

Parents-Teachers Transformational Community of Inquiry:

An Innovative Model

Maria Papathanasiou

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ABSTRACT

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Extensive research over the last 3 decades has documented that collaboration between parents and teachers in the education of children from kindergarten through high school is highly beneficial for all parties, and particularly so for the academic progress and general welfare of the students. This dissertation describes a study that was directed toward developing and refining an innovative model of teaching practice—Philosophy for parent (P4P)—specifically directed at the parents of K-12 school-age children for the purpose of bridging a now widely recognized gap in communication and collaboration between parents and teachers—and hence in potential educational efficacy—and convert the actors into a well-bonded community—one that is actively engaged via “philosophic” Socratic dialogue with questions that probe and challenge their own and mutual frames of reference. And one that will intentionally sponsor and facilitate parents’ direct involvement with their children’s curriculum and everyday progress.

In particular, my research focused on creating an innovative model of practice directed toward promoting teacher-facilitated liberating democratic dialogue between parents and teachers that is based on the fundamental principles of Socratic dialogue that academically acclaimed Columbia University professor of philosophy, Matthew Lipman, incorporated into an educational model for schoolteachers, and their students. In Lipman’s model the teacher fosters and facilitates formation of a Community of Philosophical Inquiry among students from preschool age to adolescence. Use of this model—termed Philosophy for/with Children, or P4C—has been found in research (Lipman et al., 1980, p.15, Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011)

to upgrade and cultivate children's innate abilities in questioning, reflecting, and thinking critically in a liberating environment if they are given appropriate prompts at school and home. Use of the process of philosophical Socratic dialogue—not study of historical philosophy—to explore and evaluate alternative actions and concepts between both children and adults is highly innovative in light of the fact that, until very recently, it was unimagined that children could think abstractly let alone compare and balance philosophical concepts.

I call my model in which teachers employ adult-adapted versions of Lipman's principles, Philosophy for Parents (P4P). In time I perceived under intensive study of the literature that a number of adult learning theories, especially including Mezirow's Transformative Learning and its dialogue circles, and, to some extent others, might likely prove, under study in practice, to elucidate and positively inform the process and evolution of P4P.

My P4P model was developed and pilot tested in a 2-year qualitative Action Research Study in a Kindergarten in Greece—with observed favorable results. During study of underlying theory at University of Naples Federico II, I decided to test P4P in the United States where Lipman's P4C has been admired, practiced, and extensively studied.

However, while the first meetings with parents in participating school sites and were in progress—the study was rapidly terminated by an unforeseen Pandemic caused by worldwide, rapidly proliferating Covid-19 disease and attendant discontinuance of face-to-face teaching in schools. And so, an alternative path of study had to be devised.

In concert, my doctoral study sponsor at the University of Naples Federico II, Maura Striano, and I converted my Action-Research-in-practice study to a *conceptual study* of my P4P model refined by extensive further research into its theoretic substrate—augmented by a complementary 49-question, self-administered, comparative international survey of a snowball sample of parents of schoolchildren from generally high SES and academically inclined families

in the United States, Italy, Greece, Spain and Costa Rica. The survey's purpose was to examine subject interest in and direct involvement with their child/ren's education, their evaluation of the impact of relationships within the family and with their child/ren's school on their academic and general future success in life, and their appreciation of factors that might signal receptiveness to engaging with my model if it were offered in their child/ren's school. In a chrono-situational context, it probed parents' level of, and interest in, engagement with their children's school both before and then during Covid-19 remote learning, and comparison of the strengths of any factors that enhanced their interest and engagement with the school under pre-Covid-19 vs. pandemic conditions.

While it is quite unlikely that many, or even any of the parents in the sample knew anything even about P4C, responses did at least suggest their likely inclination toward P4P—among them, surprisingly, a preference for dialogic communication.

An ancillary purpose pursued in this period was development of a Teacher's Handbook as a tool that would assist teachers in leading this practice, featuring stories that might under the right conditions be expected to provoke free and open dialogic discussion between almost any possible grouping of parents and teacher-facilitators, where judgment of "right" or "wrong" might often be suspended to the point of irrelevance, where there might be few, if any, a priori "given" answers ever sanctioned, and where it would be encouraged that one person's point would be commented on, such that one person's question is quite likely to be "answered" (i.e., responded to) by *another* person's question.

Evolution of a teacher-facilitated Community of Philosophical Inquiry, aspirationally, might be expected to eventuate in meaningful parent-teacher partnerships where all actors think deeply, exchange ideas, argue with respect to their own and others' voices and build relevant capacities to manage the complexity of modern pedagogy together as allies on a team.

Abstract di Tesi

Un vasto filone di ricerca negli ultimi 3 decenni ha documentato che la collaborazione tra genitori e insegnanti nell'educazione dei bambini, dalla scuola materna alla scuola superiore, è altamente vantaggiosa per tutte le parti e, in particolare, per il progresso scolastico e il benessere generale degli studenti. Questa tesi descrive uno studio che è stato diretto allo sviluppo e al perfezionamento di un modello innovativo di pratica didattica - Filosofia per i genitori (Philosophy for Parents, P4P) - rivolto nello specifico ai genitori di bambini in età scolare K-12 (primaria e secondaria) allo scopo di colmare un divario ora ampiamente riconosciuto nella comunicazione e collaborazione tra genitori e insegnanti - e quindi nella potenziale efficacia educativa. Esso trasforma gli attori in una comunità ben legata, attivamente coinvolta attraverso il dialogo socratico "filosofico" con domande che sondano e sfidano i propri e reciproci quadri di riferimento. Inoltre, esso che sponsorizzerà intenzionalmente e faciliterà il coinvolgimento diretto dei genitori nel curriculum dei loro figli e il loro progresso quotidiano.

In particolare, la mia ricerca si è concentrata sulla creazione di un modello di pratica innovativo, volto a promuovere il dialogo democratico liberatorio tra genitori e insegnanti, facilitato dall'insegnante, basato sui principi fondamentali del dialogo socratico che il celebre professore di filosofia dalla Columbia University, Matthew Lipman, ha incorporato in un modello educativo per gli insegnanti e i loro studenti. Nel modello di Lipman, l'insegnante promuove e facilita la formazione di una comunità di indagine filosofica tra gli studenti, dall'età prescolare all'adolescenza. La ricerca (Lipman et al., 1980, p.15, Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011) ha mostrato come l'uso di questo modello, chiamato Filosofia per/con i bambini, o P4C, migliori e coltivi le abilità innate dei bambini nel mettere in discussione, riflettere, e pensare

in modo critico in un ambiente liberatorio, se gli vengono dati suggerimenti appropriati a scuola e a casa. L'uso del processo del dialogo filosofico socratico, e non lo studio della filosofia storica, per esplorare e valutare azioni e concetti alternativi tra bambini e adulti è altamente innovativo alla luce del fatto che, fino a tempi molto recenti, era impensabile che i bambini potessero pensare in modo astratto, figurarsi a confrontare e bilanciare concetti filosofici.

Chiamo il mio modello, in cui gli insegnanti utilizzano versioni adattate per adulti dei principi di Lipman, Filosofia per i genitori (P4P). Col tempo ho percepito, attraverso uno studio intensivo della letteratura, che un certo numero di teorie sull'apprendimento degli adulti, tra cui in particolare l'apprendimento trasformativo di Mezirow e i suoi circoli di dialogo, e in una certa misura altre, potrebbero probabilmente dimostrare, allo studio empirico, di chiarire e informare positivamente il processo ed evoluzione del P4P.

Il mio modello P4P è stato sviluppato e testato empirico in uno studio pilota qualitativo, di ricerca-azione, di 2 anni in un asilo in Grecia, con risultati favorevoli osservati. Durante lo studio della teoria empirica all'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, ho deciso di testare il P4P negli Stati Uniti, dove il P4C di Lipman è stato ammirato, praticato e ampiamente studiato.

Tuttavia, mentre erano in corso i primi incontri con i genitori nelle sedi scolastiche aderenti, lo studio è stato rapidamente sospeso da una pandemia imprevista causata dalla malattia Covid-19, in rapida proliferazione in tutto il mondo, e dalla conseguente interruzione dell'insegnamento faccia a faccia nelle scuole. E così è stato necessario ideare un percorso di studio alternativo.

Insieme, la mia tutor di dottorato empirico presso l'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Maura Striano, ed io abbiamo convertito il mio studio empirico di ricerca-azione in uno studio concettuale del mio modello P4P, perfezionato da ulteriori approfondite ricerche sul suo substrato teorico e ampliato da un questionario comparativo internazionale di 49

domande, autosomministrato , ad un campione a valanga di genitori di bambini in età scolare di status socio-economico generalmente alto e di famiglie con tendenze accademiche negli Stati Uniti, in Italia, in Grecia, in Spagna e in Costa Rica. Lo scopo dell'indagine era di esaminare l'interesse dei soggetti e il coinvolgimento diretto nell'istruzione dei figli, la loro valutazione dell'impatto delle relazioni all'interno della famiglia e con la scuola sul loro successo scolastico e futuro generale nella vita, e la loro valutazione dei fattori che potrebbero segnalare la ricettività a impegnarsi con il mio modello se fosse offerto nella scuola del figlio . In un contesto crono-situazionale, il questionario ha sondato il livello di coinvolgimento e l'interesse dei genitori nei confronti della scuola dei propri figli, sia prima che durante l'apprendimento a distanza da Covid-19, e il confronto dei punti di forza di tutti i fattori che hanno accresciuto il loro interesse e il loro coinvolgimento nei confronti della scuola in condizioni pre-Covid-19 vs in pandemia.

Anche se è abbastanza improbabile che molti, o anche qualcuno dei genitori nel campione, sapesse qualcosa del P4C, le risposte suggerivano la loro probabile inclinazione verso il P4P, tra cui, sorprendentemente, una preferenza per la comunicazione dialogica.

Uno scopo accessorio perseguito in questo periodo è stato lo sviluppo di un Manuale dell'insegnante, come strumento che avrebbe aiutato gli insegnanti a condurre questa pratica, con storie che, nelle giuste condizioni, possano provocare discussioni dialogiche libere e aperte tra quasi tutti i possibili gruppi di genitori e docenti-facilitatori, dove il giudizio di "giusto" o "sbagliato" possa essere spesso sospeso fino all'irrelevanza, dove possano esserci poche, se non nessuna, risposte "date a priori" e mai approvate, e dove possa essere incoraggiato il commentare il punto di una persona , in modo tale da rendere molto probabile che la domanda di una persona "riceva una risposta" dalla domanda di un'altra persona.

Ci si potrebbe aspettare che l'evoluzione di una comunità di indagine filosofica facilitata dall'insegnante sfoci in partnership genitori-insegnanti significativa, in cui tutti gli attori pensano profondamente, scambiano idee, discutono rispetto alla propria voce e a quella degli altri e costruiscono capacità rilevanti per gestire la complessità della pedagogia moderna insieme, come alleati, in squadra.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my brilliant husband, Vlasio, who has been my constant disorienting dilemma;, to my father and mother, Vasilio and Stella, who made me believe there is nothing I cannot achieve if I aim for it and whose good examples have taught me to work hard to achieve my goals; and to my children, Spyro, Vasilio and Sofia-Stella who have made unthinkable sacrifices without which it would have been impossible for me to come to Federico II in Naples, Italy, and then to Montclair State University, in New Jersey, and Teachers College, in New York and answer my calling.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Overview and Process

Because of the sudden intervention of Covid-19 and consequent interruption of normal schooling for children worldwide the actual findings reported in this thesis are necessarily more limited than those originally intended in their power to address and support the hypothesis that is its core premise, specifically, that modern conditions and recent research argue strongly for a working collaboration between parents and teachers for optimal teaching/education of today's growing children.

This thesis report presents findings that are ancillary to, but serve to amplify information, pertinent to the original large-scale intent of this study. This was to investigate and compare the effect of dialogue and critical reflection in groups of parents, facilitated by schoolteachers with the goal of creating a collective school-family "Community of Philosophical Inquiry." Moreover, this research sought to leverage the now well supported benefits of parent engagement in enhancing students' academic performance and the well-being of all participants in the school community (students, teachers, parents, and administrators).

As foundation for my intention, I believe that unique benefits can accrue from the active participation of parents and their children's teachers in a framework of mindful adult learning within the school community, as outlined by Langer (1997, p.4)—one that will involve an implicit awareness and recognition of the potential validity of more than one perspective, openness to emergent insight, and reflective thinking all of which, together, may exert a transformational effect.

The idea of this study emerged through my long-lasting teaching experience in primary education and family counseling and out of the positive power I observed as a teacher and a

researcher in a strong, facilitated parent-teacher partnership as a factor promoting the best interests of all parties, including the students. Most often, today this partnership appears to encounter, a multitude of disturbances that research ascribes to the lack of a trusting high-quality school-family collaborative relationship and, as Kluczniok (2013) finds in her review, fostered by a persistent alienation between teachers and parents that promotes uncoordinated and sometimes contradictory school-learning and home-learning environments. This fracture has been proven to carry major negative social and learning impacts for the children involved.

This family-school gap that has been extensively explored, especially in the United States, has sparked researchers' curiosity and prompted intense study of parent-school engagement strategies and models that will be described in succeeding chapters. To investigate the causation and possible amelioration of parent-teacher alienation, with the full collaboration of the teachers and parents in the school classes being observed, I carried out a two-year exploratory study in the classrooms of a kindergarten in Athens, employing an Action Research methodology.

My research focused on creating an innovative model of practice directed toward promoting teacher-facilitated liberating democratic dialogue between parents and teachers which is based on the fundamental principles of Socratic dialogue that Columbia University professor of philosophy, Matthew Lipman, incorporated into an educational model for teachers and their students, where the teacher facilitates formation and fosters a Community of Philosophical Inquiry among students from preschool age to adolescence. Use of this model—termed Philosophy for Children, or P4C—has been found in research (Lipman et al., 1980, p.15, Vansielegheim & Kennedy, 2011) to upgrade and cultivate children's innate abilities in

questioning, reflecting, and thinking critically if they are given the chance and appropriate prompts at school and home.

In my Action-Research intervention with this practice model I developed and then deployed an educational tool that it was hoped other teachers could easily embrace to aid them in a similar process. As a prototype, I selected for modification and evaluation, a tool with which teachers would already be familiar so that, if it proved effective, few professional development hours would be required for its adoption. That tool is already widely used in preschool education in Greece to assist teachers in developing critical thinking, problem solving skills, and reasoned discussing of different perspectives among kindergarten students. In broad terms it consists of nothing more than a handbook containing stories and fairy tales that constitute a natural trigger for classroom teacher-facilitated dialogue with and between students of this age along with integrated prompts for a group discussion among teachers and students with a lot of questions, answers, and ideas that are keyed to the stories individually and collectively.

My model premised on Lipman's was implemented across two years in a two Greek Kindergarten classes in a school that was already practicing the basic Socratic dialogic P4C process routinely. However mine and its implementation employed one all-important difference from Lipman's basic one. Because I was at once fully cognizant of the known general deficit in parental involvement in their children's schools and a strong believer in Epstein's reported findings that when parents were significantly involved in "voluntary" participation in many school activities—exclusive of the curriculum—very good outcomes were achieved for the students as well as for other aspects of school life, I chose to implement a bifurcated strategy whereby *one* of the two classes continued for the two years employing the P4C dialogic process between teachers and students that occurred routinely in the school as a control group. But in the

second that was taught and facilitated by *me*, I personally sought and obtained strong parental involvement, not only in voluntary non-curricular matters (as had Epstein), but also engaged enthusiastic parental participation in P4C Socratic dialogue between the class parents and me as teacher—as well as among themselves—concerning the same story-introduced issues which their children were exploring in the curriculum. In these discussions, also probed were issues of good parenting and sponsoring mostly lingual and playful interactions with their children. These sessions occurred roughly once every month and were very enthusiastically embraced by the parents! So much so, in fact, that one parent in the control class who heard about them in conversation among school parents begged me and eventually succeeded in getting me to allow them to join the active parent group!

What was particularly propitious for the success of this initiative was that, in many cases the issues of ethics and other matters treated dialogically were the same and were introduced into discussion via the *same* fairytales and stories as the ones introducing them into dialogue by the children. Even more positive for family-child(ren)-school relations was the fact that the children were told about this so the kids would ask their parents about, and eagerly discuss with them the very same issues and contexts when they came home from school.

All of this and its successful outcome were presented in an academic paper in 2019. While the study was not quantitative, anecdotal results for the active class were very positive. Here is just a listing of some of them; explanatory explanations are given within the paper itself: (Papathanasiou, 2019)

(All the following results were based on continual evaluations by all parties involved. In particular, the outcomes from the Experimental Group unfolded to a considerably greater extent

compared to the Control Groups'. The appearance of certain attitudes in the control was either not apparent before or with a very low progression compared to previous years.)

- Empowering parents to develop effective parenting strategies.
- Cultivating group climate for the young & adult students.
- Integration of parents into the educational process inside and outside the school.
- Develop trust relationships in the Educational Triangle: School–Child–Parent.
- Developing a positive climate in school from all participating sides.
- Parents promoted their children academically after assimilating how to enhance and link learning in the family environment with learning at school.
- Parents responded with great enthusiasm to school whenever cooperation was sought.
- The relationships between the parents that participated persevered in the following years.
- The parents who participated were looking for cooperation and remained attached to the kindergarten during the next year, regardless of having their children in elementary school.

After two years of Action Research based on my model and findings (above) strongly suggesting positive outcomes for both the school community and for individuals as well, the exploratory research moved to Italy and evolved into a proposal for Doctoral research There, it was hosted and supported by Professor, Maura Striano former Coordinator of Doctoral Studies in Psychological and Educational Sciences (now called: Mind, Gender & Language), and Director of the Philosophy for Children training course and the SYNAPSIS Center at the University of Naples Federico II. Professor Striano, an acknowledged expert in the philosophy of adult

education with a particular focus on John Dewey, has sponsored and supervised my research there as a doctoral candidate.

Seeing that most research, innovations, and policies on parent-school partnership were grounded in the US, I decided to undertake deeper research in developing, evaluating, and validating my innovative model with more comprehensive comparative research that would perhaps allow generalization for a very select segment of the population for a model that aims to build and/or enhance parent-school relationships in a strong Community with teachers and families in the epicenter and positively affect academic success and well-being of students and their schools.

The intention of doing comparative research brought me to the US where, initially, as a Visiting Research Scholar at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children in Montclair State University, New Jersey, and with the full support of my mentors, Professors Maughn Gregory and David Kennedy, I became knowledgeable and experienced in how to conduct research in school sites. Soon after, I concluded refining my practice framework to a point that will be discussed in the next chapter while, at the same time, building my own complementary Teachers Handbook for Transformational Parenting that includes mostly my own stories that could trigger philosophical dialogues between both parents and teacher/facilitators *as well as* their children as students

In addition to practicing P4C as a core process in my model, I sought to further explore the theoretical foundations of the learning experience of the parents and other participants in my earlier AR study in Greece that appeared, metaphorically, to have transformed participants from caterpillars into butterflies.

As a Visiting Doctoral Student at Teachers College in Columbia University, New York, I also studied under my advisor Professor Victoria Marsick, Academic Director of the Adult Learning and Leadership Program, and a widely acknowledged expert in organizational, informal, and incidental learning as well as the theory and practice of Transformative Learning—a discipline originated and developed by her long-time mentor, Jack Mezirow.

