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Social Pedagogy under Very Difficult Conditions: The Case of the Multicultural School of Athens

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THEORY

PRACTICE

RESEARCH

This paper presents social pedagogy under very difficult conditions in the Multicultural School of Athens. More specifically, the paper introduces the Participatory Transformative Pedagogy model developed to train our students to overcome conflicts and to learn to coexist, communicate and gradually to participate to common actions and finally to collaborate effectively. Our efforts aim to introduce cooperation among students that have come from war-torn countries, have suffered a lot and finally meet, in the same school, students 'responsible for their suffering'; this is the environment of the first multicultural School of Athens.

Participatory Transformative Pedagogy (PaTraPe), is a promising approach for making students develop relationships as the only way to deal with the demanding requirements of their classes that value cooperation. When sustainable relationships have been established, social pedagogy methods emerge. The aim of our model is to let a 'social pedagogical wind' blow in the Multicultural School of Athens, so that effective communication, community collaboration and social cohesion could be established.

Key words: social pedagogy, participatory transformative pedagogy (PaTraPe); learning through engagement (LTE); multicultural education.

Introduction

Multicultural schools were introduced into Greece during the last decade, after the opening of the north frontiers and the mass refugee wave from eastern and Middle East countries. Some made it, others, however, were either lost forever in the hazardous mountains or drowned while attempting crossings of the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. This resulted in 1,500,000 refugees mainly settled in the cities of Athens and Thessalonica. Trying to cover the basic educational needs of the young refugee population, the Greek Ministry of Education with the financial help of the European Union,

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designed and implemented multicultural secondary schools. The difficulty has been huge, as the vast majority of the students, trying to escape violence and traveling illegally around countries, had dropped out of schools in their countries of origin long, even years, before their arrival in Greece.

This is the story of the multicultural school of Athens, located at the heart of the city, and its efforts to embrace multicultural pragmatic learning through total student engagement. Currently, the school has 206 students coming from the following countries: Afghanistan: 8, Albania: 11, Bulgaria: 11, Iran: 8, Iraq: 12, Egypt: 10, Syria: 23, Bangladesh: 8, Libya: 7, Romania: 11, Russia: 12, Ukraine: 8, Jordan: 9, Georgia: 9, Palestine: 8, China: 9, Nigeria: 12, Congo: 6, Mali: 7, Pakistan: 8, India: 9. Most of them are war refugees marked with physical, emotional and psychological scars; the situation they escaped had been frustrating, hostile, often impossible. In the school, yesterday's sworn enemies fighting each other in Aleppo, Kabul, Baghdad, Donetsk, Kosovo, Tripoli meet face-to-face today and investigate each other in a common neutral ground that has accepted them as refugees, respects their rights and asks them to listen, follow, respect colleagues, cooperate and share. We needed a pedagogy that would serve these students and train them to survive, evolve, and prosper in a diverse world.

Social pedagogy focuses on improving the educational, social status and well-being of all the people, especially of the socially vulnerable and underprivileged individuals and groups (Mylonakou-Keke, 2003). The philosophical background, theory, principles of social pedagogy are vital in the multicultural school of Athens in order to train students to overcome their stereotypes, negative feelings, rejections, isolation and to learn to cooperate. But what if, besides all the efforts, students still refuse to coexist, collaborate, get organized, accept and respect each other which is the case of the Multicultural School of Athens? In this situation we engaged the methodology of Soft System Methodology (S.S.M.) (Mylonakou-Keke, 2013) as it focuses on human interpersonal conflicts. According to S.S.M., social pedagogy recognizes culture and society as providing the main barriers and aims and encourages active involvement and cooperation so that people are able to face a problem and try to solve it. The application of this approach to the acute conditions of the multicultural school of Athens led us to realize the need for a new social pedagogic model which we called '**Participatory Transformative Pedagogy**'¹ to emphasize the sharing and cooperation of the students as prerequisites for a successful transformation of their established perceptions and beliefs. Within this new framework of the 'Participatory Transformative Pedagogy' (PaTraPe) we developed techniques and approaches that 'imposed' cooperation among students. The curriculum was rewritten assessing the efforts of the students to reuse objects, solutions, models, ideas developed by classmates. Students prioritized collaboration from failure; the model reformed our school community in an unprecedented way aiming to turn our students into producers of synergistic learning content. Participatory Transformative Pedagogy schema introduced new administrative processes, faculty training, student retention, assessment, and curriculum design.

