulus to foster and accelerate the development of linguistic abilities. Furthermore, given its focus on the emotional dimension of the story characters, it enhances children’s ability to reflect on internal states, and on the relationship between private experience and manifest actions and behaviours, as well as on individual differences in emotional experience and outward behavior (Reddy, 2008; Hughes, 2011). The same stories, read aloud and followed by conversation about emotions, may also be successfully used with older preschool children.

The Intervention Program is available at the following link:

<http://www.socioemotionalcognition.formazione.unimib.it/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/The-Stories-of-Ciro-Beba.pdf>

For further questions, please contact the authors:

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## COUNTRY COORDINATORS

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

**Italy:** Camilla Brandao De Souza

I am a PhD candidate at the University of Verona, in Italy. My research project focuses on the relationship between emotional intelligence and creativity. I have already attended a training course, *The anchors of Emotional Intelligence*, at the University of Yale. I am spending half of my PhD in Paris, to the University of Paris Descartes-Sorbonne and my co-supervisor is Michela Marzano, professor and deputy of the Italian Parliament.

I am a sociologist and a social worker specialized in education issues. Accordingly, I focus particularly on integration and development policy related to different approaches to the education system. I worked for the Ministry of Education of Mozambique, for the LatinHub organization in Australia where I collaborated for the realization of the documentary: "9 historias vitales" related to the point of view of political refugees from South America. Previously I worked also for a Cultural Centre in Spain, for the Italian National Institute for the Educational Evaluation of Instruction and training, and until January, I was co-responsible for the Ruler project (in collaboration with the Yale University and Per Lab) in the north of Italy.

I am interested in the role of emotional intelligence in learning, decision making, relationship quality and mental health, the measurement of emotional intelligence and the influences of emotional intelligence training on student and educator effectiveness. I am interested also in human rights as a form of social solidarity and its intersection with the processes of migration amongst its main stakeholders -civil society, international organizations and states.

I attended many European projects (such as evs and trainings). I speak fluent English, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, and I am improving my French. In addition, I have double citizenship (I have got also the Brazilian one) therefore if it will be necessary I am available also for helping Brazilian people.

We are still looking for more volunteers for country coordinators from other countries, so please email Carmen [Carmen\\_huser@web.de](mailto:Carmen_huser@web.de) if you are interested in joining the ENSEC country coordinator team.

## New edition of *International Journal of Emotional Education*

Volume 8 Issue 2 of the *International Journal of Emotional Education (IJEE)* has just been published. It is a special edition on Social and Emotional Learning Training, Intervention and Research Worldwide, guest edited by Professor Maurice Elias (Rutgers University, USA) and Professor Chryse Hatzichristou (University of Athens, Greece). Papers by authors from Australia, New Zealand, USA, Croatia, Greece, and Turkey focus on issues of implementation, assessment, and application and adaptation of different existing SEL-related programs and approaches to international contexts. A number of these authors are members of our network.

We are proud to announce that our journal is now indexed also in SCOPUS and has a new website address: [www.um.edu.mt/ijee](http://www.um.edu.mt/ijee)

We will be announcing soon a new call for a special edition for 2018.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### Does Training Toddlers in Emotion Knowledge Lead to Changes in Their Prosocial and Aggressive Behavior Toward Peers at Nursery?

**Veronica Ornaghi<sup>a</sup>, Elisa Brazzelli<sup>a</sup>, Ilaria Grazzani<sup>a</sup>, Alessia Agliati<sup>b</sup>, and Maria Lucarelli<sup>b</sup>**

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*Early Education & Development*, Published online 21 October 2016

Within the flourishing area of research demonstrating the efficacy of emotion-based interventions carried out by trained teachers in educational contexts in increasing children's emotional skills, this study makes an original contribution to the existing literature by focusing on the effects of this kind of intervention on toddlers' prosocial and aggressive behavior. Ninety-five 26- to 36-month-olds participated in a 2-month intervention in which trained teachers read emotion-based stories to small groups of children and then either involved them in conversations about emotions (experimental condition) or did not (control condition). Even after we controlled for age and general

language ability, the children in the experimental condition were found to outperform the control group on measures of emotion knowledge and emotional-state talk. Furthermore, the intervention fostered gains in prosocial behavior, whereas it did not have a significant effect on the frequency of aggressive actions, which was lower at posttest in both groups. The positive effect of the training program on participants' prosocial behavior was no longer significant when we controlled for gains in emotion knowledge and emotional-state talk. The results encourage the implementation of early educational programs focused on emotion knowledge in order to foster children's prosocial behavior toward peers.

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2016.1238674>

### **False-Belief Understanding and Language Ability Mediate the Relationship between Emotion Comprehension and Prosocial Orientation in Preschoolers**

**Veronica Ornaghi<sup>1</sup>, Alessandro Pepe<sup>2</sup> and Ilaria Grazzani<sup>1</sup>**

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*Frontiers in Psychology*, published 7 October 2016

Emotion comprehension (EC) is known to be a key correlate and predictor of prosociality from early childhood. In the present study, we examined this relationship within the broad theoretical construct of social understanding, which includes a number of socio-emotional skills, as well as cognitive and linguistic abilities. Theory of mind, especially false-belief understanding, has been found to be positively correlated with both EC and prosocial orientation. Similarly, language ability is known to play a key role in children's socio-emotional development. The combined contribution of false-belief understanding and language to explaining the relationship between EC and prosociality has yet to be investigated. Thus, in the current study, we conducted an in-depth exploration of how preschoolers' false-belief understanding and language ability each contribute to modeling the relationship between children's comprehension of emotion and their disposition to act prosocially toward others, after controlling for age and gender. Participants were 101 4- to 6-year-old children (54% boys), who were administered measures of language ability, false-belief understanding, EC and prosocial orientation. Multiple mediation analysis of the data suggested that false-belief understanding and language ability jointly and fully mediated the effect of preschoolers' EC on their prosocial orientation. Analysis of covariates revealed that gender exerted no statistically significant effect, while age had a trivial positive effect. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

**Citation:** Ornaghi V, Pepe A and Grazzani I (2016) False-Belief Understanding and Language Ability Mediate the Relationship between Emotion Comprehension and Prosocial Orientation in Preschoolers. *Front. Psychol.* 7:1534. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01534

**How to Prevent and Tackle Bullying and School Violence: Evidence and Practices for Strategies for Inclusive and Safe Schools**

School bullying is an EU-wide issue. It has serious and long-term effects, for both victims and perpetrators; and it takes many forms. This report raises awareness about the sizeable prevalence of school bullying in many EU countries and about its negative long-term impact. It highlights key lessons emerging from the most relevant European and international research that can support policy and practice against school bullying. It provides substantial policy guidance and sets out the supporting evidence. The report shows that cross-departmental policy synergies are needed for more effective intervention against school bullying. It also reveals that a large number of EU Member States do not have national school bullying and violence prevention strategies.

Available at: [http://nesetweb.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AR2\\_2015.pdf](http://nesetweb.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AR2_2015.pdf)

**Citation:** Downes, P & Cefai, C. (2016). *How to prevent and tackle School Bullying and Violence: Evidence and Practices for Strategies for Inclusive and Safe Schools*. NESET II report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union