In time I perceived under study that a number of both childhood and adult learning theories—especially including Mezirow’s Transformative Learning and its dialogue circles—might likely prove, under study, to explain and positively inform the process and evolution of my own P4C-based learning model that necessarily spanned the entire age range from four in kindergarten students through adulthood for their teachers and parents. Use of philosophical Socratic dialogue—not historical philosophy, per se—to explore and evaluate alternative actions and concepts between both children and adults would be innovative in light of the fact that, until very recently, it was unimagined, even in theory, that children could think abstractly let alone compare and balance philosophical concepts. I wondered if was possible that positive results accrued from my planned AR study along with further research like it in P4C might reciprocally influence current childhood and adult learning theories.

In the United States while the very first of steps in implementation of my P4Cgrounded Action Research study—including first meetings with parents having been initiated in participating school sites and were in progress—an unforeseen Pandemic caused by widespread and rapidly proliferating infection with the SARS-CoV-2 virus and consequent Covid-19 disease rapidly caused cascading worldwide suspension of in-person education of children in classrooms. Where technologically possible, such face-to-face teaching and learning was soon largely

replaced by remote, electronically enabled, “distance learning” of children in their family homes—learning that was frequently facilitated by one or both parents.

This unexpected turn of events, of course, fully negated the possibility of executing planned in-person action-research study of my model.

Factors Influencing Conduct of an Alternate Research Method

Significant parental participation in their children’s education inevitably caused a shift in the previous strong focus on its sole conduct by teachers in schools with only limited or absent parent-teacher engagement in the education of their school-age children. The fact that distance learning necessitated—essentially *forced*—parents to take on the role of co-teaching from home, and consequent difficulties in this transition, also highlighted the great disparity that previously had widely obtained in the parent-school relationship (sometimes exacerbated by outright parent-teacher hostility) that had precluded meaningful parent-teacher-school collaboration, a process that, as noted above had been shown to work toward the best interest of all the participating parties, particularly the students (Weiss et al., 2002).

After consideration and deliberation with my sponsor and principal advisor, all the conditions and barriers described above, argued for conduct of a comparative survey among parents of five different nationalities—Greek, Spanish, Costa Rican, Italian and American—for the purpose of identifying and elucidating the potential *readiness* of parents across national cultures to participate in a mutually trusting relationship with teachers and engage in the collaborative practice of P4C entailed by my model.

Personally selected non-random groups of parents in the five countries listed above were asked via the survey that was distributed via email and social media to share insights on their relationship with their children as well as on a number of factors concerning their family

relationship with their child/ren's school they considered wanting or positive both before and during the Pandemic. The survey questions were constructed in a way that I hoped would elicit answers that would be relevant to improving parents' relationship with their child(ren), his/her/their teacher, and the school in a post-Covid world. Such improvement, if needed—or lack of it—would be expected to have an impact on the future implementation and success of my P4C-based model dependent on implementing tripartite parent-teacher-child engagement in a teacher-facilitated Community of Philosophical Inquiry engaged in development of reasoning-skills-enhancing reflective dialogue.

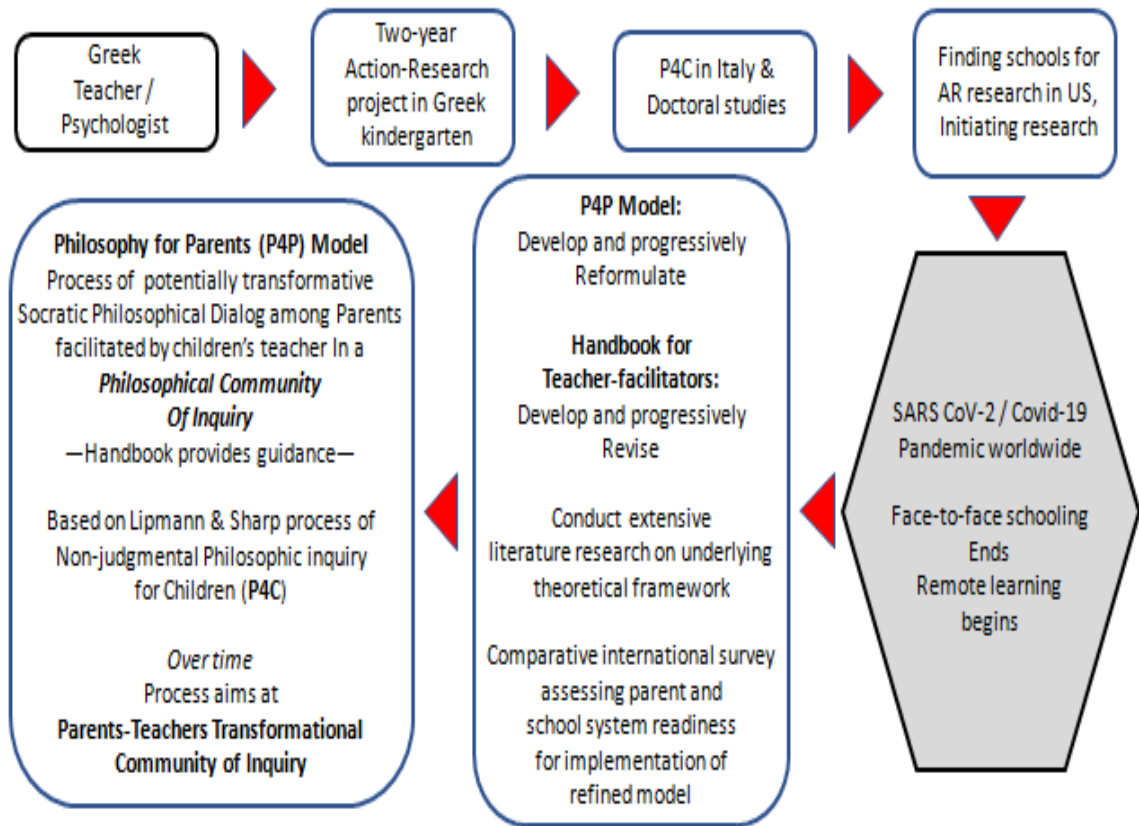
The sum effect of the history briefly articulated above was necessary conversion of this thesis and study of an in-person *action-research study* testing the efficacy of my refined practice model to a *conceptual study* of my model attended by a model refined by extensive further research into its theoretic substrate—and then augmented by a complementary international comparative survey that explores some of these key ideas that, in particular, have to do with parents' readiness for actual implementation and their views around engagement and their relationship with the school.

The thesis still involves the basis of insights from an action research, study, significantly augmented by extensive exploration and adaptation from its potential theoretical base where it is seen that, even though it was only in one place, it was one that the researcher was familiar with, and so there were reasons to believe its future success elsewhere might be the case.

The adult learning theory that seemed to promise an important contribution to model refinement was Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning, particularly including its discourse circles that substantially mirror the concept and execution of P4C for adults and as used in the active class in my 2019 study.

Further, I found Marsick and Watkins model of organizational learning, embodied in their “Learning Organization” also potentially relevant to the task of building a unified community of Parents, Teachers, Children, and School-as-a-whole that must co-operate and learn together.

Figure 1. Schematic overview of the development of the model and research encompassed by this thesis.



Overview of the Problem Addressed

This chapter is a brief introduction to the study whereas in the chapters that follow, both theoretical framework, research and the proposed model will be discussed in detail. As noted in the process overview, this study, was originally conceived, as a face-to-face engagement employing an action-research (AR) methodology to further develop and refine an innovative model of teaching practice for kindergarten through high school that would bridge a now widely recognized gap in communication and cooperation between parents and teachers and convert the school as a group of people—teachers, parents, and children—into a well-bonded community that is actively engaged via “philosophic” Socratic dialogue with problematic questions in their own and mutual frames of reference. An ancillary purpose was development of a Teachers Handbook for Transformational Parenting as a tool that would assist teachers in leading this practice. As will be discussed later, the innovative aspect of the referenced model would be at least tangential direct parent involvement in the curriculum.

Importantly, as previously stated, just as the planned action research program began, the intervention of a worldwide pandemic of Covid-19 rapidly led to the foreclosure of all classroom teaching in schools across the world preempting any possibility of the planned AR engagement and a supplementary international survey of parents in Greece, Italy, Costa Rica, Spain, and the United States was conducted to assess the readiness of parents and schools in these countries for implementation of the model as planned.

The survey methodology, results, and conclusions will be treated in later chapters. Here I will present the details concerning the planned study that grew out of a two-year Action research project conducted in a Greek Kindergarten, results of which were published in 2019 (Papathanasiou, 2019).

Context & Background

Value of Parent Involvement

International research (Epstein, 1985, Henderson, 1987) has shown how reinforced parent's collaboration with the school community—exclusive of any significant involvement with the curriculum—seems to have positive effects in their children's academic success (Aronson, 1996), and improves attitude and school performance (Bradley, Caldwell & Rock, 1988). The research agenda shows that parents understand more clearly how to enhance the educational experience of their children through cooperation processes within the school community and offers different models of intervention.

One of the most well-known, and also promising, interventions on a world-wide scale has been Epstein's framework that defines 6 types of Parents' involvement (Epstein, 1982, 1987), that consists of: guidance/training of parents, communication and information about the educational program, voluntary participation of parents in activities of the school, support of children's learning at home, participation in decision-making and cooperation with local community institutions aiming at the support of school programs (Keyes, 2002). This particular cooperation model has proved to be effective in students' achievement (Epstein et al., 2002, Fan & Chen, 2001), attendance (Fan & Chen, 2001), and emotional well-being (Epstein, 2005) and has been used by the US National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) to provide standards for parent/teacher involvement programs (National PTA, 1997).

Problem Statement

This dissertation is founded on the great need to bridge the gap on parents' involvement in kindergarten, grade, and high schools, and strengthen the school-family relationship with a

new, innovative model adapted to the results of research in this field some of which is overviewed just above.

Recapping the problem–solution analysis at the beginning of this chapter, this study was directed toward developing and refining an innovative model of teaching practice for kindergarten through high school that would bridge a now widely recognized gap in communication and cooperation between parents and teachers and convert all people in the into a well-bonded community. One that is actively engaged via “philosophic” Socratic dialogue with problematic questions in their own and mutual frames of reference. And one in which parents will have direct involvement with their children’s curriculum.

While the educational environment struggles to bridge the gaps that the drastic changes in social, racial, environmental, and technological fields are bringing inside classrooms it is mostly the leadership’s duty to embrace new pedagogical models and policies based on decades of research that are identifying parents as the best partners for educators and one with substantial benefits accruing at a minimal cost if their participation is well planned.

It is the writer’s fervent hope that while negotiating the desired relational culture within the school community, all actors will realize that their individual concerns, not just those that are communitarian, will be important for society at large. Meaningful parent-teacher partnerships might help all actors think deeply, exchange ideas, argue with respect to their own and others’ voices and build relevant capacities such as active listening, reflecting and critical thinking to manage the complexity of modern pedagogy together as allies on a team.

There is, however, additional knowledge that is required for this partnership to succeed while all actors are building up their skills. Parents would need to elaborate and liberate their knowledge in their own distinctive role in education, administration, and parenting. In parallel,

teachers would need to transform their interaction with their students' families and, as much as possible, dissipate any mistrust and misunderstanding which will be replaced, for all by the sense of mutual knowing, caring, and respect (Mapp, 2002).

Considering all the complex and confusing technologic and pedagogic changes occurring today, as Epstein (2005) comments, teachers should not be left alone to figure out on their own what works best for their students even though they tend to have the best ideas whilst fighting daily in the battlefield where they are commissioned to challenge, enhance, prepare, influence, and extend theirs and their students' knowledge and capacities in any possible way. In addition to the ongoing racial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and social changes in school populations, Epstein (2005) calls for preservice and in-service training for teachers and school administrators aiming to a stronger conceptual understanding for the need of professional development around family, school, and community partnerships.

High standards of school improvement require the collective action of educational leadership and policymakers who are eager to prepare teachers for productive change—a change that might well embrace substantial teacher preparation on innovative strategies in family involvement beyond the traditional approaches which have emphasized a more individualistic and passive role of the parent in the parents-school partnership (Shirley, 1997) and invite parents to actively engage in a wider and more inclusive school community. Such a change could gradually enhance an internal transformation in people's and/or community's core-beliefs, perceptions, expectations, and actions if their social interactions within the school community lead to connecting the individuals' experiences and knowledge that can result in reconstruction or amplification of the sense of community. More profound and sustainable change occurs by creating new ways for people as individuals and in communities and institutions to think and act

collaboratively (Waren & Mapp, 2011). To achieve such a transformation, teachers would need adequate support from new policies and training on how to re-frame, mentor and intentionally invite and activate a whole community to investigate and improve, advocate for the educational system.

After identifying and analyzing the aforementioned gap between parents and teachers, and the benefits of bridging this gap, it then turns to describe and analyze the theoretical grounding framework for the suggested innovative model, which aims to provoke the necessary changes in perceptions and core beliefs of the school community, based on building parents' communities of inquiry that critically reflect and discuss their personal and collective family concerns.

Scope and Aims of the Study

The differentiated model of parents–school collaboration, dialogue and philosophical inquiry that is being exploited in this dissertation constitutes a means for shaping an appropriate family environment to have a positive effect on the social and emotional maturation of the children, while also amplifying their academic performance. The main emphasis of the types of collaboration employed is on the development of reasoning, reflection, philosophical search, in the sense of a revival of grassroots philosophy outside of Academia (Lipman, 1991). According to Lipman's model (2003), a story embedded with potentially problematic concepts is read, aimed at provoking philosophical questions from the children that can be explored dialogically.

Out of this simple actionable framework, the specific study aims to build an effective educational tool, specifically tailored to reach the above-mentioned goals through the use of Lipman's Community of Philosophical Inquiry model (CPI) which is at the core of the Philosophy for Children program (P4C) (Lipman, 1982). The pedagogical framework of P4C

determines a way, children can learn how to think, analyze, and argue from an early age, before, otherwise, their inherent ability to think abstractly is lost. Their abstract thinking brings them to “philosophy,” familiarizes them with discussion, critical thinking, and their "reasoning" skills, it leads them closer to the Socrates Dialogue (Lipman & Sharp, 1994). In addition, as it has been pointed out by Lipman himself (2003), P4C is characterized by reflective, deliberative, communicative, and dialogic actions, which concludes in both reinforcing individual judgment and meanwhile solidifying the community. Specifically, in my *Philosophy for Parents (P4P)* model, parents, as individuals who are diverse (i.e., in ideas, beliefs, socio-economic backgrounds) are given the chance to voice their ideas in a warm, democratic, empathic, and respectful manner and co-construct a community that promotes trust and well-being, while building a Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) (Lipman, 2009).

In simplest “schematic” implementation, the type of CPI that might obtain in to this study would involve free and open dialogic discussion between almost any possible grouping of parents, and teacher-facilitators, prompted by anyone’s question, where judgment of “right” or “wrong” is suspended to the point of irrelevance, where there are no a priori “given” answers ever offered such that one person’s question is quite likely to be “answered” (i.e., responded to) by *another* person’s question. In Lipman’s construct, the search is for *meaning*, *not* for some abstract concept of “truth.” And, importantly, as such, it can only productively occur in *community* where individuals’ meanings can be compared with those of others as well as with one that might be seen by many to represent that of the group, or even elements or all of society at large. The search may well entail issues of ethics since, on an adult plane at least, just as was the case with “truth,” the search is not for an abstract *meaning* of life, but rather for the personal or collective meaning of a *good* (productive and harmonious) life.

The Key prompt for the P4P engagements conducted for two years studied via AR earlier, comprises, a story-based reflective inquiry that focuses, initially, on exposing an issue, both posed and analyzed in simple child-accessible words, that is susceptible to “philosophic” Socratic dialogic analysis

As Niels (2009) asserts in his article “*we know that the act of storytelling evokes deep listening and deep feeling*”, accordingly, problematizing issues for parents in the same way as with the children, through narratives, storytelling, and art, is a strategy that can stimulate philosophical quests initially, but then validate through reflection and discourse their surfacing of problematic assumptions (Mezirow, 1991, p. 35). This course can then lead them towards and into the acquisition of a habitual reflective pattern that, in turn, can sustain learning and their engagement into personal and family as well as educational issues.

Over time, it can transform an institution, the school into a well-bonded community that is actively engaged on individual and systemic problematic frames of reference (Mezirow, 2000). Hence the self-directed community that arises, continually encourages discussion, reflection, and empathy among all school participants: teachers parents, and their children.

The nature of the Socratic dialogue sponsored by Lipman’s P4C takes us back to the original meaning of the word philosophy that “comes from the Greek roots philo- meaning "love" and -sophia, or "wisdom." When someone studies philosophy they want to understand how and why people do certain things and how to live a good life. As a noun, philosophy entails the rational investigation of questions about existence and knowledge and ethics (Vocabulary.com, 2021)

In that context, children have been reported asking questions demonstrating sophistication and a sometimes startling degree of abstraction. A few examples excerpted from the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

“Philosopher Gareth Matthews . . . argues at length that Piaget failed to see the philosophical thinking manifest in the very children he studied. Matthews (1980) provides a number of delightful examples of very young children’s philosophical puzzlement. For example:

- TIM (about six years), while busily engaged in licking a pot, asked, “Papa, how can we be sure that everything is not a dream?” (p. 1)
- JORDAN (five years), going to bed at eight one evening, asked, “If I go to bed at eight and get up at seven in the morning, how do I really know that the little hand of the clock has gone around only once? Do I have to stay up all night to watch it? If I look away even for a short time, maybe the small hand will go around twice.” (p. 3)
- JOHN EDGAR (four years), who had seen airplanes take off, rise, and gradually disappear into the distance, took his first plane ride. When the plane stopped ascending and the seat-belt sign went out, John Edgar turned to his father and said in a rather relieved, but still puzzled, tone of voice, “Things don’t really get smaller up here.” (p. 4)

Not infrequently children’s questions touch on ethics. Here, in particular is another one provided by Matthews that demonstrates rather complex, philosophical thinking.

Matthews (1984) provides illustrations of this, too. Meeting with a group of 8-11 year olds, he used the following example to develop a story for discussion:

- Ian (six-year-old) found to his chagrin that the three children of his parents’ friends monopolized the television; they kept him from watching his favorite program.

“Mother,” he asked in frustration, “why is it better for three children to be selfish than one?” (Matthews 1984, 92–3)

The main aim of the study is to use the model of the CPI that “fosters critical *self-reflection* and help learners plan to take action” as in Transformative Learning theory (Mezirow, 1990, p.357), which will be defined in detail in the fourth chapter.

Brief Aside on “Transformative Learning,” “Transformation Theory” and Organizational Transformation

Even though Transformative Learning and “transformation” will be elucidated in Chapter four, they have been referenced in the preface and here. For the reader’s convenience and understanding I include two of Mezirow’s most recent definitions. And, since the dialogic learning inherent in P4C has clear implications for entire organizations including schools as well as individuals and groups I include a brief definition of the “Learning Organization” as well.

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true [Sic] or justified to guide action (Mezirow, 2012, p. 76). Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions and making an action decision based on the resulting insight.

Transformation theory. Transformation theory’s focus is on how we learn to negotiate and act on our own purposes, values, feelings, and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others—to gain greater control over our lives as socially

responsible, clear-thinking decision makers. As such, it has particular relevance for learning in contemporary societies that share democratic values (Mezirow, J. , 2012).

Learning Organization. One that is characterized by continuous learning for continuous improvement, and by the capacity to transform itself (Marsick, V. J. & Watkins, K. E. (1999).