Our Students

At the dawn of our multicultural effort, the school was a place of silent anger, closed consciousness, restricted mobility, and mouths firmly shut. All of our students although coming from different regions of the world, share common painful efforts, experiences and images. Most of them when the war broke out fled their homes in search of safety. They faced harrowing journeys often taking

¹ In previous publications, we called this pedagogy 'Dependence Pedagogy' (DePe), to emphasize the need to develop an environment that promotes dependency among students based on reusability. However discussing our research with Dr. Mylonakou-Keke she expressed her skepticism about the term as the word 'dependence' often has a negative connotation; so we selected the term Participatory Transformative Pedagogy (PaTraPe) to emphasize the collaborative and transformative character of this pedagogical model applied in very difficult conditions.

weeks or months to reach the relative safety of a refugee camp in another country- often slums on the outskirts of a city. In such situations adolescents and youth are even more powerless and vulnerable to abuses such as forced marriages, rape, recruitment into armed forces, trafficking, robbery, disease, hunger and thirst. Some have experienced tragic loss including the loss of beloved family members when trying to cross mine fields or dangerous seas. Others, as they tried to navigate through the chaos and confusion, left behind family members never seen since then. Others stayed, voluntarily or not, to fight or remained to protect family's land and possessions and when we say others we mean fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. Moreover, war forced our students into unfamiliar roles as suddenly they find themselves desperately trying to get money, food and other goods necessary for their families. Girls have suffered more as they have spent their young lives behind closed doors to ensure their 'virtue', and then find themselves suddenly thrust into a very adult world of sexual abuse inflicted by war. Education and skills training seem impossible. Here are some stories:

- ✦ Abas (age 12): Abas and his family were returning to their house when Abas stepped on a mine. The explosion smashed Abas's legs; both legs above knees got amputated.
- ✦ Zaxra (age 11): Zaxra saw her father drowned in sea.
- ✦ Sara (age 14): Sara saw her grandpapa shot dead at the balcony of their house
- ✦ Faxim (age 12): Faxim kidnapped from a refugee camp in Turkey; his kidnappers asked for money from his family in order to get released. He escaped, joined his family and altogether crossed Evros river – one of the entrances to Greece.
- ✦ Ismail (age 15): Ismail was forced to join a military group, to fight and kill.
- ✦ Samkin (age 14): He escaped the horror of Sierra Leone; he is here alone.
- ✦ Ieba (age 13): She saw family members get separated and fight each other in the war in East Ukraine.
- ✦ Reza (age 14,): found himself in a boat with other desperate men, women and children who had been left at sea for days while countries argued about where they should be taken. He witnessed people dying in the boat while distress calls went unanswered.

Defining the Problem – Relationships Matter

Our young refugees – ages 11 to 14 – are asked, for the first time in their lives, to coexist together with other ethnic groups in a common school space in order to listen, follow, and share. Soon they realized that the 'enemy' is here, the one totally responsible for their suffering is here, at this school sharing the same class, library study, theater hours, gym activities; and the 'enemy' student is himself/herself a refugee, overwhelmed with identical feelings against the other - occasionally both come from the same country but with different ideologies. Our daily school efforts for cooperation get collapse as the students return home and the family members forbid any contact with the other side.

Our efforts derive from the social pedagogy academic principles emphasizing participation, justice, welfare, sharing, appreciation, equality, self-respect, altruism, freedom, dignity, to name a few; all belonging to the humanitarian framework of values. The focus is on authentic, positive, strong relationships [Cameron, 2011; Mylonakou-Keke, 2013].

As discussed before, we started our educational efforts by adapting social pedagogy as the underpinning framework for all work with students. We had concentrated on the following goals: supporting students in their development such as gaining skills, building a sense of self, and developing critical reflection; creating an ethical connection between instructors and students emphasized by 'being there' for them; providing opportunities for the students to be involved in decision-making and democratic processes; and gaining an understanding of each student's world and challenges. But for these goals to be satisfied, meaningful relationships had to be established. It emerges that the question of what makes relationships meaningful within social pedagogy needs to

be answered within the context in which it is asked – and this context is affected by the social pedagogical setting in which it takes place. Social pedagogy is based on relationships but its influence and progress depend on the quality of these relationships [Eichsteller & Petrie, 2013].

Social pedagogy aims at social learning, a learning process based on humanitarian values and healthy interaction among students. Learning is a process that involves three parts instructor, student, topic and as such engineers and re-engineers values, beliefs, ideas, customs, architectures and structures. However learning in the context of social pedagogy is reinforced, legitimized and often obtained from peers; it is a relationships-based learning.

Moreover we tried to emphasize [Mylonakou-Keke, 2013]:

- ✦ Critical and reflective thinking
- ✦ Equal and active participation
- ✦ Preventive action appraisal
- ✦ Respectful and valuable relationships
- ✦ Empathetic thinking
- ✦ Synergistic actions
- ✦ Original thinking
- ✦ Creative interventions
- ✦ Students' motivation for ground breaking and milestone thought