Community of Philosophical Inquiry and Philosophy for Children (P4C) Continued

With my new model, teachers can build a community of parents that better understands their children's, their own and the teachers' needs, unravel the intersecting roles of parents and teachers, and therefore better communicate and reflect on complex educational issues. In this community of parents, learners can critically examine their parental and living patterns, reassess their personal assumptions and change their problematic actions. Reflecting, discussing, and even learning does not lead inevitably to transformative learning, which according to Mezirow is a difficult intentional process, with many stages that the individual must go through to be able to transition to assumption-liberated knowledge (Cranton 2016, p. 2).

In the larger context, it seems likely there is a great need at the same time to integrate emotion and feelings with the critical thinking and reflection to solidify parents' engagement within the school community. Engagement in strong bonded community might possibly result in a transformational effect—one that might enhance realization Lipman's intention that the dialogue constituting P4C should occur under and further foster democracy. Habermas, a critical theorist of democracy, might seem to confirm this in asserting that a society can be judged as more or less democratic according to the ways adults learn how to decide on matters that greatly affect their lives and suggests that engaging in a free and least restricted communication possible within learning can lead to democracy (Habermas, 1978).

To create a community where people feel truly free to exchange honest feedback on theirs and their peers' experiences and where all feel emotionally capable of change, they need to feel assimilated in a trusting, respectful and safe environment. We usually encounter such feelings within a safe relationship. Taylor, too (2002) argues the importance of relationships in the process of transformation.

Therefore, this research was organized to investigate the following research questions with an online survey:

- What are the main/principal elements/features that constitute a successful parent-school relationship and partnership?
- What is the role of relationships and partnerships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children?
- How did Online/Remote Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic influence parents-school relationship and partnership?
- Do the parents need to participate more actively within the school community? Is there an emergent need for a parents' community where they will get the support, guidance, and the chance to learn new communicative paths?

A complementary research question was: "When parents actively participate as adult learners in a Community of Inquiry within the school, may they experience T.L. in parenting?" that is linked to the literature review in chapters 2, 3 and 4, was examined and led to the suggested model.

Survey

The Questionnaire was built based on the modified research questions to provide insight into the researcher's scope and aims that were previously described and was disseminated online. The survey respondents were randomly recruited through a Snowball process, starting from friends in the social media who further distributed it to their own acquaintances. They were all parents of children in primary and secondary education and came from five different countries (US, Italy, Greece, Spain, Costa Rica). Full details on the Research Methods are presented in Chapter Five, below.

Researcher's Perspectives and Assumptions

In considering the present study I have held the following assumptions:

1. Significant actors for students' academic achievement are both parents, and teachers.
2. No drastic changes are required in the educational system of a country when the proposed model is applied.
3. No costs and changes in the responsibilities and duties of the actors are required.
4. Parents' willingness to engage and participate in their child's education.
5. There is a need for an effective way to strengthen, cultivate, and foster democratic processes in terms of differences in social structure, race, and culture.
6. Promote school as a learning center, the cradle of education for the community.
7. Significance of family's participation in the educational process.
8. Significance of the teachers' role in strengthening the school-family relationship.

9. The training of teachers in matters concerning the creation of conditions for the strengthening of the school's relationship with the parents/ guardians of their students.
10. Knowledge is a social good and must be offered and transmitted to all people regardless of socio-economic background, age, culture, race (Dewey, 1929).

Rationale and Significance

The present dissertation is the result of synthesized information coming from research reports, peer reviewed articles, expert opinions, conferences papers and proceedings, programs descriptions, and guidelines for setting up programs in addition to results of the controlled AR study of direct parent involvement in the study direct parental curricular and other involvement in a P4C program in two Greek Kindergarten classes conducted—with use of selected stories—across two years that was reported in Papathanassiou (2019).

The value of the dissertation is briefly described at the end of this introductory chapter. In addition, some key words and phrases are mentioned, which are discussed extensively in the following chapters. As it is pointed out in the next chapter, a vast amount of research in recent decades is focused on exploring the value of parents and their relationship with the school and their pedagogical role in their children's academic success and lately also in their well-being. By recognizing and confirming the importance of the school-family relationship the field of research in creating models and tools that can enhance this relationship with multiple positive outcomes opens. Most research and policies concerning parents-school participation, even at the national level have taken place in the US. In Europe, the investigation and implementation of useful models through policies in education is still at a preliminary stage, according to the European Commission (2020). This study could be a small step to bridge this gap. That is the ambition for the proposed model suggesting the formation of parents' communities of inquiry. Communities

that are organized by schoolteachers who will thereby enhance the significant relationship with their students' families by facilitating parents' learning. The important tool of dialogue and constructive discussion is used to welcome and extend schools' work with the parents as partners in their children's pedagogy in order to build a strong academic foundation.

Summary

The re-formed “phenomena” on which the research in this inter-covid thesis focuses, then on what the literature and the results of the survey say about the reformulated Research

Questions:

Research Questions Pertaining to the Canceled AR Study

In what way does the literature provide conceptual grounding for answers to the following four questions:

1. What would be the more effective model of a coherent parents–teachers–children–school community and parental involvement within it?
2. What are the main/principal elements/features that constitute a successful parent-school relationship and partnership?
3. What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children?
4. “When parents actively participate as adult learners in a Community of Inquiry within the school, may they experience T.L. in parenting?”

Survey Research Questions

Based on the objectives set by the present study and the theoretical framework explored in the previous chapters, the following general research questions are formulated:

1. What are the main/principal elements/features that constitute a successful parent-school relationship and partnership?
2. What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children?
3. How did Online/Remote Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic influence parents-school relationship?
4. Do the parents want to participate more actively within the school community? Is there an emergent need for a parents' community where they will get the support, guidance, and the chance to learn new communicative paths?

Capitolo 1: Panoramica, Scopo e Processo

A causa dell'intervento improvviso del Covid-19 e della conseguente interruzione della normale scolarizzazione per i bambini di tutto il mondo, i risultati effettivi riportati in questa tesi sono necessariamente più limitati di quelli originariamente intesi nel loro potere di affrontare e supportare l'ipotesi che ne è il presupposto fondamentale, cioè che le condizioni moderne e la ricerca recente sostengono fortemente una collaborazione lavorativa tra genitori e insegnanti per un insegnamento/educazione ottimale dei bambini in crescita oggi.

Questa tesi presenta risultati che sono accessori, ma servono ad estendere le informazioni, pertinenti all'intento originale su larga scala di questo studio. Si trattava di indagare e confrontare l'effetto del dialogo e della riflessione critica in gruppi di genitori, facilitati dai docenti, con l'obiettivo di creare una "Comunità di indagine filosofica" collettiva scuola-famiglia. Inoltre, questa ricerca ha cercato di sfruttare i vantaggi, ben supportati, del coinvolgimento dei genitori nel migliorare il rendimento scolastico degli studenti e il benessere di tutti i partecipanti alla comunità scolastica (studenti, insegnanti, genitori e amministratori).

Come fondamento delle mie ipotesi, credo che benefici unici possano derivare dalla partecipazione attiva dei genitori e degli insegnanti dei loro figli in un quadro di apprendimento consapevole degli adulti all'interno della comunità scolastica, come delineato da Langer (1997, p.4), che implichi una consapevolezza e un riconoscimento impliciti della potenziale validità di più di una prospettiva, l'apertura all'intuizione emergente e il pensiero riflessivo che, insieme, possono esercitare un effetto trasformativo.

L'idea di questo studio è emersa attraverso la mia lunga esperienza di insegnamento nell'istruzione primaria e nella consulenza familiare e dal potere positivo che ho osservato come insegnante e ricercatore in una partnership genitore-insegnante forte e facilitata come fattore che promuove i migliori interessi di tutte le parti, compresi gli studenti. Molto spesso, oggi, questa partnership sembra incontrare una moltitudine di disturbi che la ricerca attribuisce alla mancanza di un rapporto di collaborazione scuola-famiglia di alta qualità e di fiducia e che vengono favoriti, come trova Kluczniok (2013) nella sua recensione, da una persistente alienazione tra gli insegnanti e genitori, che promuove ambienti di apprendimento scolastico e di apprendimento a casa non coordinati e talvolta contraddittori. È stato dimostrato che questa frattura comporta importanti impatti negativi sociali e di apprendimento per i bambini coinvolti.

Questo divario famiglia-scuola che è stato ampiamente esplorato, soprattutto negli Stati Uniti, ha suscitato la curiosità dei ricercatori e ha stimolato un intenso studio delle strategie e dei modelli di coinvolgimento tra genitori e scuola che saranno descritti nei capitoli successivi. Per approfondire il nesso di causalità e il possibile miglioramento dell'alienazione genitore-insegnante, con la piena collaborazione degli insegnanti e dei genitori delle classi scolastiche, ho svolto uno studio esplorativo di due anni nelle aule di un asilo di Atene, utilizzando una metodologia di ricerca-azione.

La mia ricerca si è concentrata sulla creazione di un modello innovativo di pratica, volto a promuovere il dialogo democratico liberatorio tra genitori e insegnanti, facilitato dall'insegnante, basato sui principi fondamentali del dialogo socratico che il professore di filosofia della Columbia University, Matthew Lipman, ha incorporato in un modello educativo per gli insegnanti e i loro studenti, dove l'insegnante facilita la formazione e promuove una Comunità di Indagine Filosofica tra gli studenti dall'età prescolare all'adolescenza. La ricerca (Lipman et al., 1980, p.15, Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011) ha mostrato che l'uso di questo modello, chiamato Philosophy for Children, o P4C, migliora e coltiva le abilità innate dei bambini nel mettere in discussione, riflettere e pensare in modo critico se viene data loro la possibilità e gli opportuni suggerimenti a scuola e a casa.

Nel mio intervento di ricerca-azione con questo modello di pratica, ho sviluppato e poi implementato uno strumento educativo che si sperava altri insegnanti potessero facilmente adottare per aiutarli in un processo simile. Come prototipo, ho selezionato per la modifica e la valutazione uno strumento con cui gli insegnanti avessero già familiarità in modo che, se si fosse dimostrato efficace, sarebbero state necessarie poche ore di sviluppo professionale per la sua adozione. Questo strumento è già ampiamente utilizzato nell'istruzione prescolare in Grecia per aiutare gli insegnanti a sviluppare il pensiero critico, le capacità di risoluzione dei problemi e la discussione ragionata di diverse prospettive tra gli studenti della scuola materna. In termini generali, non è altro che un manuale contenente storie e fiabe che costituiscono un naturale innesco in classe per il dialogo, facilitato dall'insegnante, con e tra studenti di questa età, insieme a suggerimenti integrati, per una discussione di gruppo tra insegnanti e studenti con molte domande, risposte e idee che sono legate alle storie individualmente e collettivamente.

Il mio modello, basato su quello di Lipman, è stato implementato in due anni in due classi di scuola materna greca, in una scuola che stava già praticando regolarmente il processo dialogico socratico P4C di base. Tuttavia, l'implementazione del mio modello utilizzava una differenza importantissima da quella di base di Lipman. Poiché ero subito pienamente consapevole del noto deficit generale nel coinvolgimento dei genitori nelle scuole dei loro figli e credevo fermamente nei risultati riportati da Epstein, secondo cui quando i genitori erano coinvolti in modo significativo nella partecipazione "volontaria" a molte attività scolastiche - extracurricolari - sono stati raggiunti risultati molto buoni per gli studenti così come per altri aspetti della vita scolastica, ho scelto di implementare una strategia biforcata in base alla quale una delle due classi ha continuato per i due anni ad utilizzare il processo di dialogo P4C tra insegnanti e studenti, che si verificava abitualmente nella scuola, come un gruppo di controllo; nella seconda, in cui sono stata insegnante e facilitatore, ho personalmente cercato e ottenuto un forte coinvolgimento entusiasta dei genitori, non solo in questioni volontarie extracurricolari (come aveva fatto Epstein), ma anche nel dialogo socratico P4C tra i genitori della classe e me come insegnante, così come tra di loro, riguardo alle stesse questioni introdotte dalla storia che i loro figli stavano esplorando nel curriculum. In queste discussioni, sono state esaminate anche le questioni relative a una buona genitorialità e alla sponsorizzazione di interazioni per lo più linguistiche e giocose con i propri figli. Queste sessioni si svolgevano all'incirca una volta al mese e sono state accolte con entusiasmo dai genitori, tanto è vero che un genitore nella classe di controllo ha sentito parlare di loro in una conversazione tra i genitori della scuola e mi ha implorato, e alla fine è riuscito a convincermi, di consentire loro di unirsi al gruppo dei genitori attivi!

Ciò che è stato particolarmente propizio per il successo di questa iniziativa è stato che, in molti casi, le questioni etiche e altre questioni trattate dialogicamente erano le stesse e venivano introdotte in discussione attraverso le stesse fiabe e storie che le introdussero al dialogo tra i bambini. Ancora più positivo per le relazioni famiglia-bambino(i)-scuola è stato il fatto che i bambini sono stati messi al corrente di questo, in modo che i bambini chiedessero informazioni ai loro genitori e discutessero con loro gli stessi problemi e contesti quando tornavano a casa da scuola!

Tutto questo e il suo esito positivo sono stati presentati in un documento accademico del 2019. Sebbene lo studio non fosse quantitativo, i risultati aneddotici per la classe attiva sono stati molto positivi. Ecco solo un elenco di alcuni di essi; le spiegazioni esplicative sono fornite all'interno del documento stesso: (Papathanasiou, 2019)

(Tutti i seguenti risultati sono stati basati su valutazioni continue di tutte le parti coinvolte. In particolare, i risultati del Gruppo Sperimentale si sono sviluppati in misura notevolmente maggiore rispetto ai Gruppi di Controllo. La comparsa di alcuni atteggiamenti nel controllo o non era evidente o ha avuto una progressione molto bassa rispetto agli anni precedenti.)

- Consentire ai genitori di sviluppare strategie genitoriali efficaci.
- Coltivare il clima di gruppo per gli studenti giovani e adulti.
- Integrazione dei genitori nel processo educativo all'interno e all'esterno della scuola.
- Sviluppare relazioni di fiducia nel Triangolo Educativo: Scuola-Bambino-Genitore.
- Sviluppare un clima positivo nella scuola per tutte le parti partecipanti.
- I genitori hanno aiutato la promozione dei loro figli a livello scolastico dopo aver assimilato come migliorare e collegare l'apprendimento nell'ambiente familiare con l'apprendimento a scuola.
- I genitori rispondevano con grande entusiasmo alla scuola ogni volta che si cercava di collaborare.
- I rapporti tra i genitori che hanno partecipato sono continuati negli anni successivi.
- I genitori che hanno partecipato cercavano collaborazione e sono rimasti attaccati all'asilo durante l'anno successivo, indipendentemente dal fatto che i loro figli fossero alle scuole elementari.

Dopo due anni di ricerca-azione basata sul mio modello e sui risultati (sopra), che suggeriscono esiti fortemente positivi sia per la comunità scolastica che per gli individui, la ricerca esplorativa si è spostata in Italia e si è evoluta in una proposta di dottorato di ricerca. Lì, è stata ospitata e coadiuvata dalla Prof.ssa Maura Striano, già Coordinatrice del Dottorato in Scienze Psicologiche e dell'Educazione, e Direttore del corso di formazione in Filosofia per

l'infanzia e del Centro SINAPSI dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II. La professoressa Striano, un riconosciuto esperto di filosofia dell'educazione degli adulti con focus particolare su John Dewey, ha sponsorizzato e supervisionato la mia ricerca lì in quanto dottoranda.

Vedendo che la maggior parte della ricerca, delle innovazioni e delle politiche sul partenariato tra scuola e genitori erano radicate negli Stati Uniti, ho deciso di intraprendere una ricerca più approfondita per sviluppare, valutare e convalidare il mio modello innovativo con una ricerca comparativa più completa, che forse avrebbe consentito la generalizzazione per un molto selezionato segmento della popolazione di un modello che miri a costruire e/o rafforzare le relazioni genitori-scuola in una Comunità forte, con insegnanti e famiglie nell'epicentro, e ad influenzare positivamente il successo scolastico e il benessere degli studenti e delle loro scuole.

L'intenzione di fare ricerca comparativa mi ha portato negli Stati Uniti dove, inizialmente, come Visiting Research Scholar presso l'Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children della Montclair State University, nel New Jersey, e con il pieno sostegno dei miei mentori, i professori Maughn Gregory e David Kennedy, ho acquisito conoscenza ed esperienza su come condurre ricerche nei siti scolastici. Subito dopo, ho concluso perfezionando il mio modello fino a un punto che sarà discusso nel prossimo capitolo e, allo stesso tempo, ho costruito il mio Manuale complementare per la genitorialità trasformativa per insegnanti, che include principalmente le mie storie che potrebbero innescare dialoghi filosofici tra i genitori e gli insegnanti/facilitatori, nonché con i loro figli come studenti.

Oltre a praticare P4C come processo centrale nel mio modello, ho cercato di esplorare ulteriormente le basi teoriche dell'esperienza di apprendimento dei genitori e di altri partecipanti al mio precedente studio di ricerca-azione in Grecia che sembrava, metaforicamente, aver trasformato i partecipanti da bruchi in farfalle.

In qualità di Visiting Doctoral Student presso il Teachers College della Columbia University, New York, ho anche studiato sotto la guida della mia relattrice, la professoressa Victoria Marsick, direttrice accademica dell'Adult Learning and Leadership Program ed esperta ampiamente riconosciuta anche nell'apprendimento organizzativo, informale e incidentale come teoria e pratica dell'apprendimento trasformativo, una disciplina nata e sviluppata dal suo mentore di lunga data, Jack Mezirow.

Col tempo, studiando, ho percepito che un certo numero di teorie sull'apprendimento dell'infanzia e dell'adulto, tra cui in particolare l'apprendimento trasformativo di Mezirow e i suoi circoli di dialogo, potrebbero probabilmente, allo studio, spiegare e informare positivamente il processo e l'evoluzione del mio apprendimento basato sul modello P4C, che necessariamente abbracciava l'intera fascia di età dagli studenti di quattro anni della scuola materna fino all'età adulta, per i loro insegnanti e genitori. L'uso del dialogo filosofico socratico - non della filosofia storica di per sé - per esplorare e valutare azioni e concetti alternativi tra i bambini e gli adulti è innovativo alla luce del fatto che, fino a tempi molto recenti, era impensabile, anche in teoria, che i bambini potessero pensare in modo astratto, figurarsi confrontare e bilanciare concetti filosofici. Mi chiedo se fosse possibile che i risultati positivi ottenuti dal mio studio con ricerca-azione, pianificato insieme a ulteriori ricerche come quella in P4C, potessero influenzare reciprocamente le attuali teorie sull'apprendimento nell'infanzia e degli adulti.

Negli Stati Uniti, mentre era in corso il primo dei primi passi nell'attuazione del mio studio P4C con ricerca-azione grounded, compresi i primi incontri con i genitori che erano stati avviati nei siti scolastici partecipanti ed erano in corso, una pandemia imprevista, causata da un'infezione da SARS-CoV-2 diffusa e in rapida proliferazione, e la conseguente malattia di Covid-19 hanno rapidamente causato la sospensione a cascata in tutto il mondo dell'istruzione in presenza, con i bambini nelle classi. Laddove tecnologicamente possibile, tale insegnamento e apprendimento faccia a faccia è stato presto ampiamente sostituito dall'"apprendimento a distanza", abilitato elettronicamente, con i bambini nelle loro case, apprendimento che è stato spesso facilitato da uno o entrambi i genitori.

Questa svolta inaspettata degli eventi, ovviamente, ha completamente negato la possibilità di eseguire lo studio programmato di ricerca-azione sul mio modello educativo in presenza.

Fattori che influenzano l'uso di un metodo di ricerca alternativo

Una significativa partecipazione dei genitori all'istruzione dei propri figli ha inevitabilmente causato uno spostamento della precedente forte ed esclusiva attenzione degli insegnanti alla loro condotta, con un coinvolgimento genitore-insegnante limitato o assente nell'educazione dei figli in età scolare. Il fatto che la didattica a distanza abbia reso necessario per i genitori assumere il ruolo di co-insegnamento da casa, sostanzialmente obbligandoli, e le conseguenti difficoltà in questo passaggio hanno anche evidenziato la grande

disparità che in precedenza si era ampiamente riscontrata nel rapporto genitore-scuola (a volte aggravata da aperta ostilità genitore-insegnante), che aveva precluso una significativa collaborazione genitore-insegnante-scuola, processo che, come notato sopra, aveva dimostrato di essere nell'interesse di tutte le parti coinvolte, in particolare gli studenti (Weiss et al., 2002).

Dopo aver esaminato e valutato con il mio tutor di dottorato, tutte le condizioni e gli ostacoli sopra descritti hanno sostenuto la conduzione di un'indagine comparativa tra genitori di cinque diverse nazionalità - greci, spagnoli, costaricani, italiani e americani - allo scopo di identificare e chiarire, nelle diverse culture, la potenziale disponibilità dei genitori a partecipare a una relazione di fiducia reciproca con gli insegnanti e impegnarsi nella pratica collaborativa di P4C implicata dal mio modello.

A gruppi di genitori non casuali, selezionati personalmente nei cinque paesi sopra elencati, è stato chiesto tramite un sondaggio distribuito via e-mail e social media di condividere approfondimenti sul loro rapporto con i figli e su una serie di fattori riguardanti il rapporto della loro famiglia con la scuola dei loro figli e che consideravano desiderabili o positivi sia prima che durante la Pandemia. Le domande del sondaggio sono state costruite in un modo che speravo potesse ottenere risposte rilevanti per migliorare il rapporto dei genitori con i loro figli, il loro insegnante e la scuola in un mondo post-Covid. Tale miglioramento, se necessario o meno, dovrebbe avere un impatto sull'implementazione futura e sul successo del mio modello basato su P4C, dipendente dall'implementazione del coinvolgimento tripartito genitore-insegnante-figlio in una comunità di indagine filosofica facilitata dall'insegnante impegnata nello sviluppo di un dialogo riflessivo che migliora le capacità di ragionamento.

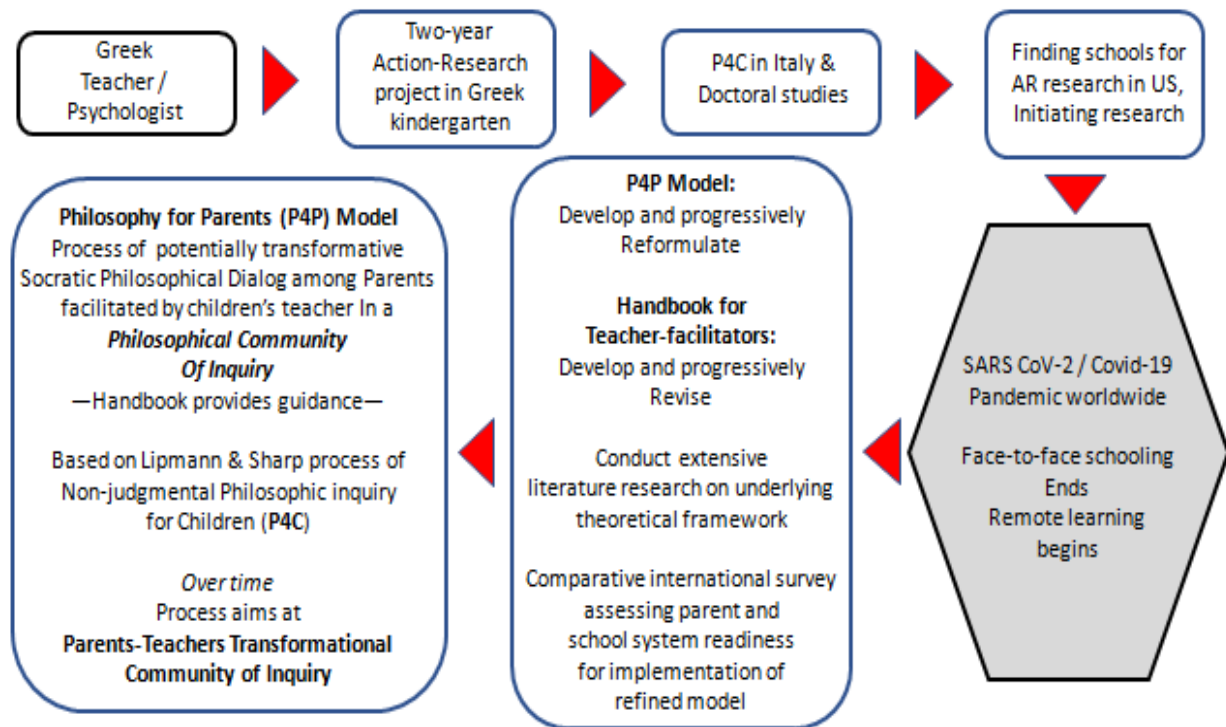
L'effetto totale di quanto brevemente articolato sopra è stata la necessaria conversione di questa tesi e dello studio di ricerca-azione in presenza per testare l'efficacia del mio modello pratico rifinito in uno studio concettuale di tale modello, seguito da un modello affinato da ulteriori ricerche approfondite in merito al suo substrato teorico e poi arricchito da un'indagine comparativa internazionale complementare che esplora alcune di queste idee chiave che, in particolare, hanno a che fare con la disponibilità dei genitori all'effettiva attuazione e con le loro opinioni sul loro coinvolgimento e sul rapporto con la scuola.

La tesi riguarda ancora la base delle intuizioni di una ricerca-azione, studio significativamente aumentato da un'ampia esplorazione e adattamento della sua potenziale base teorica in cui si vede che, anche se era solo in un luogo, era un luogo con cui il ricercatore era familiare, e quindi c'erano ragioni per credere che il suo futuro successo altrove potesse verificarsi.

La teoria dell'apprendimento degli adulti che sembrava promettere un contributo importante al perfezionamento del modello è stata l'apprendimento trasformativo di Jack Mezirow, inclusi in particolare i suoi circoli discorsivi che rispecchiano sostanzialmente il concetto e l'esecuzione di P4C per gli adulti, utilizzati nella classe attiva nel mio studio del 2019.

Inoltre, ho trovato anche il modello di apprendimento organizzativo di Marsick e Watkins, incarnato nella loro "Organizzazione per l'apprendimento", potenzialmente rilevante per il compito di costruire una comunità unificata di genitori, insegnanti, bambini e scuola nel suo insieme che deve cooperare e imparare insieme.

Figura 1. Panoramica schematica dello sviluppo del modello e della ricerca oggetto di questa tesi.



Panoramica del problema affrontato

Questo capitolo è una breve introduzione allo studio, mentre nei capitoli seguenti verranno discussi in dettaglio il quadro teorico, la ricerca e il modello proposto. Come notato nella panoramica del processo, questo studio è stato originariamente concepito come un impegno faccia a faccia che impiega una metodologia di ricerca-azione (AR) per sviluppare ulteriormente e perfezionare un modello innovativo di pratica dell'insegnamento dalla scuola materna alla scuola superiore, che unirebbe un divario ormai ampiamente riconosciuto nella comunicazione e nella cooperazione tra genitori e insegnanti, e convertire la scuola come gruppo di persone - insegnanti, genitori e bambini - in una comunità ben legata che è attivamente impegnata attraverso il dialogo socratico "filosofico" circa questioni problematiche in propri e reciproci quadri di riferimento. Uno scopo accessorio era lo sviluppo di un Manuale dell'insegnante per la genitorialità trasformativa come strumento che avrebbe aiutato gli insegnanti a guidare questa pratica. Come verrà discusso in seguito, l'aspetto innovativo del modello di riferimento è il coinvolgimento diretto, almeno marginale, dei genitori nel curriculum.

È importante sottolineare che, come affermato in precedenza, proprio quando è iniziato il programma di ricerca-azione, l'inizio della pandemia da Covid-19 ha portato rapidamente alla preclusione del l'insegnamento in aula nelle scuole di tutto il mondo, anticipando ogni possibilità del previsto impegno di AR; un questionario internazionale supplementare è stato condotto con genitori in Grecia, Italia, Costa Rica, Spagna e Stati Uniti per valutare la disponibilità dei genitori e delle scuole in questi paesi all'attuazione del modello previsto.

La metodologia del sondaggio, i risultati e le conclusioni saranno trattati nei capitoli successivi. Qui presenterò i dettagli relativi allo studio pianificato. che è nato da un progetto di ricerca-azione della durata di due anni condotto in un asilo greco, i cui risultati sono stati pubblicati nel 2019 (Papathanasiou, 2019).

Contesto e sfondo

Valore del coinvolgimento dei genitori

La ricerca internazionale (Epstein, 1985, Henderson, 1987) ha mostrato come la rafforzata collaborazione dei genitori con la comunità scolastica, al netto di qualsiasi coinvolgimento significativo con il curriculum, sembra di avere effetti positivi sul successo scolastico dei loro figli (Aronson, 1996) e migliora l'atteggiamento e rendimento scolastico (Bradley, Caldwell & Rock, 1988). L'agenda della ricerca mostra che i genitori possono comprendere più chiaramente come migliorare l'esperienza educativa dei propri figli attraverso processi di cooperazione all'interno della comunità scolastica e offre diversi modelli di intervento.

Uno degli interventi più noti, e anche promettenti, sulla scala mondiale è stato il framework di Epstein che definisce sei tipi di coinvolgimento dei genitori (Epstein, 1982, 1987), che consiste in: orientamento/formazione dei genitori, comunicazione e informazioni sul programma educativo, la partecipazione volontaria dei genitori alle attività della scuola, il sostegno all'apprendimento dei bambini a casa, la partecipazione al processo decisionale e la cooperazione con le istituzioni della comunità locale finalizzate al sostegno dei programmi scolastici (Keyes, 2002). Questo particolare modello di cooperazione si è dimostrato efficace nel rendimento degli studenti (Epstein et al., 2002, Fan & Chen, 2001), nella frequenza (Fan & Chen, 2001) e nel benessere emotivo (Epstein, 2005) ed è stato utilizzato dalla National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) degli Stati Uniti per fornire standard per i programmi di coinvolgimento di genitori/insegnanti (National PTA, 1997).

Dichiarazione problema

Questa tesi si fonda sulla grande necessità di colmare il divario sul coinvolgimento dei genitori nelle scuole materne, elementari e superiori, e rafforzare il rapporto scuola-famiglia con un nuovo modello innovativo adatto ai risultati della ricerca in questo campo, alcuni dei quali è visualizzato appena sopra.

Ricapitolando l'analisi problema-soluzione all'inizio di questo capitolo, questo studio è stato diretto allo sviluppo e al perfezionamento di un modello innovativo di pratica didattica per la scuola materna fino alla scuola superiore che avrebbe colmato un divario ormai ampiamente riconosciuto nella comunicazione e nella cooperazione tra genitori e insegnanti e convertito tutte le persone in una comunità ben legata. Uno che è attivamente impegnato attraverso il dialogo socratico "filosofico" con questioni problematiche nei propri e reciproci quadri di riferimento. E uno in cui i genitori avranno un coinvolgimento diretto con il curriculum dei loro figli.

Mentre l'ambiente educativo lotta per colmare le lacune che i drastici cambiamenti in campo sociale, razziale, ambientale e tecnologico stanno portando nelle classi, è principalmente dovere della leadership abbracciare nuovi modelli pedagogici e politiche basate su decenni di ricerca che stanno identificando i genitori come i migliori partner per gli educatori e uno con vantaggi sostanziali che maturano a un costo minimo se la loro partecipazione è ben pianificata.

È la fervida speranza dello scrittore che, mentre negoziano la cultura relazionale desiderata all'interno della comunità scolastica, tutti gli attori si rendano conto che le loro preoccupazioni individuali, non solo quelle comunitarie, saranno importanti per la società in generale. Significative collaborazioni genitori-insegnanti potrebbero aiutare tutti gli attori a pensare in profondità, scambiare idee, discutere rispetto alla propria voce e a quella degli altri e costruire capacità rilevanti come l'ascolto attivo, la riflessione e il pensiero critico per gestire insieme la complessità della pedagogia moderna come alleati su una squadra.

Tuttavia, sono necessarie ulteriori conoscenze affinché questa partnership abbia successo mentre tutti gli attori stanno sviluppando le proprie competenze. I genitori avrebbero bisogno di elaborare e liberare le loro conoscenze nel loro ruolo distintivo nell'istruzione, nell'amministrazione e nella genitorialità. Parallelamente, gli insegnanti dovrebbero trasformare la loro interazione con le famiglie dei loro studenti e, per quanto possibile, dissipare ogni diffidenza e incomprensione che sarà sostituita, per tutti, dal senso di conoscenza, cura e rispetto reciproci (Mapp, 2002).

Considerando tutti i complessi e confusi cambiamenti tecnologici e pedagogici che si verificano oggi, come commenta Epstein (2005), gli insegnanti non dovrebbero essere lasciati soli, e da capire da soli cosa funziona meglio per i loro studenti, anche se tendono ad avere le idee migliori, mentre combattono ogni giorno sul campo di battaglia dove sono incaricati di sfidare, migliorare, preparare, influenzare ed estendere le conoscenze e le capacità loro e dei loro studenti in ogni modo possibile. Oltre ai continui cambiamenti razziali, etnici, linguistici, culturali e sociali nelle popolazioni scolastiche, Epstein (2005) chiede una formazione pre-servizio e in servizio per insegnanti e amministratori scolastici, con l'obiettivo di una più forte comprensione concettuale della necessità di sviluppo professionale intorno collaborazioni familiari, scolastiche e comunitarie.

Standard elevati di miglioramento scolastico richiedono l'azione collettiva della leadership educativa e dei responsabili politici desiderosi di preparare gli insegnanti a un cambiamento produttivo., Un cambiamento che potrebbe abbracciare una preparazione sostanziale degli insegnanti su strategie innovative nel coinvolgimento della famiglia al di là degli approcci tradizionali che hanno enfatizzato un approccio più individualistico e ruolo passivo del genitore nel partenariato genitori-scuola (Shirley, 1997) e invitare i genitori a impegnarsi attivamente in una comunità scolastica più ampia e inclusiva. Tale cambiamento potrebbe aumentare gradualmente una trasformazione interna nelle convinzioni, nelle percezioni, nelle aspettative e nelle azioni delle persone e/o della comunità se le loro interazioni sociali all'interno della comunità scolastica portano a collegare le esperienze e le conoscenze degli individui che possono portare alla ricostruzione o all'amplificazione di il senso di comunità. Un cambiamento più profondo e sostenibile si verifica creando nuovi modi per le persone come individui e nelle comunità e nelle istituzioni di pensare e agire in modo collaborativo (Waren & Mapp, 2011). Per realizzare tale trasformazione, gli insegnanti avrebbero bisogno di un sostegno adeguato da nuove politiche e formazione su come formulare di nuovo, guidare, invitare e attivare intenzionalmente un'intera comunità per indagare, migliorare, e sostenere il sistema educativo.

Dopo aver identificato e analizzato il suddetto divario tra genitori e insegnanti e i vantaggi di colmare questo divario, passa quindi a descrivere e analizzare il quadro teorico di base per il modello innovativo suggerito, che mira a provocare i necessari cambiamenti nelle percezioni e nelle convinzioni fondamentali della comunità scolastica, basata sulla creazione di comunità di indagine dei genitori che riflettono e discutono in modo critico le loro preoccupazioni familiari personali e collettive.

Scopo e obiettivi dello studio

Il modello che differenzia nella collaborazione genitori-scuola, dialogo e indagine filosofica che viene sfruttato in questa dissertazione costituisce un mezzo per plasmare un ambiente familiare appropriato per avere un effetto positivo sulla maturazione sociale ed emotiva dei bambini, amplificando anche il loro rendimento scolastico. L'enfasi principale dei tipi di collaborazione impiegati è sullo sviluppo del ragionamento, della riflessione, della ricerca filosofica, nel senso di una rinascita della filosofia di base al di fuori del mondo accademico (Lipman, 1991). Secondo il modello di Lipman (2003), viene letta una storia incastonata con

concetti potenzialmente problematici, volta a provocare nei bambini domande filosofiche che possono essere esplorate dialogicamente.

Al di fuori di questo semplice quadro attuabile, lo studio specifico mira a costruire uno strumento educativo efficace, specificamente adattato per raggiungere gli obiettivi sopra menzionati attraverso l'uso del modello della Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) di Lipman che è al centro della Filosofia per l'infanzia programma (P4C) (Lipman, 1982). La struttura pedagogica di P4C determina un modo in cui i bambini possono imparare a pensare, analizzare e argomentare fin dalla tenera età, prima che, altrimenti, la loro capacità intrinseca di pensare in modo astratto vada persa. Il loro pensiero astratto li porta alla "filosofia", li familiarizza con la discussione, il pensiero critico e le loro capacità di "ragionamento", li avvicina al Dialogo di Socrate (Lipman & Sharp, 1994). Inoltre, come è stato sottolineato dallo stesso Lipman (2003), P4C è caratterizzato da azioni riflessive, deliberative, comunicative e dialogiche, che si concludono sia nel rafforzare il giudizio individuale sia nel consolidare la comunità. In particolare, nel mio modello Philosophy for Parents (P4P), ai genitori, in quanto individui diversi (ad es. per idee, convinzioni, background socio-economici), viene data la possibilità di esprimere le proprie idee in modo caloroso, democratico, empatico e rispettoso modo e co-costruire una comunità che promuova la fiducia e il benessere, costruendo nel contempo una Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) (Lipman, 2009).

Nella più semplice implementazione "schematica", il tipo di CPI che potrebbe ottenere in questo studio comporterebbe una discussione dialogica libera e aperta tra quasi tutti i possibili gruppi di genitori e insegnanti-facilitatori, stimolati dalla domanda di chiunque, dove il giudizio di "giusto" o "sbagliato" viene sospeso al punto da risultare irrilevante, in cui non ci sono a priori risposte "date" mai offerte in modo tale che è molto probabile che la domanda di una persona riceva una "risposta" (vale a dire, una risposta) dalla domanda di un'altra persona. Nel costrutto di Lipman, la ricerca è di significato, non di un concetto astratto di "verità". E, soprattutto, come tale, può avvenire in modo produttivo solo in comunità dove i significati degli individui possono essere confrontati con quelli degli altri così come con quelli che potrebbero essere visti da molti come rappresentare quello del gruppo, o anche elementi o tutta la società in generale. La ricerca può ben comportare questioni etiche poiché, almeno sul piano adulto, proprio come avveniva con la

“verità”, la ricerca non è di un significato astratto della vita, ma piuttosto del significato personale o collettivo di un bene (vita produttiva e armoniosa).