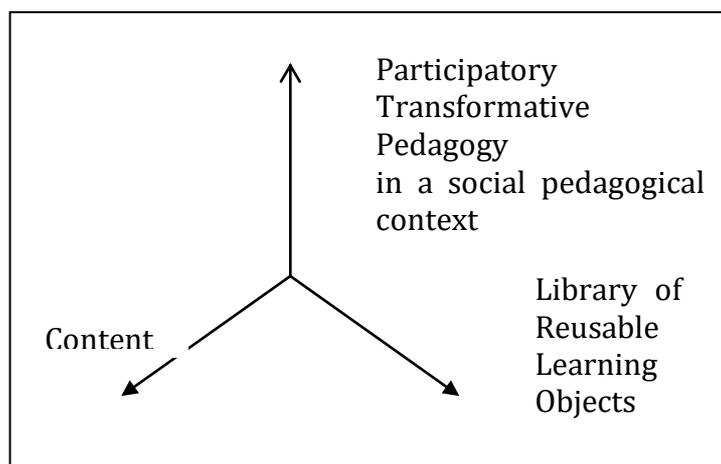


Figure I. The Development Model

However the school was an arena of sharp differences, and negativity, and relationships could not at first be established. We started with group assignments, mixed soccer and basketball teams, group studies, group library assignments, mixed choir groups, song and food presentations. Nothing seemed to work, as much of what they have suffered has impacted students emotionally and psychologically, minimizing their learning efforts. Soon all realized that the school conditions had been overwhelming for the students and necessitated a reshaping of staffs strategies, techniques and approaches. Students were disinterested and depressed, living with parents who themselves were disengaged and depressed as they struggled to adjust.; we needed to come up with something that would make students, no matter what their scars and beliefs, become actively involved in learning; we knew that - in a social pedagogical context - participatory engagement is the key to unlock the magic that lies within each one of our students. Our efforts have been organized along the axes presented in figure I.

Participatory Transformative Pedagogy

Social pedagogy aims in resolving social and educational issues (Mylonakou-Keke, 2003) and it focuses on the development and support of sustainable relationships and effective communication skills (Petrie, 2011). In our school, however, the reality has been that sustainable relationships could not get established. We needed a new approach, a new social pedagogical model that would 'impose' the need of forming quality relationships as a means of surviving in this new school environment, in this new foreign country, hundreds of miles away from home. Social dependency, respect and communication should get established as soon as possible before the situation gets uncontrollable.

Within this framework, we developed an 'extreme' social-pedagogic model, the Participatory Transformative Pedagogy (PaTraPe). Just like the social pedagogy, the Participatory Transformative Pedagogy emphasizes that the existence and prosperity of an entity depends on the quality of the relationships established. Additionally, according to PaTraPe, the quality of a relationship is a factor of dependence. The higher the dependency between students A and B, the more mutual beneficial the relationship A-B is.

At the beginning we tried to establish relationships between students but in order for this to be accomplished we developed a structure investing in the notion of 'find, understand, adapt, assemble objects already developed by classmates' that 'imposed' the necessity for collaborations in order for its goals to be satisfied. The assessment of students work was based on the fact that any piece of students' work should had been an assembly effort reusing the work of other students. Assessment is totally based on 'reusability' that credits both the student(s) that produced a learning component and the student(s) that reused this component to assemble and satisfy the requirement of an assignment. Nothing is accepted unless it is the outcome of reusability. A Heterogeneous Index indicated the plethora of reusable relationships established in accomplishing a piece of work (the greater the number of collaborations the higher the mark) so that All were enforced to relate to All. The PaTraPe period alternates with a more 'regular' social pedagogy approach (figure II). Both -the 'extreme' and the 'regular' social pedagogic approaches- may coexist for a period of time; for some students, PaTraPe period may continue.

Based on this new PaTraPe paradigm:

- a) The school restructured its content in all classes introducing new learning objectives.
- b) Students were trained in producing reusable learning objects and in reusing such objects that had been developed by other students, in that way the roles of 'Producer' and 'Consumer' were introduced.
- c) The school redesigned its assessment procedures to evaluate producer and consumer activities.
- d) Instructors redesigned their assessment activities to 'enforce' reusability; nothing was accepted unless it has been assembled by reusable objects. Often, objects need to be adapted to the requirements of a solution.

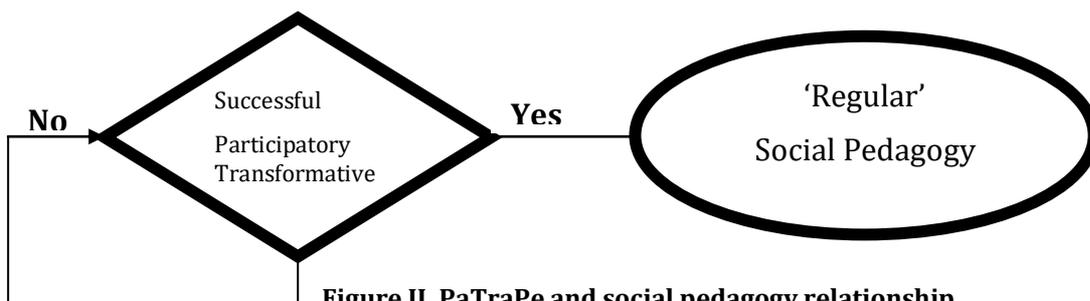


Figure II. PaTraPe and social pedagogy relationship

We called this model Participatory Transformative Pedagogy model because it aimed at the transformation of belief and behaviors via participation, sharing and cooperation. The model inherits all the fundamental principles of social pedagogy.