Il suggerimento chiave per gli impegni P4P condotti per due anni studiati tramite AR in precedenza, comprende un'indagine riflessiva basata su una storia che si concentra, inizialmente, sull'esposizione di un problema, sia posto che analizzato in parole semplici accessibili ai bambini, che è suscettibile di "filosofico" Analisi dialogica socratica

Come afferma Niels (2009) nel suo articolo "sappiamo che l'atto di narrare evoca un ascolto profondo e un sentimento profondo", di conseguenza, problematizzare i problemi per i genitori allo stesso modo dei bambini, attraverso narrazioni, narrazione e arte, è una strategia che può stimolare inizialmente le ricerche filosofiche, ma poi convalidare attraverso la riflessione e il discorso il loro emergere di presupposti problematici (Mezirow, 1991, p. 35). Questo corso può quindi guidare verso e nell'acquisizione di un modello riflessivo abituale che, a sua volta, può sostenere l'apprendimento e il loro impegno nelle questioni personali e familiari oltre che educative.

Nel tempo, può trasformare un'istituzione, la scuola, in una comunità ben legata che è attivamente impegnata su quadri di riferimento problematici individuali e sistemici (Mezirow, 2000). Da qui la comunità autodiretta che nasce, incoraggia continuamente la discussione, la riflessione e l'empatia tra tutti i partecipanti alla scuola: insegnanti, genitori e figli.

La natura del dialogo socratico promosso dalla P4C di Lipman ci riporta al significato originario della parola filosofia che “deriva dalle radici greche *phyllo-* che significa “amore” e *-sophia*, o “saggezza”. Quando qualcuno studia filosofia vuole capire come e perché le persone fanno certe cose e come vivere una bella vita. Come sostantivo, la filosofia implica l'indagine razionale di domande sull'esistenza, la conoscenza e l'etica (Vocabulary.com, 2021)

In quel contesto, è stato riferito che i bambini facevano domande che dimostrano raffinatezza e un grado a volte sorprendente di astrazione. Alcuni esempi estratti dalla Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:

“Il filosofo Gareth Matthews. . . sostiene a lungo che Piaget non è riuscito a vedere il pensiero filosofico manifesto negli stessi bambini che ha studiato. Matthews (1980) fornisce una serie di deliziosi esempi di perplessità filosofica nei bambini molto piccoli. Per esempio:

TIM (circa sei anni), mentre è impegnata a leccare una pentola, ha chiesto: "Papà, come possiamo essere sicuri che non sia tutto un sogno?" (pag. 1)

- GIORDANIA (cinque anni), andando a letto una sera alle otto, chiese: "Se vado a letto alle otto e mi alzo alle sette del mattino, come faccio a sapere davvero che la lancetta dell'orologio ha girato solo una volta? Devo stare sveglio tutta la notte per guardarlo? Se distolgo lo sguardo anche per poco tempo, forse la lancetta girerà due volte". (pag. 3)

- JOHN EDGAR (quattro anni), che aveva visto gli aeroplani decollare, salire e scomparire gradualmente in lontananza, fece il suo primo viaggio in aereo. Quando l'aereo smise di salire e il segnale della cintura di sicurezza si spense, John Edgar si rivolse a suo padre e disse con un tono di voce piuttosto sollevato, ma ancora perplesso: "Le cose non si fanno davvero piccole quassù". (pag. 4)

Non di rado le domande dei bambini toccano l'etica. Qui, in particolare, ce n'è un altro fornito da Matthews che dimostra un pensiero filosofico piuttosto complesso. Anche Matthews (1984) fornisce illustrazioni di questo. Incontrando un gruppo di bambini tra gli 8 e gli 11 anni, ha usato il seguente esempio per sviluppare una storia per la discussione:

- Ian (6 anni) ha scoperto con dispiacere che i tre figli degli amici dei suoi genitori monopolizzano la televisione; gli hanno impedito di guardare il suo programma preferito. "Madre", chiese frustrato, "perché è meglio che tre figli siano egoisti che uno solo?" (Matteo 1984, 92-3)

L'obiettivo principale dello studio è utilizzare il modello del CPI che "favorisce l'auto riflessione critica e aiuta gli studenti a pianificare l'azione" come nella teoria dell'apprendimento trasformativo (Mezirow, 1990, p.357), che sarà definito in dettaglio nel quarto capitolo.

Breve aside su "Apprendimento trasformativo", "Teoria della trasformazione" e Trasformazione organizzativa

Anche se l'Apprendimento Trasformativo e la "trasformazione" saranno chiariti nel Capitolo quattro, sono stati citati nella prefazione e qui. Per comodità e comprensione del lettore, includo due delle definizioni più recenti di Mezirow. E, poiché l'apprendimento dialogico inerente

al P4C ha chiare implicazioni per intere organizzazioni, comprese le scuole, nonché individui e gruppi, includo anche una breve definizione di "Organizzazione per l'apprendimento".

L'apprendimento trasformativo si riferisce al processo mediante il quale trasformiamo i nostri quadri di riferimento dati per scontati (che significa prospettive, abitudini mentali, atteggiamenti mentali) per renderli più inclusivi, discriminanti, aperti, emotivamente capaci di cambiamento e riflessivi in modo che possono generare convinzioni e opinioni che si riveleranno più vere [Sic] o giustificate per guidare l'azione (Mezirow, 2012, p. 76). L'apprendimento trasformativo implica la partecipazione a un discorso costruttivo per utilizzare l'esperienza degli altri per valutare le ragioni che giustificano questi presupposti e prendere una decisione di azione basata sull'intuizione risultante.

Teoria della trasformazione. L'obiettivo della teoria della trasformazione è come impariamo a negoziare e ad agire in base ai nostri scopi, valori, sentimenti e significati piuttosto che a quelli che abbiamo assimilato acriticamente dagli altri, per ottenere un maggiore controllo sulle nostre vite come decisori socialmente responsabili e con idee chiare. In quanto tale, ha particolare rilevanza per l'apprendimento nelle società contemporanee che condividono valori democratici (Mezirow, J., 2012).

Organizzazione per l'apprendimento. Uno che è caratterizzato dall'apprendimento continuo per il miglioramento continuo e dalla capacità di trasformarsi (Marsick, V. J. & Watkins, K. E. (1999).

Comunità di indagine filosofica e filosofia per i bambini (P4C) Continua

Con il mio nuovo modello, gli insegnanti possono costruire una comunità di genitori che comprenda meglio i bisogni dei propri figli, quelli propri e degli insegnanti, svelare i ruoli intersecanti di genitori e insegnanti e quindi comunicare e riflettere meglio su questioni educative complesse. In questa comunità di genitori, gli studenti possono esaminare criticamente i loro modelli di vita e genitoriali, rivalutare i loro presupposti personali e cambiare le loro azioni problematiche. Riflettere, discutere e persino imparare non porta inevitabilmente all'apprendimento trasformativo, che secondo Mezirow è un processo intenzionale difficile, con molte fasi che l'individuo deve attraversare per poter passare alla conoscenza liberata dai presupposti (Cranton 2016, p. 2).

In un contesto più ampio, sembra probabile che vi sia una grande necessità allo stesso tempo di integrare emozioni e sentimenti con il pensiero critico e la riflessione per consolidare l'impegno dei genitori all'interno della comunità scolastica. L'impegno in una comunità fortemente legata potrebbe eventualmente comportare un effetto di trasformazione, che potrebbe rafforzare la realizzazione dell'intenzione di Lipman che il dialogo che costituisce il P4C dovrebbe avvenire sotto e promuovere ulteriormente la democrazia. Habermas, un teorico critico della democrazia, sembrerebbe confermarlo affermando che una società può essere giudicata più o meno democratica in base al modo in cui gli adulti imparano a decidere su questioni che influiscono notevolmente sulla loro vita e suggerisce che impegnarsi in un ambiente libero e la comunicazione meno ristretta possibile all'interno dell'apprendimento può portare alla democrazia (Habermas, 1978).

Per creare una comunità in cui le persone si sentano veramente libere di scambiare feedback onesti sulle proprie esperienze e su quelle dei loro coetanei e in cui tutti si sentano emotivamente capaci di cambiare, hanno bisogno di sentirsi assimilati in un ambiente fiducioso, rispettoso e sicuro. Di solito incontriamo tali sentimenti all'interno di una relazione sicura. Anche Taylor (2002) sostiene l'importanza delle relazioni nel processo di trasformazione.

Pertanto, questa ricerca è stata organizzata per indagare le seguenti domande di ricerca con un sondaggio online:

- Quali sono gli elementi/caratteristiche principali/principali che costituiscono una relazione e un partenariato genitore-scuola di successo?
- Qual è il ruolo delle relazioni e delle collaborazioni all'interno della comunità scolastica e della famiglia stessa per il successo scolastico e il benessere dei bambini?
- In che modo l'apprendimento online/remoto durante la pandemia di Covid-19 ha influenzato il rapporto e la collaborazione genitori-scuola?
- I genitori devono partecipare più attivamente all'interno della comunità scolastica? C'è un bisogno emergente di una comunità di genitori in cui ottengano il supporto, la guida e la possibilità di apprendere nuovi percorsi comunicativi?

Una domanda di ricerca complementare era: "Quando i genitori partecipano attivamente come studenti adulti a una comunità di indagine all'interno della scuola, possano sperimentare T.L. nella

genitorialità?" che è collegata alla revisione della letteratura nei capitoli 2, 3 e 4, è stata esaminata e ha portato al modello suggerito.

Sondaggio

Il questionario è stato costruito sulla base delle domande di ricerca modificate per fornire informazioni sulla portata e sugli obiettivi del ricercatore precedentemente descritti ed è stato diffuso online. Gli intervistati sono stati reclutati casualmente attraverso un processo Snowball, a partire da amici sui social media che lo hanno ulteriormente distribuito ai propri conoscenti. Erano tutti genitori di bambini dell'istruzione primaria e secondaria e provenivano da cinque diversi paesi (Stati Uniti, Italia, Grecia, Spagna, Costa Rica). I dettagli completi sui metodi di ricerca sono presentati nel capitolo cinque, di seguito.

Prospettive e ipotesi del ricercatore

Nel considerare il presente studio ho sostenuto le seguenti ipotesi:

1. Gli attori significativi per il rendimento scolastico degli studenti sono sia i genitori che gli insegnanti.
2. Non sono richiesti cambiamenti drastici nel sistema educativo di un paese quando viene applicato il modello proposto.
3. Non sono richiesti costi e modifiche alle responsabilità e ai doveri degli attori.
4. Volontà dei genitori a impegnarsi e partecipare all'educazione del proprio figlio.
5. È necessario un modo efficace per rafforzare, coltivare e promuovere i processi democratici in termini di differenze nella struttura sociale, nella razza e nella cultura.
6. Promuovere la scuola come centro di apprendimento, culla dell'educazione per la comunità.
7. Significato della partecipazione della famiglia al processo educativo.
8. Significato del ruolo degli insegnanti nel rafforzamento del rapporto scuola-famiglia.
9. La formazione degli insegnanti in materia di creazione di condizioni per il rafforzamento del rapporto della scuola con i genitori/tutori dei loro studenti.

10. La conoscenza è un bene sociale e deve essere offerta e trasmessa a tutte le persone indipendentemente dal background socio-economico, dall'età, dalla cultura, dalla razza (Dewey, 1929).

Ragione e significato

La presente tesi è il risultato di informazioni sintetizzate provenienti da rapporti di ricerca, articoli sottoposti a revisione paritaria, opinioni di esperti, atti di conferenze e atti, descrizioni di programmi e linee guida per l'impostazione di programmi oltre ai risultati dello studio AR controllato sul coinvolgimento diretto dei genitori nel studia il curriculum diretto dei genitori e altro coinvolgimento in un programma P4C in due classi di scuola materna greca condotto, con l'uso di storie selezionate, in due anni che è stato riportato in Papathanasiou (2019).

Il valore della tesi è brevemente descritta alla fine di questo capitolo introduttivo. Vengono inoltre citate alcune parole e frasi chiave, di cui si parlerà ampiamente nei capitoli seguenti. Come verrà evidenziato nel prossimo capitolo, una vasta mole di ricerca negli ultimi decenni si è concentrata sull'esplorazione del valore dei genitori e del loro rapporto con la scuola e del loro ruolo pedagogico nel successo scolastico dei loro figli e ultimamente anche nel loro benessere. Riconoscendo e confermando l'importanza del rapporto scuola-famiglia si apre il campo di ricerca nella creazione di modelli e strumenti che possano valorizzare questo rapporto con molteplici esiti positivi. La maggior parte delle ricerche e delle politiche sulla partecipazione genitori-scuola, anche a livello nazionale, si sono svolte negli Stati Uniti. In Europa, secondo la Commissione Europea (2020), l'indagine e l'implementazione di modelli utili attraverso le politiche in materia di istruzione è ancora in una fase preliminare. Questo studio potrebbe essere un piccolo passo per colmare questa lacuna. Questa è l'ambizione del modello proposto che suggerisce la formazione di comunità di indagine dei genitori. Comunità organizzate da insegnanti che in tal modo rafforzano il rapporto significativo con le famiglie dei loro studenti facilitando l'apprendimento dei genitori. L'importante strumento di dialogo e discussione costruttiva viene utilizzato per accogliere ed estendere il lavoro delle scuole con i genitori come partner nella pedagogia dei loro figli al fine di costruire una solida base accademica.

Riepilogo

I “fenomeni” riformati su cui si concentra la ricerca in questa tesi inter-covid, poi su cosa dicono la letteratura e i risultati dell'indagine sui Questionari di Ricerca riformulati:

Domande di ricerca relative allo studio AR annullato

In che modo la letteratura fornisce una base concettuale per le risposte alle seguenti quattro domande:

1. Quale sarebbe il modello più efficace di una comunità coerente genitori-insegnanti-figli-scuola e coinvolgimento dei genitori al suo interno?
2. Quali sono gli elementi/caratteristiche principali/principali che costituiscono una relazione e un partenariato genitore-scuola di successo?
3. Qual è il ruolo delle relazioni all'interno della comunità scolastica e della stessa famiglia per il successo scolastico e il benessere dei bambini?
4. “Quando i genitori partecipano attivamente come discenti adulti a una comunità di indagine all'interno della scuola, possano sperimentare T.L. nella genitorialità?

Domande di ricerca del sondaggio

Sulla base degli obiettivi fissati dal presente studio e del quadro teorico esplorato nei capitoli precedenti, vengono formulate le seguenti domande generali di ricerca:

1. Quali sono gli elementi/caratteristiche principali/principali che costituiscono una relazione e un partenariato genitore-scuola di successo?
2. Qual è il ruolo delle relazioni all'interno della comunità scolastica e della stessa famiglia per il successo scolastico e il benessere dei bambini?
3. In che modo l'apprendimento online/remoto durante la pandemia di Covid-19 ha influenzato il rapporto genitori-scuola?
4. I genitori vogliono partecipare più attivamente all'interno della comunità scolastica? C'è un bisogno emergente di una comunità di genitori in cui ottengano il supporto, la guida e la possibilità di apprendere nuovi percorsi comunicativi?

Chapter 2. Literature Review of Parents' Engagement in the School Community

Introduction

The relationship between school and family is traditionally a field of rich theoretical dialogue and research interest because it has been linked primarily to improving the quality of education, promoting academic achievement of all students, and secondarily to enhancing the effectiveness of both family and school as pedagogical and socialization carriers. The quality and quantitative characteristics of this relationship seem to differ in different historical periods and countries under the influence of specific social, political, economic conditions, cultural values, policies, and scientific approaches (Adams, Forsyth & Mitchell, 2009). These differences are reflected in the way parenting involvement is perceived, a term that has been identified with the study of the relationship between family and educational context, describing how parents participate in the child's learning experiences. The unprecedented Pandemic that burst into the Globe in the beginning of 2020 has uncovered the problematic structure of the partnership that has been studied in this research. Distorted perceptions and beliefs have been challenged, which potentially could mobilize the school community towards implementation of innovative changes.

Types and Models of Family-School Cooperation

Parenting is a term that encompasses primary involvement in all aspects of raising a child, that is attributed to the child's "caregiver-in-chief" regardless of their biological relationship to the child—or lack of one. Henceforth in this dissertation, "parent" or "parenting" will reference the person and activities in the primary caregiving role. There is a specific purpose that is attributed to the parent as a Pedagogue (paidi + ago = guide the child in Greek), a role that refers to the holistic guidance of the child that dates to ancient times, long before school establishment as an institution—when parents were not just caregivers, but life guides.

However, after institutionalization, of the role of children's' pedagogist as that of their schoolteachers, the parental role in that respect has been thought of as limited, because of their sharing their responsibilities with their children's schoolteachers. However, rather than either role being limited, the roles of parents and the teachers—while different—complement each other. The importance of their collaboration has been increasingly recognized in recent decades by multiple scientific studies and reports. Unfortunately, although the collaborative efforts have an ever-increasing importance, there is a great lack of school and/or governmental policy reinforcing such collaboration in the school communities in the US (Alexander & Morgan, 2016), and even more so in most European countries (Pisa, 2012, Dusi, 2012).

The pedagogical aspect of parenting in its modern form that appears significantly evolving and influential in recent decades is the one of parent involvement in their child/ren's education, which according to Epstein (1996) includes, among others, several different forms of participation in education and with the schools, the exchange of information (communication), purposeful interaction at home (homework, tutoring, encouragement etc.), and meaningful participation and/or volunteering of parents in schools in supporting the school, itself, student learning and achievement, as well as advocating, planning and making decisions for educational reforms.

According to a great number of researchers, there have been various forms, styles, and models of parental involvement. The two main types that enhance student academic students' achievement (Fantuzzo et al., 2000, Hill & Craft, 2003) are: a) On one hand, the school- based, where the parents are introduced into activities within the school environment, attend school functions and respond to school obligations (volunteering in field trips, classroom activities, fundraising etc.)—as well as communication through Parent–Teacher conferences, informational

meetings, and meetings with administration (Bryk, 2010b). On the other hand, there are the home-based, where involvement includes encouragement, emotional support and learning opportunities that are provided at home by the family (Epstein, et al., Sheldon, 2019). Regarding the latter, parents at home can become more involved in helping their children improve their schoolwork, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modeling desired behavior (such as reading for pleasure), monitoring homework, and actively tutoring their children. Reports show that parents' training for the supportive role at home can be provided by the school, itself, wherein parents are encouraged to provide learning opportunities for their children, e.g., reading activities that can exert positive effects on acceleration of reading skills by students in K-3 (Sénéchal, 2006).

Nevertheless, a 3rd both newer and broader parents' engagement in their child's education is the one that encompasses parent efforts in all educational venues, community as well as home and school (Lawson, 2003). An example of this latter type involves parents serving as advocates for the school in the community, in addition to their taking an active role in the governance and decision making necessary for planning, funding, developing, and providing an education for the community's children.

The combination of the two types of parent involvement—both in the home and in school—seems to be the most successful, according to a great amount of research (Mart, et al., 2011). For example, in parent-teacher meetings, parents can be informed about the school curriculum and educational goals as well as trained to provide effective home-based learning activities that are particularly effective for their children's' learning enhancement. Furthermore, such informational meetings in the school combined with home visits from the school educators (Hoover-Dempsey, 2005), create opportunities for bonds of caring and respect, and help essential

trusting parent–teacher relationships build up. When such initiatives are supported and encouraged on the part of teachers, students’ achievement gaps may possibly be bridged sooner than expected. Hoover-Dempsey (2005) asserts that parent-teacher discussions within the social context of the school community could encourage communication and enhance a relational culture that results in students’ improving their academic success and well-being. In the context of other studies, it is also recognized that parental engagement is a complex multifaceted construct that evolves as children grow. In the age of adolescence for example school-based engagements decrease while home-based ones increase.

Another type of parental involvement that has come under the scrutiny of researchers is that of academic socialization strategies where parents communicate their academic expectations, discuss the value and utility of education, link schoolwork to present active family and external situations and current events, develop educational and occupational aspirations in their children, and make preparations and plans together with their children for their future (Jensen & Minke, 2017).

Five Models of Parent-School Engagement

Based on the types of parent engagement, various models of cooperation have been presented in the relevant literature. Each of these presents a different perspective on how the relationship between family and school is perceived by researchers emphasizing different specific characteristics of this relationship. We briefly mention some of them: a) the model of the parents’ positions, which refers to a sociological perspective of the school-family relationship by emphasizing the role of parents in relation to the education of their child (Vincent, 2000), b) the Model of parental roles in education introduced by Greenwood and Hickman (1991) that attempts an approach to the role of parents as they interact with teachers and within the

boundaries set by the school for parental participation in the education of their children, c) the evolutionary model of the family and school relationship of Martin, Ranson, and Tall (1997), which emerged after a large-scale survey inspecting the quality of education that was reported in England. Another is the d) Hoover-Dempsey & Shandler's model (1995), which focuses on parents' motivation that is captured by 2 variables, parental role-construction (beliefs on their active or passive responsibilities) and parental self-efficacy (beliefs in their actions' & abilities to effect positive outcomes).

Finally, there are also e) the model of the overlapping spheres of the family and school, (Epstein, 2001), and f) the model of influences and consequences of parental involvement in the school of Eccles and Harold (1996), that, according to Penteri (2012), are two approaches that reflect elements of Ecological Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

All the models mentioned above, clearly identify the roles, actions, and relationships in every phase of interaction of the family with the school community, while recognizing the existence of differences. However, the latter two, develop a systemic vision of the relationship between the school and the family and at the same time emphasize the processes, perceptions, practices, and characteristics of the three intermediary entities, parents, teachers, and pupils (Poulou & Matsaggoyras, 2008).

New, Even More Inclusive Models Needed

Most recent research reveals the need for additional models that are focused on building trusting relationships and interactive communication, as well as on cultivating partnerships on shared goals that will gradually spread within the school community (Warren & Mapp, 2011). The actors within these models soon realize that their seemingly individual concerns actually embrace all partners, enabling them to find new opportunities to engage meaningfully. These

would include ones, to think deeply, exchange ideas, argue respectfully with others, and develop their skills in active listening, reflecting and thinking critically—while, at the same time, building their knowledge in child development, on one hand and educational, and administrative matters on the other. By discussing their concerns, values, and beliefs, and interacting in a community where everyone is invited, respected, and equally welcomed, actors develop a sense of “WE,” and togetherness that they create, and envision ways to accomplish their common and/or individual hopes and dreams for their families. They are then prompted to ask why not even transform the public educational system into a more community-based one that supports not just itself but, as Dewey envisioned (1937), the broader community around it. Further still, for the new models of parents’ involvement to be successful, they need to take into consideration the factors that years of research have disclosed that positively affect student academic achievement and their socio-emotional well-being.

Factors Bearing upon Parents’ Engagement

Based on a sound analysis of the scientific literature, we have come to recognize factors that play an indisputable role in empowering the family-school relationship. Racial, ethnic, academic, and socioeconomic differences, on average, generate limitations in the quantity and quality of parents’ involvement (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005). Nevertheless, parents’ involvement benefits all families regardless of those diversities even though research reveals that disadvantaged families and those (often the same) belonging to minorities are the ones who gain the most from it (Cotton & Wikelund, 1989). In sum, the more parents are involved, the more beneficial are the effects on student’ achievements.

Similarly important, and beneficial for the students is the importance for all parents to further their children’s academic and other-life efforts and for them to understand and effectively

fulfill their role in early-childhood parenting and caregiving (employing, e.g., Boston Basics, 2007) that could narrow their achievement gap (2007). For parents to involve themselves early in this way an optimal parental role must be inspired, taught, fostered, and nurtured in the parent—even before and/or right after the child’s birth, preferably, within a broader social context (Ferguson, 2007). Further still, Epstein (Epstein et al., 2019) highlights the importance and success of goal-oriented practices where family, school and community partners focus on the *same* goals, and learning aims (i.e., in many cases math, reading, literacy, etc.). Practices linked to learning and development, e.g., cultivating a love for learning through reading and discussing, counting, comparing, and exploring for children, from birth on may sound simple and obvious; but, they are far from that for the less advantaged.

Raffaella, L. and Knoff, M. (1999) argue that the effectiveness of such collaboration should be based mainly on preventing poor parenting rather than on reactive attempts to correct it. That would take educators in the direction of instilling the best pedagogical process in *all* families and not only in those whose children are facing school or learning difficulties. This means that the schools should acknowledge and value the importance of contribution by *all* parents, regardless of their educational and/or their socio-economic background. Also, it is fully acknowledged in recent literature that family culture is the key to the family’s life context. In sum, an educational system performs best only when all cultures are equally respected and embraced in a school community where parents and teachers are fully collaborating, in an educational atmosphere where parents are warmly invited and welcomed.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (2005) theoretical model describes parents’ *motivation* as a significant factor prompting their engagement, particularly in secondary education. It is captured by two variables—the two factors that affect academic achievement and socio-

emotional well-being and clearly explain why parents' involvement is important regardless of their various diversities. The first one is parental role construction which refers to the active or passive beliefs of parents about their responsibilities towards their child's education. That is, respectively, whether their beliefs center on responsibility for that responsibility being theirs alone, or a shared one with the school for their child's education on one hand, or only that of the school on the other.

The other variable either discouraging or prompting parental involvement is the *self-efficacy* of parents' beliefs in their abilities actions to have a positive influence on their child's educational outcomes. The variables mentioned above may act differently depending on differences in race, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic status of the family. However, *all* parents are more likely to be engaged appropriately as long as they feel welcomed to the school community. Schools' and teachers' invitations to the families appear clearly important in communicating this message. We must not forget, either, that teachers also need the appropriate orientation and training in how to invite and engage parents effectively with use of appropriate communication skills.

Another factor shown to affect parental engagement (Lovejoy, Graczyk, O'Hare & Newman, 2000) is presence or absence of psychological difficulties (e.g., distress, depression, etc.). Along similar lines, according to Comer (2005) and others (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009, Dodge, Greenberg & Malone, 2008), parents' engagement is linked to their own and their children's social & emotional well-being—as children need emotional support to learn. This support seems to develop efficiently from their environment when the family and school educators work together for the benefit of children and when school and family focus together on social and emotional support as well as on academic development, including educators having

and conveying respect for students' inner lives, and showing an understanding of students as complex and multifaceted.

Influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The unprecedented circumstances that the Covid-19 Pandemic has introduced to the school community, is most exemplified by its extensive impact on the socio-emotional state of students, parents, and teachers. Research, such as that of Epstein (2001), documents the importance of parents' participation in the education of their children all the way from preschool to the end of adolescence, because of its relationship to the positive socio-emotional development and school performance of children. He even more inclusively values parents' love and responsiveness beginning at birth and especially in the pre-school years, including imposition of clear disciplinary regulators that don't impair the child's sense of emotional security and behavioral autonomy that can minimize stress and maximize the well-being of children. Singing to and talking and discussing with children things even from the very early developmental stages of a child is part of the #1 recipe for children's social-emotional health, self-efficacy and resiliency.

Most of the recent studies show how complex parents' engagement can be and how much it varies depending on the ages of the children, among other factors. Nevertheless, across the entire age range, it has been proven in multiple studies how important its role is in the educational and social/emotional well-being of children. Regarding the age of adolescence, it seems that there have been less studies available but there is, nonetheless, insight into the need for developmentally appropriate types of parents' involvement and parental warmth that is always considered a possible positive mediator. Other findings show that parents overly engaged with their children in the "wrong" ways may deprive teenage students of their autonomy and

their self-efficacy in building relationships with their peers while, by contrast, the need for high-quality communication between the parents and children is a factor that minimizes stress and positively affects academic success (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009).

How parents can build requisite skills is where research has found fertile ground for innovative projects that have increased in quantity and quality during the last two decades—mainly, as shown in the literature, emanating from Harvard and John Hopkins Universities in the US.

Discontinuities in meaning and intent between teachers/administrators and families/communities are clearly detrimental to the development of parents-school partnerships, working relationships and/or positive attitudes about education between community and school (Cotton & Wikenlund, 1989). Enhanced parents' engagement motivates teachers and administrators to build working and trusting relationships with all actors of the school community, view these colleagues as partners, trust the school principal as a leader, promote innovation and continuity in their school, and build up better communication and more opportunities for parent engagement. When strong relationships are built, teachers own well-being is being positively affected and, not surprisingly, teacher turnover also tends to be reduced. (Allensworth et al., 2009).

Positive Parental Engagement with the School Curriculum

In addition, Bali, Demo and Wedman (1998), and Griffith (1996) emphasize the improvement of children's behavior as well as parental and pedagogical relationships that arise as a result of parental participation in developing school curricula. Expanding parents' assets and strengths such as their conversational, leadership, learning and essential information-gathering skills, seems to become an advantage for their children's educational improvement. Recent

literature describes how parents, especially those coming from disadvantaged environments, can broaden their social capital when they are given the opportunities to build relationships with one another and with the school through various kinds of community building while they increase their explicit knowledge about the school system and ways for their children to benefit from it. Other research provides data showing an emerging process occurring whereby parents transform themselves into advocates and decision makers in their children's lives rather than just being their supporters. The transition of a parent from a private citizen to a Public Actor through Community Organizing has resulted in parents who support, demand, and co-decide for school changes—including those in the curriculum—that will benefit a broader set of children, especially those less represented in the general population. This process transforms the individual, the school, and the community overall while it amplifies the Intellectual capital of the students.

Value of Involvement by Parents in Low-Income Groups

The value of parent engagement in such ways for low-income and low-educational-background communities is specifically recognized in this scenario, as it is likely the exact field where the interests of these people are less acknowledged. The traditional approaches of low-income parents to their children's' education tend to be individualistic and passive. However, the need to go beyond these forms towards more meaningful engagement in their children's life requires them to work collectively and become more active as citizens in a democratic collective.

Research suggests to teachers a profound shift from their traditional attitudes toward and modes of parental engagement in favor of their development of leadership plus conversational and learning skills as well as sharing their essential information that will increase their self-efficacy as sometimes parents and citizens of their community.

Promoting Engagement in the School Community—The Role of Teachers and Principals

All research findings on parents-school partnership support its significance. This conclusion has been confirmed by a great number of initiatives in several local school districts in the US where, as a result, many educators have been informed of the importance of the parent-teacher partnership (Epstein, 2005). Nevertheless, it seems that, elsewhere, most teachers and schools still wonder why many parents are not involved in their children's education and why it is the parents do not approach the school for assistance, support, and engagement. The literature as far back as the early 1980s suggested there was a misunderstanding as to who is responsible for initiating this relationship, and most educators were untrained and felt unprepared to implement parent involvement strategies (Becker & Epstein, 1982). Unfortunately, about three decades later, research still indicates that only a few colleges of education are introducing their students and future educators to parent involvement practices (Epstein, 2005). As the situation has been shaped it has had an impact, on the one hand, on the attitude of the educators towards parents, and on the other, on inhibiting that of corresponding parents to efforts toward strengthening their participation in actions of the school community. Indications are that many educators still hold an attitude of caution and even of distaste towards the families of their students, and many parents are reluctant, indifferent, or even aggressive towards their teachers and supervisors (Chavkin & Williams, 1987). Also, in many cases non-participation of parents, especially if belonging to a minority, is taken by teachers as indifference (Carasquillo & London 1993). As a consequence of revealing research on the impact that parent-school relationship has on students primarily on one side, and, on the other, the acknowledgement of the great need of teachers to understand the importance of an effective parent partnership, calls for appropriate teachers' training aiming to change their perspectives and attitudes resonate fundamentally:

Transformational change involves an internal change in how people and institutions act, (Cranton, 2016) the readings are ‘shouting’ very often within literature. Researchers assert on the most profound and sustainable changes that occur when new ways to think and act, are created, for people individually and even more for those in communities and institutions. It is rather surprising when research concludes that interventions in schools through teaching and curriculum changes does not have such size effects as the parents’ interventions. In the readings we can read about successful examples that represent a new relational and conversational culture of collaboration (Bryk & Schneider, 2002). “How simple but powerful can be writing back to parents!” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

PJU (Padres y Jóvenes Unidos), a Latino-based organizing group, has been one of those examples where high drop-out rates for Latino students in Denver are incorporating education reform that is deeply relational and especially collaborative. PJU is an established reform committee that began to call for a redesign of the school and it has assured that young people and their parents would, from then on, have an organized voice in educational decisions (Waren & Mapp, 2011).

Home-visiting from educators (Parent Teacher Home Visit Project’s -PTHVP), is one more innovative project that significantly decreased school truancy and improved students’ reading outcomes (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies, 2007). This means that analyses showed that building relationships with students’ families benefited students in two ways. First, students whose families participated in at least one home visit were less likely to be chronically absent in school, depending on whether they were chronically absent the year before and other important background characteristics (e.g., family socioeconomic status, gender, grade, race/ethnicity, ELL status, and special education status) and secondly on whether the students

were more likely to score as proficient on the standardized ELA assessment (Henderson et al., 2007).

Another example is that of LSNA's (Logan Square Neighborhood Association's) deep and sustainable work in Chicago schools. With their efforts they have been able to provide a transformative potential for new relationships between educators and parents, where parents are no longer confined to auxiliary support roles but participate in the real work of schools. One example (Henderson et al, 2007), references one or even many parents coming into the classrooms and cases where teachers are visiting at students' homes. Consequently, collaborative relationships are being built. In this way, teachers have come to realize that parents' strengths and their culture can transform a school's culture.

In all cases, as is found in in most literature, parents' engagement does not any longer appear as it has traditionally, with PTA meetings and P-T conferences but, rather as a sign that more inclusively evidences a community-based relational culture within the school community. Hopefully, it seems natural that the success of all these efforts should lead the way for future policy and practices in family engagement.

In this way parents and teachers both take ownership of the processes of change. Nevertheless, such initiatives require a shift in mindset and perception about the role of families, primarily by the teachers who can then create the opportunities for the parents to co-develop communities with strong relationships while both undergo powerful processes of transformation by a professional. For this to happen, appropriately grounded training of teachers is required. Without requisite training and institutional support for such practice, even though it could certainly enhance their students' academic achievement, trying to implement it could also overwhelm their already burdened capacities. Another barrier is usually educators' traditional

“professional identity” that projects the proposition that teachers are the sole source and exemplar of expertise in contrast to parents who are seen as only their clients and/or the beneficiaries of their wisdom.

Teachers’ characteristics such as their level of education and self-efficacy have been studied in relation to these issues. Higher levels of teacher education are correlated with positive attitudes toward parent engagement (Becker & Epstein, 1982). Despite the value recognized in the importance of parental involvement, research reviews indicate the difficulties of realizing it in a school environment. Epstein (1986, p. 277) has noted the rising incompatibility as well as competition and conflict between families and schools and supports, on one hand, and cooperation and complementarity of schools and families is emphasized as well as family-school communication and collaboration being encouraged on the other. As previously mentioned, teachers, even when positive to the idea of implementing practices to engage parents, perceive *themselves* as unprepared. Their lack of preliminary training may lead to parents’ negative attitudes and feelings of frustration. Those negative attitudes naturally may limit teachers’ abilities or desire to create successful parental involvement.

Moreover, state guidelines, policies and official manuals are also often not available regarding achieving this purpose for future and in-service teachers along with the absence of formal courses to prepare future teachers, principals, and superintendents for community engagement (Weiss et al., 2002). When, rarely, there is a minimal amount of professional development for in- service teachers, provision of it typically falls under the jurisdiction and disposition of the principal and/or superintendent in the district—who often are unfamiliar with it. Those who do insist on, and greatly appreciate, parental engagement need to plan way ahead to delineate a series of steps through which to organize the implementation of parental

involvement. Initially they need to discuss issues with colleagues, to break down some of their inhibitory fears and misconceptions and decide on the path they would necessarily follow. An informational discussion with a widely acknowledged expert might, potentially help to replace negative feelings with a sense of knowing, caring, and respect. The expert could also share operational tips and strategies and assist the teachers' community in first identifying what additional training or information is needed. It is usually the educational leaders that welcome such practices following up by organizing training for teachers and then, even later, developing workshops and resources that are available to, and established for the benefit of parents.

What an administrator or a policy designer needs to always have in mind when building an initiative to enhance parent—school partnership are the 4Cs of appropriate Policy and Program goals. These include: Capabilities, Connections, Cognition and Confidence (Mapp & Bergmann, 2019). These could actually capture the Dual-Capacity Framework that is discussed by K. Mapp in an interview (<https://youtu.be/QpCnXnO-cO8>). This framework directs efforts on building the capacities of both families and school to become more effective in their partnership (Mapp & Kutner, 2013, p. 42). Therefore, it suggests that policies and programs should be directed to all stakeholders of this relationship and partnership (Mapp & Bergmann, 2019). The latest version of this Framework is a result of a 5-year research study that—while it confirms that the 4Cs are helpful for conceptualizing and evaluating effective practices—has, a) differentiated it from the initial one because it identified the most prominent barriers for effective relationships and, b) then acknowledged the fact that both educators and parents start in distant positions and need to reciprocally exchange power to support one another's continued growth. This framework could become the compass to guide teachers' practices in family engagement and to prevent random acts. The framework was formulated using research from those of us, like

me, in the family and community engagement field, as well as engaged in research on adult learning and leadership development.

What is finally proposed mostly in the literature, is the need for Professional Development for in-service and future teachers as well as for the educational leaders in the field where they will invite parents to discussion, not in a formal way, but rather in a *pedagogical*, way mirroring skills they use with their students whilst enhancing parents' knowledge with Adult Learning Theories. This proposal would suggest an on-going professional development program for pre-service (as introductory information) and in-service (discussing ideas, plans and tools) teachers combined with the district leaders who will clarify, support and evaluate partnership initiatives aiming toward an effective dialogue the requisite complementary partners.

A New Challenge: Remote Learning in the Time of Covid-19

About a year ago, the world as we had known it was, and still is, being challenged by the Covid-19 pandemic has propelled every person in the world on a journey without either clear destination or end. Countless people have gone into action selflessly. This final part of the first chapter focuses on the effects of the Pandemic that greatly impacted not only this dissertation and its research but most of all the two main groups of people to whom its research is addressed. Families and teachers will be discussed herein as they are the ones who have made a miraculous effort to defend education from the relentless attack of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and struggled to overcome the unexpected stress and adversity of the emergent dire Health situation. Despite the stress and powerful negative effects, both groups have been challenged and perhaps slightly positively affected by the Covid-19 crisis, and so has their relationship. Even though mounting literature signifies the importance of a close, collaborative relationship, as noted earlier, vast evidence affirms the remaining gap between them, even in the US where most research has taken

place and most efforts for implementation of new research-based policies and derivative mechanisms have been incorporated into the secondary-school process, compared to the case on most European countries (Pisa, 2012, Dusi, 2012). Perhaps the Pandemic is providing a new opportunity for family engagement, a new baseline for their partnership—as long as both sides seize the chance.