More specifically, Participatory Transformative Pedagogy is concerned with the theory and practice of a socially pragmatic interactive education in a conflict environment and focuses on implementing procedures that reshape cultural beliefs. Participatory Transformative Pedagogy aims to baptize and reform any human being in the values of respect, trust, tolerance, appreciation; these values are defined within a highly connected human space with each networking node representing a service-oriented human being. The following principles underline the PaTraPe approach:

- Focus on the human being as a totality within a society.
- Humans inhabit the same life space.
- Nothing socially healthy exists without dependent relationships that produce 'well-being'.
- The corner stone of the PaTraPe pedagogic structure is dependency.
- To train people to communicate and cooperate, any practical approach used must focus on sharing and dependence for the satisfaction of the statement 'the output of a node must be the input to others'.

Our efforts have been inspired by the German social pedagogic philosophical movement but it walks its own path and direction (Gunther, 1994). Participatory Transformative Pedagogy includes all people and all ages. Any strategy and tool developed should aim at pre-emptiveness, rather than correction.

For PaTraPe, radical dependent roles are necessary for reshaping consciousness. Dependency led us to reusability, defining dependent behavior. Both PaTraPe and reusability efforts have resulted in a framework of principles and methods that have reformed and redefined our school's relationships smoothing our students' attitude. The PaTraPe model utilizes Information and Communications Technology (I.C.T. and we present some examples below.

The reusability model is based on the principle that we develop systems, and provide solutions by reusing artifacts developed by others. In our school, reuse is based on a structure whose main elements are presented in figure III. Based on this model, different school classes and groups have different roles. The producer develops components suitable for reuse. The reusable components are stored in the Library of Reusable Components (LRC) from where they will be reused by a consumer for the development of a new solution.

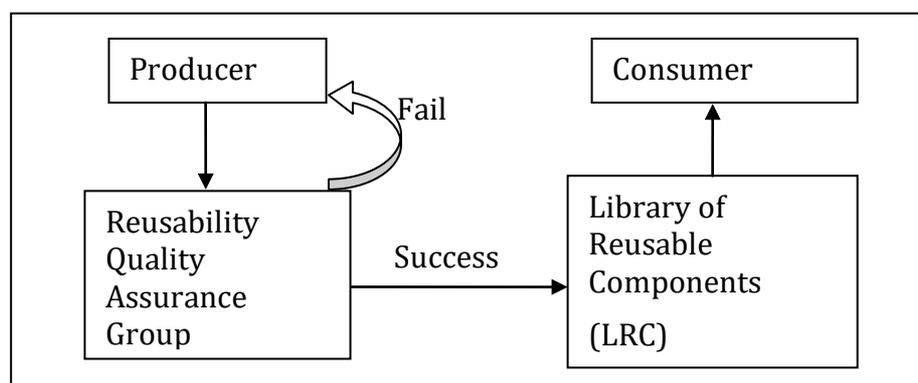


Figure III. The main elements of school's reusable behavior

Trying continuously to ensure the maximum possible quality of the LRC components, the Reusability Quality Assurance Group (RQAG) has been defined. It is the responsibility of the RQAG to test each student's reusable component on its quality; for a more extensive discussion on the LRC and quality checklist please see section E, 'Library of Reusable Components'.

Students are organized into 3 levels (figure IV). Each level consists of 3 classes, designated A1-A3(ages 11-12), B1-B3 (ages 12-13), C1-C3(ages 13-14). Each level produces reusable objects for the next level. Teachers develop assignments having reusability in mind.

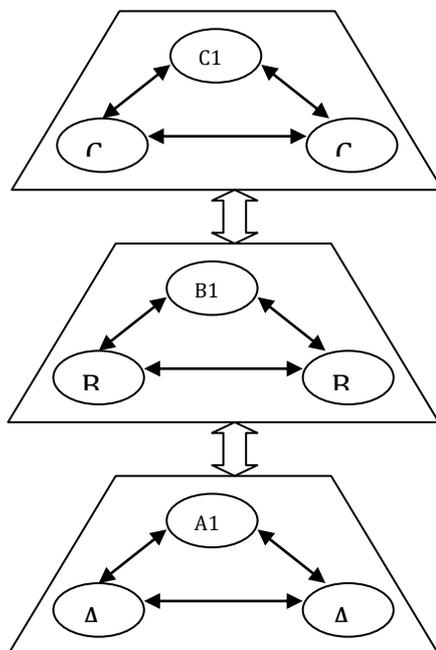


Figure IV. The students' role layer structure

Level 1 students develop primitive elements to be used as constructs developed at level 2. These primitive elements include items such as text, acrylic, graphics, ink, oils, pointers, brushes, watercolors, shadows, surfaces, scenes.

Level 2 students reuse the objects of level 1 to develop basic elements to be assembled at level 3. These elements vary depending on the objects ordered by level 3 students. So far, the LRC enriches the following classes: windows, doors, furniture, appliance, vehicles, employees, employers, students, instructors, vessels, wild life scenes.

Level 3 students are assigned animation and 'thematic sites' (sites on a particular subject covering curriculum content- see below) projects based on reusability and Participatory Transformative Pedagogy. Here are some examples based on animation assignments.