A Great Challenge for Both Families and Schools

When Covid-19 was affirmed as a global Pandemic, most governments around the world proceeded collectively to take measures to reduce the spread of the disease. In the absence of a treatment and/or vaccines, most countries opted for Quarantines and Lockdowns. Inevitably, then, life as people had known it changed completely. Initially, in the unprecedentedly stressful situation, women displayed a higher level of resilience than men according to the President of Global Health Council, Loyce Pace. For those who had the luxury of both time and resources, they have taken this break from normality to reflect and imagine a new kind of work-and family-life balance (Horsley, 2020)—while others, less privileged and mostly from minority and immigrant backgrounds, scrambled with all the uncertainties and pressures of pandemic life. Nevertheless, many parents that have been struggling with all the challenges that the Pandemic has imposed to maintain family stability provide their children with the feeling of safety in in a precarious world.

While the rest of the world “paused” it was the parents who underwent the greatest ordeal. While the new situation displaced normal life, it was the parents of children,—young, older, and, teenagers—who often acted in the best-available, most creative, and resilient ways . . . who stretched all limits of their abilities through food-insecurity, social isolation, and severely limited access to medical care, sometimes when operational, racism and fears related to

immigration status challenged them further . . . all in the face of a global health situation that threatened to dissipate their child's future.

For the last few months, an abundance of multiple surveys worldwide, reports and articles on various Journals, scientific and not, have described some of the effects of the pandemic not just on family life, but most specifically on mothers. One of these, refers to families living in the State of New Jersey, US where the restrictions from March 2020 still existed until around May 2021, but not yet totally rescinded almost two years later. Perhaps the most important of those, has been the inability of schools to open their doors to primary and secondary school students because of health uncertainty caused, among other things by resistance of some (sometimes violent) to wearing—or having their children wear masks or, themselves being vaccinated. The American Psychological Association describes the severe consequences for women and even more, mothers during the pandemic not only in NJ but also across the entire US—where the percentages of women workers fell into the numbers experienced in the 80s (Kashen, et al., 2020), as the Center of American Progress reports, causing a strong sense of insecurity for the future and a large gap in their prospects for higher-level jobs. This was a problem that, as the UNFPA, (2020) reports, at least for the state of New Jersey had almost disappeared before the advent of Covid-19. However, the greatest anxiety for families, and especially that for working mothers who are being pulled in every direction while trying to balance work with family life, has concerned the potential impact on their family's life-long health and well-being. There are detrimental consequences on the mental health of the population worldwide that could yield serious health and social consequences for years to come as, experts from the American Psychological Association (2020) sound the alarm. Within the Pandemic, work, education, health care, relationships and social life, and the economy has been

seriously disrupted with some groups more negatively impacted than others. Unquestionably, this mental health crisis was not created because these women were forced to spend more time with their family, with their children, even though domestic violence has seen a great increase in the face of the Pandemic (UNFPA, 2020). According to several articles in New York Times, Forbes, NPR, and CBS News (Grose, 2021, Hsu, A. 2020, Viau, J., 2020, Gajewsk, M., 2020, Gogoi, P., 2020) almost 1,000,000 mothers have left the workforce with black, Hispanic, and single mothers among the hardest hit as reported by the US Labor Department. To all this has been the continuing burden of the necessary emergent home-schooling in addition to parenting and running the household (Schneider et al., 2020)—that, in addition to the fact that it had previously been established that mothers do almost double the amount of household chores and parenting as do married fathers. On the other hand, many men who are facing the new reality of financial strain due to women quitting the workforce to shoulder parenting, and their own participation in home-schooling and unwonted taking up of household chores, find themselves spending more time with their children, and closely interacting with the family in ways unimagined before (Hsu, 2020). Job insecurity, financial distress, and uncertainty about the future, have created a chaos that has become unbearable for many families in addition to the devastating loss of life of relatives and friends (APA, 2020).

In single-parent and low-SES households, of course the challenges of shouldering children's Online Learning have been multiplied in (UOREGON CTN, 2020). They have been experiencing significantly higher levels of anxiety, depression, stress, and loneliness compared to other families. (APA, 2020). More than a year into the Pandemic, with the Covid-19 waves elevating stress, depression, and anxiety levels (CDP, 2021) for all people but especially for parents who watch the governments and school administrations still undecided on whether

schools should open or close their doors again. On top of all this, while families and children struggle managing school classrooms within their households, many reports confirm that there are many of them that do not have access to the internet or even to a computer or its equivalent (UNICEF Report, 2020). Even when these services exist, they may not be sufficient for the number of people engaged in homeschooling, work, or other web-based activities at the same time. As a result, many schools had to refocus their attention on the necessity of shared responsibility with the students' families.

The presence of a trusting and responsive relationship within the immediate environment—microsystem (home + school) described in the Bronfenbrenner Ecological Model Theory (1987)—could potentially have strengthened the necessary defense mechanisms that a parent needs for restoring his/her child's environment to a state that permits it keep the child growing, developing, learning, and dreaming of a possible future. The impacts of such a prolonged activation of stress on the body and brain within the micro- meso- and exo-systems, have been devastating. These need to be acknowledged and, when possible, offset by governments especially for the disadvantaged students and communities who were already on the “wrong” side of the privilege gap that the pandemic widened precipitously. Governments recognize and acknowledge the long-lasting damaging effects, not just on learning but also on behavior and health across the lifespan (World Bank Report, 2021)—in sum, on the entire human capital of learners.

According to UNESCO as of 3rd April 2020 over 1.54 billion learners have been affected by school closures in 188 countries. That makes it over the 90% of the world's student population that have been suspended from learning the way they were accustomed TO, because of the wide scale lockdowns. Distance Learning solutions, according to an estimate of a joint

UNESCO-UNICEF-World Bank survey, have failed to reach hundreds of millions of learners. Problems piled up immediately after the school closures with students lacking access to devices and internet combined with the job and food insecurity within their homes, mostly for the middle- and low-income households, who according to Pierro (2021) accounted for at least six percent of the cases in abandonment of lessons, for example, in Italy. Fortunately for some, there has been a great effort beginning shortly after the sudden school closure, especially within the most economically advantaged countries to close the digital divide according to UNESCO's Report Team (UNFPA, 2020).

As Covid-19 continues to impact lives around the world, we can see the Pandemic fallout having a worldwide regressive effect on children's social emotional well-being (APA, 2021). On one hand, the World Bank estimates that 6.8 million children and adolescents of primary and secondary school age are at risk of drop-out (Azevedo et al., 2020), while UNESCO expects around 11 million children not returning to school (United Nations, 2020). A Report that has reviewed studies on the psychological impact of quarantine include post-traumatic stress symptoms, confusion and anger and indicate the need to ensure their psychological support. Lockdown in combination with online learning schooling and studying along with online socializing, have caused a considerable increase of at least four to six hours per day for the young students which inevitably increases respectively to older ages (APA, 2020). That means that the older the student the more hours of screen time are used from the students. Especially for the teens, ages 13-17, the impacts of pandemic-related school closures have been negative in 81% while almost half, 51%, say that the Pandemic makes planning the future impossible (APA, 2020). Loneliness and uncertainty about the future are major stressors for adolescents and young

adults who are striving to find their places in the world, both socially, and in terms of education and work» said Adam E. (2020).

Impacts on Teachers as First Responders

Teachers, who also might be parents, themselves, in their primary role, have been called upon to keep teaching in a radically different environment. They were asked to rapidly adapt, be creative, motivate their students and transfer their teaching through a screen regardless of their own levels of stress and uncertainty in a life that had been abruptly disrupted—in addition to their ignorance, in most cases, of how to teach remotely. They took on all the burden of keeping regularity and progress of learning in each student’s home without any training and before educational authorities had the chance to organize the differentiated learning that was imperative for a new mode of teacher-student-family communication. In most cases, even in a country like the US, where mountains of research and resulting policies on parents–school partnerships have resonated in public education, schools closed the windows of communication to student families as a first response. Gradually, communication has been partially restored. But it has been either by those teachers who had already invested in building trusting relationships with student families, or those who realized they could not effectively and reliably reach and teach their students without supporting their parents. Undoubtedly there has been a profound impact in education while no one was trained in responding to such a challenge.

It has been “uncharted territory” (C. Geoffrey, 2020, in UNESCO Report, 2020) as an educational leader has stated, and “it’s the time for the educators to act as scientists.” It should not be overlooked that the biggest challenge for an educator has not been just using the technology but, at the same time, overcoming fearful worry about their own kids, their students, their families (and, sometimes, their jobs). As is well known, trauma has a tremendous impact on

children's learning; healthy development can be derailed (NCCDC, 2014). More specifically, neuroscience research has confirmed that—depending on duration, intensity, and timing—in the absence of support and intervention, when a young child's stress response systems are activated their brain development is negatively affected (NCCDC, 2014). Therefore, during this challenging period, it could not be only the quality of academic work that needs to be teachers' priority but also selfless support of all students and their families. Education has never been, and will never be, just academics and/or knowledge but , especially now, the social and emotional development and stability of the students, that needs to be integrated with, with great urgency. Throughout the world there have been students who have never gone back to their classrooms or have never seen their classmates and teachers for over a year now. There are others, who are going back and forth from in-person to remote learning and it is not yet known whether this switching or sticking with remote learning only has the worse impact on those students' souls and minds in the long run. It is however a certainty that all students of all ages, all races, all ethnicities, and SESs have been traumatized deeply and it is the teachers together with the parents who must both be the ones who need to support them. More than ever before, today, during the COVID-19 epoch, it is the Parents–School *partnership* that seems most critical to the academic, and Social Emotional success of all the children.

To mitigate the vast negative impact on students, countries will need to design and implement school re-enrollment mechanisms, as the UNESCO Report Team has suggested—consisting of national campaigns and incentives targeted at encouraging students to return to school. This is especially, for marginalized groups that, in particular, have fallen behind from where they could have been if they could have continued their face-to-face school education.

Reaching out to their families, inviting them, or even better visiting them in their own homes could possibly become one of the solutions.

It is easy to lose sight of what needs to be done in times of immediate crisis, let alone during a prolonged Pandemic, especially for leaders who encounter and must contend with such unprecedented circumstances. Nevertheless, there may be hidden opportunities from great changes if they are communicated appropriately and in a democratic way to the public—changes that were long needed throughout society that might not have been ready for them. Pathways for the next step to normality cannot be successfully discerned and traveled without having all sides of the community working together—optimally a resourceful community that is based on a culture of partnership and shared responsibility where trusting relationships can flourish.

Chapter 3. The Community of Philosophical Inquiry Approach

Introduction

Today, philosophy is usually seen as a field that is dealt with only by experts, while it could be the activity in which everyone participates, regardless of age, and socio-economic level, as it is a tool for critical thinking and reflection. In this chapter I will attempt to briefly convey the concept and practice of philosophy, as manifested within the perspective of the Pragmatists, while also reviewing some of its basic characteristics, such as thought, dialogue, and creation of the philosophical community. In addition, reference is made to “educator philosophers” who formulated the underlying framework of Philosophy for Children (P4C). Most of it, however, will deal with this modern educational movement in practice—one that is premised on the teaching of philosophy in primary and secondary education, not as a course that will inform children about philosophical systems and theories from antiquity to the present but as an educational activity-tool, aiming at cultivation of reflection and promotion of critical thinking and the requisite skills for problem solving. More specifically, it supports the proposition that philosophy should not be limited to, or even primarily directed toward creation of but, rather should be put into practice in the exploration of consensual knowledge of knowledge with the aim of striving for the general good. In contrast to the prevailing technocratic discourse today, the practice of philosophy, if transmitted and used properly mainly via the educational system of Philosophy for Children articulated by Lipman and Sharp, can play an important perhaps sometime decisive role in the future of human societies. It constitutes the basis of my proposed model extending its principle in the dialogic process of a *Philosophical Community of Parents* operating as an integral part of the school community and in a broader, more metaphoric sense as a natural continuation of a “teacher-student-family.”

Philosophy and Dialogue in Education

"All human beings by nature seek knowledge."

(Aristotle's: *Metaphysics* 980a, in Kyrgiopoulos, 2006, p.23)

People began to philosophize out of curiosity. In the beginning they were aroused by noticeable strange/inexplicable phenomena, and little by little, proceeding gradually, they began to focus on and think about things of greatest importance to them. It has been said that he who wonders and admires, realizes that he is ignorant. [. . .] So, if people philosophized to avoid their ignorance, it is obvious that they sought science for the sake of knowledge and not for the sake of any usefulness.

(Aristotle's: *Metaphysics* 980a, in Kyrgiopoulos, 2006, p.23)

What really exists? How was the world created and how does it work? What is human and what is God? Could we meet God? What is good and what is bad? What is the best state? What is the purpose of life? These fundamental questions were asked, and answers were attempted by the ancient Greek philosophers. And they believed that the answer we give to these questions, and especially the effort we make to answer them, determines our own path toward the purpose of life, our relationship with other people, and our participation in social and political life.

It has been said and written that philosophy is born when the belief is created in the minds of people that behind the apparent chaos of events there is a hidden order—an order that comes from impersonal forces. That it is someone's theoretical inquiry into the world, itself, and into their own knowledge; it is the person's attempt to form valid tools of thought and apply them to everyday and metaphysical problems . . . their anguish to face the questions of their

existence, to escape from the individual and achieve a comprehensive wholistic examination and explanation of things.

There has been however a great shift in the practice of philosophy since the time of Socrates of whom it is was said in the fifth Century, B.C., that “he brought Philosophy from Heavens to Earth” on the one hand and on the other with the founding and consolidation of Plato’s Academy which was a major turning point for the philosophical venture who managed, through the writing of his Socratic dialogues, to transmit the essence of dialectical controversy within philosophy. Since then, the solitary practice of philosophy has, for some, been unthinkable. The topics discussed have been issues of great significance for life in an organized state: what determines moral behavior: what is the proper education for the citizens, which kind of a state is preferable, what is the significance of laws etc. (Kalfas, 2015).

The truth is that philosophical thinking cannot be taught but can be practiced and developed further. People should have opportunities to ask questions, to think, to reflect, to decide. This whole process is a way of teaching itself. But to make “philosophy” or philosophic dialogue into teaching, as Rupert Wegerif tells us, is not easy; “in order to trigger thought one must be thinking” (2010, p.23).

The key to strong thinking is a strong question and discovering the possible answers. The power of thought is fueled by the dynamics of our questions which guide the course of inquiry. The questions through dialogue invite the other point of view, the different one, which the student listens to, having the choice to either embrace it and build on it, or reject it with an argument. In order to do this mental exercise, the selection process, students should have the opportunity and the freedom—and available space and time to at least submit their questions and, hopefully, receive thoughtful responses. When the teacher, the school, the family, and the

community where a child grows up, allows the possible questions to be asked, the answers can become an act of change. The questions provoke thinking in dialogue and make any involved person responsible to look at the question from different angles. Simultaneously with the question, an internal dialogue is born (stochasmos) in parallel with the external one, which can result in understanding, reflection, learning, and change. When a child grows up in an interactive environment, when students are encouraged by the teacher to think for themselves, then they often react by thinking. The teacher may not be able to teach the thought itself, as also may not the parent at home. However, both can create an environment in which the child can develop the will to discuss, to think, to express him/herself, and to contrast its views with those of others. “As birds learn to fly by flying one learns to think while thinking” (Lipman, 1975, p.1) .

In a real dialogue there is no place for right and wrong, winners and losers. Participants in such a dialogue are not hierarchically divided into students and teachers, young and grown-ups. **The meaning of the dialogue is not found in either of the participants or either in the two together, but in their *interaction*** (Friedman, 1955, p.89). Knowledge of ourselves depends on our interaction with others. In a way it is like saying that we exist as a personality only in all the reflections in the personal field. **Our contact and understanding of ourselves and others happens through a constant dialogue.** The self, for Bakhtin, is defined through dialogue and is a more authentic opening to the differences between perspectives (1986, p.169).

As Lipman tells us, children, unlike adults, try to understand what lies behind what they see around them. They are constantly amazed and try to face the mysteries that appear in their daily lives with questions that are often philosophical, such as open to reasoning, inquiry, and reflection, for example: What is the mind? What is time? How was God born? Many times, children surprise us with their creative thinking, and it would be a skeleton of human

unconsciousness if we tried to impose our own point of view of what is possible for children, while instead what we need to do is encourage them to listen, observe and give them time and space to think, discover, and imagine. School is the place that should provide the venue for practice, where the student will ask his/her questions and will be trained in the formulation of philosophical questions (scientific, ethical, metaphysical).

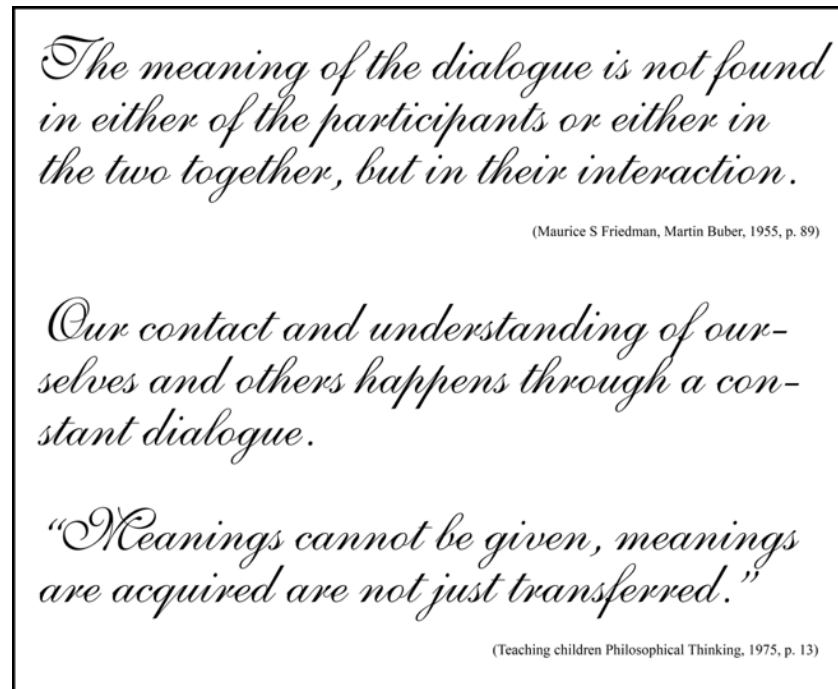
In This Context, the Meaning of “Philosophical Questions”

"The main concern of philosophy is to check and understand very common concepts, which we all use every day without thinking about them. A historian may ask to know what once happened in the past, but a philosopher will ask: what is time? A mathematician may be researching possible relationships between numbers, but a philosopher will ask: what is a number? A physicist will ask to know what atoms consist of or how gravity is explained, but a philosopher will ask: how can we know if there is something outside our minds? A psychologist can investigate how children learn a language, but a philosopher will ask: what makes a word make sense? (Nagel, 1986)

If we want to leave the child with an *open* consciousness, in the project of self-discovery and in the use of critical thinking, we must project a philosophically dialectical learning environment. Students will have the opportunity to ask, to listen, to research, to challenge, to reflect, to evaluate responsibly, to structure and deconstruct their thinking consistently using the philosophical way of formulating questions, i.e., the dialectic. This environment of dialogue if successfully organized at school and even extended to the family environment, where the child usually unfolds even more comfortably, with the appropriate information and guidance—both through the agency of the parents and by the teachers aiming for continuity. This could be a way to build what the consensus of the population, as a whole, conceives as social justice in a

multicultural society where different opinions, ideas and thoughts are encouraged. But to do this, the environment in which these children grow up must inspire free inquiry, expression of questions and their interaction with others through dialogue.