The animation projects developed in our school so far, are classified in the following 2 categories:

a) Teaching the Greek Language (TGL) and b) Melting Cultural Differences (MCD)

- i. **Teaching the Greek Language (TGL):** Observations prove that a coloured letter is grasped faster than a non colourful one and an animated letter is grasped faster than a static one. Moreover each letter of the Greek alphabet is accompanied by a rich set of punctuation showing the way a letter should be pronounced, in its context, to convey its meaning fully. This is not an easy task but it is a fascinating one, and leads to the development of rich sentences with unprecedented, meaningful efficiency. The method embraces the classic Greek language as directly rooted in the ancient one which has glorified western civilization. Our refugee students teach each other, creating a rich set of animations following Greek grammar and syntax rules. Figure V shows an animation where a student had to choose the right punctuation and corresponding letter from a word and then presses the play button. If that is correct then the tone lands over the letter. The result is shown in figure VI. If the choice is wrong then an animated error window message pops up. In this example the objects: cloud, tones, table, and background have been requested by the level 2 students who then asked level 1 students to provide the more primitive elements. The level 2 students made the necessary modifications to

satisfy the requirements. The RQAG checks for the quality of the objects and, if satisfied, the objects are stored in the library of reusable components to be reused by the level 3 students to assemble the animation scene. After the scene is set, the level 3 students design the animation storyboard. The speaker icon pronounces the word.

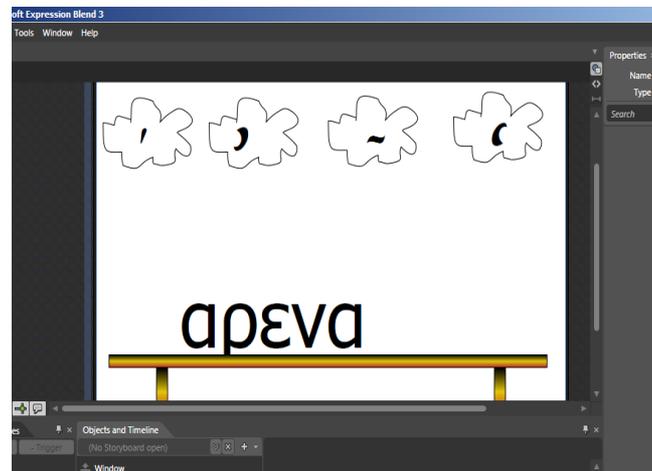


Figure V. Animating and developing words

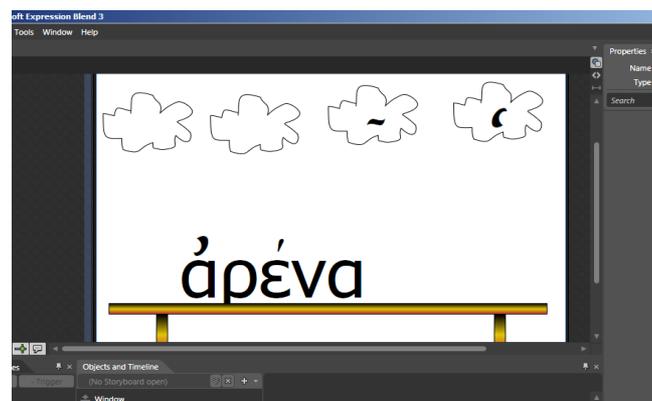


Figure VI. Choosing and animating the correct punctuation

The animation scheme defines different roles to different students. Level 1 students are the producers. Level 2 students are both producers and consumers. Level 3 students are consumers and project managers. RQAG has a managerial role. LRC is the heart of any activity.

- ii. **Melting the Cultural Differences (MCD):** Students create animations of different cultures. Our school is a perfect environment for such activity. In figure VII, we see a snapshot of an animation demonstrating a love story between a 'Western' boy and a typical Islamic girl, developed by the students.



Figure VII. Choosing and animating new perspectives

In figure VIII we see a family with mixed cultural elements. The school encourages, promotes, and provides incentives for such efforts.



Figure VIII. Cultural mixed elements.

We have to note that for the above examples the level 1 students and level 2 students got inspired and to some extent redesigned the figures from the blog angelrie which contains Islamic cartoons ('AngelrieMustimah Cartoon's World', n.d.).

In figure IX, we see a snapshot of an animation that actually creates a mosque and a church assembling their parts with background music from both cultures.

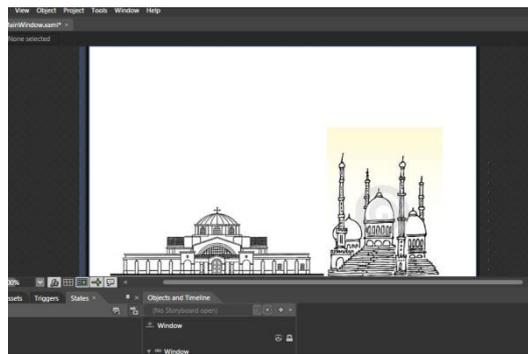


Figure IX. Creating and relocating symbols in a united frame.

As in the previous case, level 1 students accept the orders and start developing the items ordered with a specific deadline as defined by the deadline of the whole project. Artifacts produced, are checked by the RQAG against the quality characteristics presented before.

Considerable time was spent educating the students on the principles of reusability and the lifecycle of any development project. Successful PaTraPe, presupposes successful reuse which requires successful producers and consumers. Students were trained in:

- a) Classifying and storing components: Each component is characterized by the following tuple <function, type, area, setting>.
- b) Identifying components that meet specific needs: The search and retrieval activities aim at identifying the most appropriate components in the library, matching certain requirements
- c) Adapting components as necessary: The ideal situation is that the retrieval process will deliver a component that exactly meets a specific need; however this is not often the case. What usually happens, is that the search process delivers, either more than one candidate reusable module or in the best case one component which needs to be adapted to the requirements of the new development.
- d) Assembling components: This is the final action and refers to interconnecting components forming the final solution of an assignment.

We are using the reuse concept to emphasize that the output of a human being must be the input to others, providing artifacts that satisfy certain quality standards. At the multicultural school of Athens, reuse is a strategic decision:

- Teachers know that management is firmly committed to reuse in order to create a strong PaTraPe environment.
- The school board has revised the assessment system to include reuse-evaluation on all aspects of the curriculum activity.
- Training for reuse has been provided to teachers as well as the technical personnel.

The next section presents the content produced by our students organized into thematic sites covering curriculum goals.

Thematic Sites Content

Early in the project, a training program started brought students to the center of the educational process and developing content. Students participated in an intense program which taught them how to develop sites on curriculum topics. Students' engagement has been catholic. We taught all students how to design, develop and publish a site and then we asked them to produce content for their curriculum classes. When students had selected from a list of topics, groups formed and the production started; what follows is a short demonstration of some of the students' works for the video game club as well as for the history, reading, citizenship, nature, sports, and geography classes:

History: Students from Syria created a site about their country before and after the civil war (figure X). Memories unfolded, pain was again faced, stories of their parents and relatives presented. Photos of their villages and their lives before and after the war got posted. Syria's history was presented as our Syrian students see, remember, feel, and believe the facts to be. Everyone agreed that war and especially civil war cannot be a solution to any problem. This helped us to be led gradually to the transformation of students' beliefs and perceptions.



Figure X. Syria History

Reading: Students from Albany and Ukraine developed a site dedicated to romantic poetry (figure XI). In March 2013, the site hosted our first poetry competition storing 75 poems from 12 countries. Anyone from the school had the chance to grade 5 different poems using the scale 1(low) – 5 (high). Based on this logic we managed to establish in our school the principle that 'art unites us'.



Figure XI. The Poetry site

Citizenship: This class is about political systems, social merits, and justice. For this class, some very conservative girls from Afghanistan developed a site to show their view of freedom and democracy. The young girls come to school wearing headscarf, but for 6 months they developed a site about their view of feminism, sex equality and respect (figure XII).

Their site is an ode to freedom of choice. They emphasize that any human being should be free to choose any way of life pleases him/her without jeopardizing others lives and choices. To them, Frances' decision to ban headscarf from schools is as dangerous as Taliban's order to impose headscarf to any female.

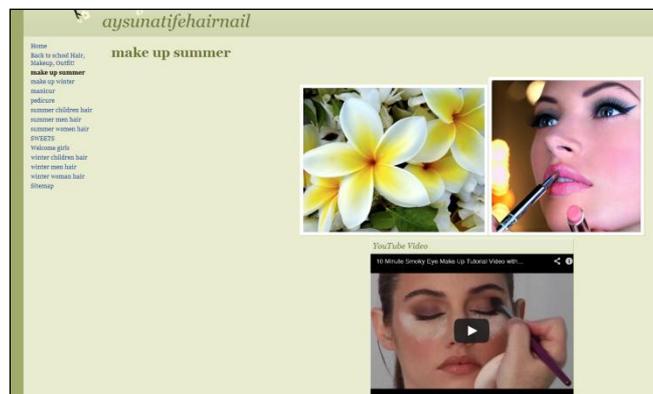


Figure XII. Citizenship class

Nature: Students from Egypt and Bangladesh developed a site about the Mediterranean animals and fish (figures XIII, XIV). Ecology is the center theme of the site and Mediterranean countries are graded according to their performance to ecology. The site emphasizes that fish travel freely from coast to coast and birds fly freely from country to country. This is a message that God created a borderless planet letting people travel freely as they wish. In this way, basic human rights such as freedom and respect for others, started to get realized.

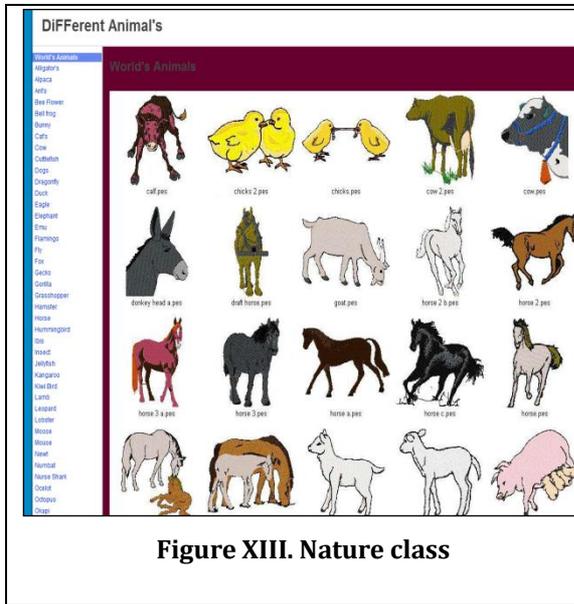


Figure XIII. Nature class

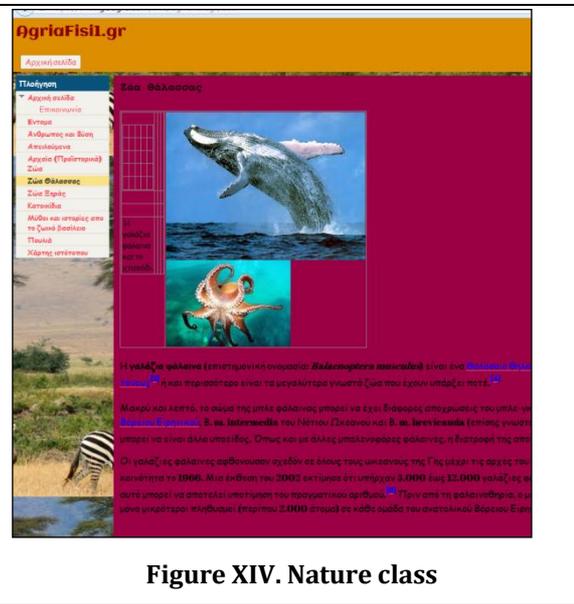


Figure XIV. Nature class

Sports: Students from Albany, Turkey and Ukraine developed a site about swimming (figure XV). This has evolved into school's athletic official site covering all sorts of sports. Students began now to see the importance of sporting ideals and the importance of their participation in joint sports activities.

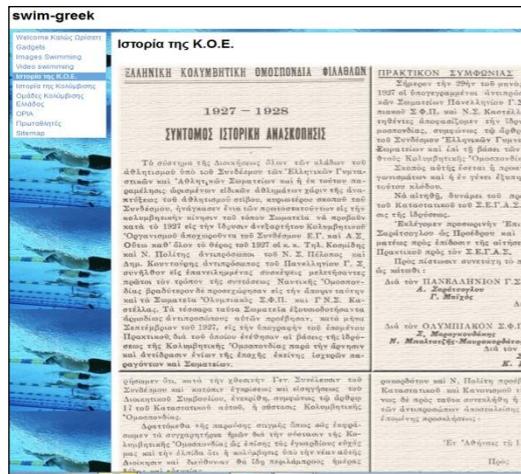


Figure XV. Swimming

Gaming: What we see in figure XVI, is the site developed by students from Egypt, India and Pakistan to teach our staff community how to play the League of Legends game. Students spent 2 months to develop the site working after class and in parallel with their lessons and homework.



Figure XVI. League of Legends material

This section presented a small sample of sites developed by our students. During September 2012 to May 2013, a total number of 137 sites were created and stored either in the school's server or Google's cloud. A wiki with the name Oli (meaning everyone, no exclusions) has been developed, based on the Tiki platform (Tiki Wiki CMS Groupware, n.d.) to organize and share all these the objects developed by our students.

Library of Reusable Components

The Multicultural school of Athens is a rich source of learning material derived by our 206 refugee students; this collection had to be organized and disseminated. Our goal was not merely to develop a library structure but to provide a synergistic environment able to support reusability and the Participatory Transformative Pedagogy (Kalagiakos & Gabor 2013). Wiki as a collaborative free format tool contributes to knowledge synergy; the latter is important as it becomes a curriculum tool along with content sites, animation schemes and learning games; as this paper is written, students produce learning games using Alice and we are in the process of incorporating these games into the official curriculum (Alice, n.d.).

Soon, the content had been huge, and all these pieces along with the curriculum knowledge had to be structured in a way that was easily accessible, reused, expanded and maintained. The wiki concept seemed a promising solution as wikis are great social, web-based, freeform tools that produce interlinked pages where each page contains a concept and content related to that concept.

The reusability model (figure XVII) is based on the principle that students provide solutions by reusing artifacts developed by other students. In our school, different classes and groups have different roles. Both the producer and consumer roles are assumed by students and staff.

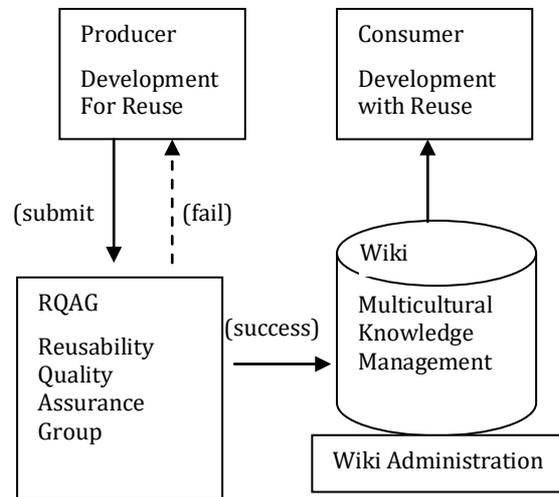


Figure XVII : The reusability model of our school.

We consider wiki a knowledge management tool that combines:

- a) A content management system which can be used to manage learning objects that can be searched and categorized
- b) A form of groupware, used to enhance communication and collaboration.

Wiki pages can be initiated by anyone and changed by anyone. The combination of a content management system and a collaboration system into one system is significant. This new tool allows for content to be worked on collaboratively and produced at the same time. We treat our wiki solution as the Library of Reusable Component (LRC) and its content as reusable objects; by this means, new roles, behaviors, and terms are introduced in our school such as the Reusability Quality Assurance Group (RQAG), quality cost, quality assessment and wiki administration.

In our reuse-based organization the producer develops components suitable for reuse. The components are submitted to the Reusability Quality Assurance Group to be evaluated based on the criteria of understandability, completeness, conciseness, consistency, usability, reliability and efficiency. In our school the RQAG consists of 3 members: one teacher and two level 3 students who are replaced by others every 15 days.

Wiki is by itself a thesaurus of knowledge. It is not only its catalytic contribution to the PaTraPe approach that makes it so valuable but also its dynamics for macro learning via valuable learning activities.

Grammar as a game: Instructors post text with grammatical errors. Students are organized into mixed cultural groups and use wiki to edit the text. Groups compete, the group with the most edit activity wins.

Debate: Instructors post topics that students can argue by using wiki online forums. Teachers monitor the discussions/debates while students learn online debate behavior.

Collaborative Development of a Story: Students inspired by their countries' legends start with a generic sentence and then the rest of the students and instructors add and edit text to create a story that usually ends up in a funny way and quite different than its original version.

Poetry Class: The instructor posts a poem online and the students discuss its meaning. Students can also post their own poems for peer review.

Book and Film Reviews: Students are encouraged to use wiki for book, film and shows reviews of their countries; anyone can comment and discuss the reviews on a monitored forum.

Riddles: Students post riddles from their country's tradition and instructors encourage groups of students to solve them through online collaboration.

History as a game: Instructors create wiki fan pages; students add and edit text, post photos and famous quotes.

Assessment: Instructors use wiki group assessments, posting tests and written assignments. Students collaboration to achieve success, is encouraged and promoted.

Wiki as a multicultural knowledge management tool has helped us identify cultural dimensions occurring in our students' content; these dimensions are similar to those analyzed by Geert Hofstede who identified five dimensions and rated countries based on these criteria (Hofstede, 1984); our Asian students have greater score than the European ones in all dimensions - power-distance, collectivism vs. individualism, femininity vs. masculinity, and uncertainty avoidance. This is an important discussion as it can inspire the development of a technology for generic learning content in order to increase the content's impact in a multicultural environment like our school.

Conclusion

This paper presents our social pedagogical efforts in the Multicultural School of Athens, which aim to train our students, who had, initially, great rivalries with each other, to coexist and gradually to participate in joint events and finally to cooperate effectively. To deal with the initial strong negativity, we developed a model that 'forced' our students to cooperate in order to satisfy the learning requirements of the school.

In essence we tried to capture the interest of our students and introduce learning through engagement. Most of our students are refugees from war zones, marked with emotional and psychological scars; a difficult situation where most theories collapse and words alone are a weak way of expressing the struggle to have the school operating effectively??. To reshape students' consciousness, radical dependent roles were necessary. Setting our students in the heart of the learning scene and at the same time enforcing reusability has defined new roles and promoted dependent behaviors. In this environment, where production and assembly of reusable objects define individual student's welfare, Participatory Transformative Pedagogy was emerged as a new approach dealing with sharp social differences. At the center of our activities is a wiki-based library of reusable components acting as a knowledge management tool. Reuse has been proved an excellent methodology and successful reusability behavior has been linked to a motivational grading system. Reusability dominates our school.

This paper portrays our efforts to shift from traditional lesson plans and programs to attention-grabbing learning. The results so far inspire us to continue trying on this path. Two years after the introduction of PaTraPe, a 'social pedagogical wind' blows in our school. To present a few:

- ✦ Students from Aleppo, ex-enemies, cooperated reluctantly at the beginning but now they have established a relationship based on mutual respect; to them, war and suffering have been imposed by outsiders.
- ✦ Ukraine and Russian students have stopped political discussions accusing each other and cooperate to satisfy the requirements of their work load.
- ✦ Girls from Iraq, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan create thematic sites dreaming of a world where girls will be free enjoying the rewards of life without fear; some dream of becoming lawyers, others doctors, others nurses, however all have in mind to return home and help the women and girls of their countries.
- ✦ India and Pakistan students excel in mathematics and honour the RQAG with their great work, increasing the quality of the LRC.

For the majority of our students PaTraPe was proved a valuable investment and experience. To them justice, sharing, appreciation, equality, respect, and freedom, are gifts given by God to people, and must be protected. For some, as Aisou notes, PaTraPe has therapeutic value: 'it's about daring to connect, to begin trusting someone. To begin to feel I can come here and open up about something that feels frightening and threatening to me. It's about daring to be dependent and to permit closeness...'

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Dedication: This effort is dedicated to my beloved daughter Matina.

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