Figure 2. On Dialogue and Its Meanings



The questions that arise through art, literature, nature, can create admiration, question marks, and unprecedented innovative ideas. Children have an ability to see clearly and to clarify such questions authentically. According to Lipman, meanings are discovered, as opposed to information that can be transmitted or emotions that can be shared. **One cannot give another person any meaning.** As Lipman & Sharp, state, **“meanings cannot be given, meanings are acquired are not just transferred”** (1975, p.13). So, since the meanings are not transmitted but only discovered, the role of the school is ancillary, that is, it helps children to discover the meanings that are important to them. In order for children to discover meanings, they must

search for, and research for these meanings—necessarily being provided with the appropriate conditions for such a course of action.

Philosophy in education can be the way of teaching that will lead the child to its own interest and way of learning, which will equip them with all the resources for a more humane dialogue and will be the trigger for change to a more cultured and a more democratic society. The earlier a person enters the process of dialogue, the more it will create and responsibly change its world internally and beyond. Thus, the contact of a person with dialogue is necessary from his/her conscious entry into the world—from the very first moment the child begins to wonder, to learn, to interact with the world around him.

Dialogue

The word "dialogue" consists of the word logos (speech + thought) and dia-(through). The key word of dialogue, logos, can mean articulate speech, reason, thought, intellect, and/or logic. It goes without saying that dialogue can be communicated through articulate speech but also through thinking. People can use their unique capability to think, and/or articulate speech and through it to express their thoughts, reflect, listen to other's thoughts, give meaning, change, or even unite their thoughts (Deakin-Crick et al., 2005).

Very early on, Greek philosophers engaged in dialogue. From Socratic philosophers to those later and even to the modern era, dialogue is a unique process for people to be able to think, to communicate, to meet, to change, to listen and to "feel" their fellow people. According to Plato, the dialectical method is the most reliable and effective method of dialogue to lead one to the absolute truth, to the essence of things (Plato, 1969, 533 c-d). The dialectic nullifies the underlying assumptions and gets to the point in discussing everything, instead of just getting

consistent results from unsolved assumptions, as in math. And while the other sciences are thought to study mirror images, the dialectic studies reality.

The ancient Greek school of thought opened the way for critical thinking through dialogue, asking critical questions about the origin of the world and was particularly interested in the human being. The concepts of virtue, morality, justice, freedom, and democracy are born from the ancient Greek language and were operationalized in ancient Athens for the first time through citizen participation in democratic dialogue. Dialogue as a practice was also necessary for the Athenian citizen in the context of the ancient Athenian democracy. Citizens had the right to participate, to speak, to intervene, to disagree, and to persuade through speech to the “Church of the Municipality” (Anc. Greek: *ekklesia tou Demou*). Dialogue with its dual meaning of speech and thought was the vehicle of inquiry and expression in the ancient Greek world of thought. It was then passed on to later generations to become a source of a modern dialectical thought. The dynamics of dialogue, through thought, words, facial and other physical expressions, shape the kind of dialogue that much later found its place in Pragmatism and, more specifically, in Dewey’s philosophy of education.

The course of the dialogue is characterized by the precepts of Socratic dialectic: Knowledge is held to pre-exist and in an appropriate way we retrieve it from the storage space to the cognitive surface space. To access and use it, we need to detect it in the storage space and, with a suitable stimulus, bring it to the surface. We must therefore, like the midwife (Anc Greek: “*maia*” (Anc. Greek: the midwife), assist in childbirth for the birth of knowledge. Teachers in the discipline argue in ways intended not to make their interlocutors feel that they have next to them a sage who possesses all the knowledge, but, rather, a person with a common mind, who has enough patience and interest for a series of questions and responses in dialogue, to reveal

corresponding truths. They participate in dialectical discourse, in order for them to discover what virtue, moral, self and other concepts mean to the discussants at least, and maybe to a wider part of society. As Socrates claimed, it is not a prefabricated discussion, rather a logical search whose successive discoveries will lead us to the ultimate goal, that is learning. If metaphorically applying the art of obstetrics (Anc. Greek: Maieutiki), is the natural way to acquire knowledge, the path to its discovery is a dialectical marathon.

In the analytical works of Plato's Socratic dialogues, we distinguish, among other things, the element of the effortless transition from the old to the new (Plato, 1969). Thus, discovery of knowledge "buried" in storage is ultimately necessary and essential for the student to "know" something "new" that had pre-existed. The relevant term "obstetrics" (maieutiki) is the didactic model that, has its roots in Socratic dialogue. It is a term that holds a dominant position not only in formal, but also essential in modern pedagogy. Piaget, wanting to confirm his views on active learning with a historical background, defines Socrates as the starting point (Mathews, 2008, 2009) and he attests to the fact that, for Socrates, it is obvious that his invocation obstetrics is a call to the student's energy and not to his slavery.

The Socratic method of education is ontologically based on a rational merging of the unity of the self with the community—that is, into a unity that emerges as a deep concern for the self, consequently as a philosophical [= logical] knowledge of the truth for someone as well as the truth in and of itself bringing them into interstitial communication with oneself and with others. Cognitively it is not understood as a specific, step by step, process of personal education of the student and promotion of his/her educational relationships. More specifically, this process, based on philosophical dialogue, attempts to drag the human individuals from their self-limitation to absolute relativism, from their spiritual immobility into the roles of a conditional

know-how, from the one-dimensional consciousness of an artful symbiosis. Its authenticity, in the end, betokens an attempt by humans to carry out their inner transformation and to turn each individual work into a conscious act of general consensus and conciliation.

Such a realization is not sought mainly in the projection of new theories or in the endless accumulation of knowledge but in the dialectical investigation of epistemological preconditions in any situation, which each one needs in order to activate the latent forces of his/her individual soul and to rise above the expertise of everyday life. In practice, this is a methodical coexistence of “knowledge and wisdom,” where the objectification of knowledge does not become an end in itself, but a transitional stage for the human individual to become aware of the restrictive use of objective speech in addition to thinking (Logos) and thereby to fall into a state of radical doubt. Thus, in the face of the complete uncertainty of things, it happens that the student raises the question of itself, that is, that turns into the consciousness of the self and transforms its knowledge of Being.

Societies however today face enormous challenges that result in a series of dramatic crises of humanity due to great misunderstandings. Although dialogue contains a power that can solve many human problems and bring about desired change, and despite its long course from ancient times, most people are unable to discuss issues effectively. Similarly, education, on a global scale, usually fails to meet its goals of teaching, learning, and socializing students. Education by means of dialogue could play a catalytic role in the development of better world thought and consciousness¹ (Friere, 1992). The teacher could carry out and pursue a discussion of inquiry as a method of obtaining knowledge, gaining passage from one question to another, from reflection to deeper reflection, from the seeming certainty of opinion to the uncertainty of

¹ It must be understood that this argument represents a historical point of view that is not congruent with postmodern thinking.

still deeper reflection, from the constraints of definitively expressed knowledge to the brightness of clarified thoughts.

In this sense, dialogue becomes the methodology and practice of human education. Practically it means that it motivates the interlocutor to participate in the abstract work of logos and to be tested in the autonomous production of knowledge; in this test it should not depend on ephemeral accomplishments, but to distinguish the subtle signals of the world of language, to be fully open to the conceptual depth and through the clarification of philosophical propositions to make it accessible to language the common drive toward the essence of the self.

This rational use of logos is already a primary source of knowledge because it increases the interlocutor's consciousness of ignorance and opens new perspectives for the interpretation of its objective relationship. Specifically, it brings the student into living communication, as a thinking subject, with the idea of the self, which already exists within the subject in the form of indefinite conception, increases the internalization of its interactive experience, mainly as a recognition of its ignorance, and consequently the awareness that there is something more than what one knows; so it reinforces the self-awareness that, as a body of knowledge, it is not just what it seems or believes it is. So, by deepening oneself in this state of the conscious self being, in fact, it becomes more and more realistic self-consciousness that discovers, within this realism, the inexhaustible linguistic power, so that it is formed into an authentic interlocutor in the vortex of discussion and does not degenerate into a mere listener who merely consents. Dialogue teaches the ones choosing to pursue it straightforwardness of thought and can thus subject issues in question to a multi-step logical process, which evolves into an inquiry, ultimately, of examining the other and the self, being and becoming one. The question directs the subject to the

learning of conscience and to rational judgment, as well as knowledge as the ability to ask and reflect.

We will not mention other elements of the Socratic dialogue. Because they are inexhaustible. We will only say that both in the special field of dialectics within the didactic process, and in wider philosophical investigation, it undoubtedly holds a fundamental place in the evolutionary course of knowledge. So, the educational value that knowledge acquires in the form of philosophical dialogue, constantly confirmed by the controlling power of the question, bridges the gap between theoretical and practical life—which brings us to Pragmatism.

Pragmatism and Dewey

Pragmatism is a philosophical tradition which originated in the United States in the second half of the 19th century. Due to the heterogeneous nature of this theory, a common feature of the pragmatists is their critical attitude towards the basic ideas of traditional Philosophy. Instead, it turns its interest to human action. More specifically, the main feature of the philosophy of pragmatism is its empirical character, that accepts that human experience is the ultimate source and evaluation of all knowledge and values (J. Childs, 1956, p3). The pioneers of pragmatism were born and lived in America during the period of rapid technological and social change through the exploitation of the achievements of science and technology. Charles Sander Pierce is considered an exceptional philosopher and the one whose influence on the scientific method is most evident. William James is known for developing his own version of pragmatism, that of philosophical empiricism. George Mead, who most strongly encountered evolutionary biology, has focused on the way in which the human mind, and human morality, can be interpreted as evolving through the evolutionary point of view. John Dewey was dominated by the idealistic phases of American democracy, and its most impelling and troublesome challenges

(Childs, 1956, p.3-4). No sector of knowledge received and accepted the impact of pragmatism more strongly than education. The interest of pragmatists in education, and more specifically in public education, did not come only from their involvement in the work of American universities but had deeper roots in their underlying philosophy. These thinkers strongly believed that their views on the experiences of learning, freedom of mind, research, and thought were of great importance in terms of the way in which the work of schools should be captured (Childs, 1956, p. 3-4).

Dewey's thoughts and philosophy of education are our guiding concern, here, in the theoretical journey which is the foundational theory and main argument for the significance of the Community of Inquiry that I used as a pedagogical tool for the Teachers Handbook for Transformational Parenting that has been produced amid this research. John Dewey is regarded as one of the most important founders of Progressive Pedagogy—although he considered himself more of a philosopher than a pedagogue. Dewey's main aim was to be able to combine his philosophical thinking with everyday educational practice and thus to apply his philosophical thoughts and reflections to Pedagogy (Lamont, 1959). He understood pedagogy as a field of applied philosophy and tried to apply his philosophical ideas to the “new school” he created. He did not believe that philosophy exists only to deal with the problems of philosophers. One of his main goals was to give philosophical problems a practical dimension, thus giving philosophy feasible access to solutions to the problems that concern people. Dewey's focus of philosophical interest was the “theory of inquiry,” where the purpose of knowledge was to cause modifications in different empirical situations and to investigate whether the knowledge gained is true or false, and if it has any practical benefit and is useful. This research process is a series of constructions and reconstructions through which we travel from a result to the fullness of knowledge (Hook,

1939, p.37). Fine knowledge can be gained through inquiry. In this exploratory process we are initially in a state of uncertainty and doubt; we presume, and therefore we cannot be certain of the outcome. The acquisition of knowledge through the process of doubt and inquiry has been a key element in the enormous progress of mankind from the Socratic years to the present day. Dewey also dealt extensively in his work with the concept of Reflection (Anc. Greek: *stochasmos*)—a concept with a broad span of content. Reflection entails both thinking and learning, although it must be distinguished from both (Mezirow, 1990, p.4). In other words, reflection should include the process of drawing conclusions, generalizations, clarifications, evaluations, emotional loading, memory, as well as the problem-solving process. Moreover, in its study, it is also necessary to include the use of various beliefs aimed at interpreting, analyzing, commenting on, and evaluating phenomena (Boud, Keogh & Walker, 1985, p. 3).

Further, Dewey is considered one of the pioneers in the abolition of the old educational tradition which argued that the mission of the schools was simply the transmission of earlier learning content to future generations. He passionately defended the student-centered, the child central school that gives full emphasis and weight to the real interests of the students as well as to the learning that is achieved through praxis. The main feature of his work was that he managed to combine philosophical thought with educational practice, considering pedagogy as a field of applied philosophy. He held that the school should, in no case, be cut off from society but should be directly related to it to constitute an active, small society in itself (Dewey, 1956, p. 8). The traditional school had—and still does have in many countries worldwide—as its main feature the transmission of sterile knowledge and theoretical forms without offering the element of direct insight that the child is experiencing, thus keeping the child isolated from the society. A great change in this mentality came with Dewey who emphasized the great educational energy of

direct practical experience that brings the child closer to real life and society. Traditional schools underestimated the child and considered him/her inferior at a moral and mental level. It considered their development as something definite and refused to see the dynamics hidden inside children's actions. Instead, they looked at them in isolation and for this reason they seemed to have no immanent prospects. Traditional pedagogy compared the immature child to the mature adult and considered the child's perceived immaturity as a major deficiency which must be eliminated as soon as possible.

However, on the other hand, Dewey emphasized that the new pedagogy can also fall into the trap of overestimating children's quality and interests and treat them with greater expectations and as if they all have had equal opportunities and abilities to excel. What is true, is that everything the child learns and knows is constantly changing, they are fluid and in no case should they be considered as something absolute or fixed that has reached its limits. If it is so conceived, then we will probably be led to remissness and distort education, the true meaning of which is development of the *potential* aspect and its impelling function (Dewey, 1926, p.132-135). A few of the key features of traditional education have been the passivity, the mechanistic massification with which it treats children, and its monolithic ways in curricula and educational methods. Education is not focused on the child's primary instincts and activities around it, rather mainly in the teacher and textbooks. By contrast, new pedagogy proceeds along a revolutionary path. The child becomes the heart, the focal point—as Dewey (1926) characteristically puts it—“ . . . the sun around which the means of education revolve, the center around which they are organized.”

The students at the traditional school associate with the learning material through textbooks and teachers, who are also the carriers that transmit knowledge, experience, wisdom of

the past and the rules of “proper” conduct (Dewey, 1982, p.36-39). These are the features of the traditional school that draw intense criticism from new pedagogy. The knowledge and the rules of conduct they were trying to impart to the students were not within the field of experience that the young children could possess and were also outside their capabilities. In its attempt to fill this gap, the traditional school imposed on students, specific knowledge, and methodology. In this way, active participation of the students in the evolutionary process of the recipient of learning becomes essentially prohibited. Children are simply to assimilate everything that is written in the textbooks, and the end-product of assimilation is considered static, completed, and finalized. And the most important error that is made is that this view does not take into account the way it was created and/or the future changes to which it can be subjected in an evolving world (Dewey, 1982, p. 36-39). The New School, on the other hand, unfavorably contrasts the cultivation of children’s personality and expression and the learning that comes solely from texts and teachers, with the learning that is acquired through experience. The acquisition of individual skills and techniques is of no use at all if they are not the means to achieve the goals set by the individual and which have immediate practical application. The modern school is one that must relocate its focus from the outdated and often morbid pedagogy of a misunderstood societal rivalry and competition that often evokes feelings of fear and injustice and to, instead, turn towards cooperation and solidarity between children.

Dewey’s school, then, is the pre-eminent place where the student develops and promotes cooperation, participation, dialogue and exchange of interesting experiences and views. The learning process depends on and is largely determined by thought. Thought is the starting point of the process according to which the modern school uses the ideas and experiences that children carry from their daily lives as stimuli to solve the problematic situations they may face at school.

This thought process can only be activated if there are situations and points that are the triggers for reflection and discussion. Furthermore, in these situations, the children's direct experiential circumstances must come from outside the school classroom—which could be elsewhere inside the school and, in many instances, while being with the family and friends. The situations in the children's intimate environment, where they feel more comfortable, activate the mechanism of their thought much more easily. The challenges that concern the students on a personal level and not the ones that concern the teacher and the books are the ones that provoke their interest. That then triggers the activation of thought, their reflection and consequently their learning (Dewey, 1982, p.60). In other words, knowledge should not be sterile and prefabricated or acquired through given course material. On the contrary, it should be acquired through the processes of reflection and inquiring into the personal challenges and experiences of the child. For Dewey, the educational process must move in the direction of preparing students for the future in an active and practical way. The new school must supply students with human values and the concept of democracy as the fundamental supplies for living their lives. Individuals who have been nurtured by the universal and timeless values of individual freedom, dignity, kindness, mutual understanding, and dialogue, can acquire a supreme quality of experience. As to its fundamental essence—that of freedom—he considers that the only interesting form of freedom is freedom of *thought*, that is, the freedom of observations and appraisal, as in medicine, a “crisis,” or turning point at which a decision must be made, one exercised with worthwhile intentions (Dewey, 1980). By contrast, in traditional schools, the intellectual and moral freedom of students is hit and cramped, to a large extent, by the constant restrictions on their freedom.

John Dewey's name is also closely associated with alternative educational perspectives that have profoundly influenced adult education (Dewey, 1916/2001) which is an important part

of this dissertation and will follow in the next chapter. Dewey's ideas influenced adult education and its lifelong and continuing learning movements.

More specifically in his book *Democracy and Education* he writes "education should not stop when someone finishes school. The tendency for one to learn from life itself and to shape the conditions of life in such a way that everyone is learning from life is the most beautiful work of school" (Dewey, 1903).

He makes it clear that although school is the basis and requisite for learning, it is however practically impossible to acquire all the knowledge that we will need throughout our lives only during our school years. He viewed life as a whole and believed that people, by nature, have the ability to grow (spiritually, personally, and socially) by constantly gaining important experiences and knowledge until the end of their lives.

Wittgenstein–Vygotsky–Piaget

Lipman, the originator of Philosophy for Children (P4C) discussed below used several elements drawn also from the work of the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Critical thinking the cultivation of which is main goal of Lipman's program for students, is based on the logic to which the Austrian philosopher contributes with his writing. Lipman's views significantly followed the philosopher's ideas and, as will be discussed below, like Wittgenstein, considered philosophy as an activity, not that clarifies the confusions of language but, rather as a method that contributes to the development of critical thinking in people and especially in children. Typically, Wittgenstein's philosophy is seen as an activity that is required for the exercise of self-criticism and consequently for gaining the understanding of self and self-knowledge (Floyd, 2005, p77). Williams (1999, pp. 187-215) highlights this philosopher as a pioneer of communicative learning, stating that his work emphasizes learning and its effects on children.

References are made specifically to expressions such as “learning in a child,” “when the child learns . . .” etc., as well as to his arguing that learning constructs knowledge in the same sense that it constructs its content and the way in which it informs a student—concluding that, in Wittgenstein’s theories, the human mind first began to be understood as a social product.

The same is evident, too, in the work of Lev Vygotsky who considers language as the main means of shaping knowledge while also an important factor in the whole process of transforming the meaning of language, words, as the social environment in which the child lives and acts.

According to Vygotsky’s theory (Kozulin, et al, 2003) in all, societies speech is the primary means of participating in knowledge and is the essential feature of learning and teaching in school, where communication with others through speech is engaging in a social way of thinking. Vygotsky, for example proposes a combination of social interaction and philosophical dialogue to empower children’s cognitive capacities (1978). Moreover, in his theory of learning, when we refer to the discovery of new meanings for children, we do not mean that the students find something completely new, but that, based on the learning stimuli given to the child by the home environment initially and from the school later on, it may proceed to find answers and solutions—that is, to discover or broaden concepts, or combinations of concepts, arguments, rules, etc., which, until then, were either not existent to it, or had not yet been well realized. Such discoveries by students are based on the reasoning mechanisms, which they have at whatever their stage of development. In this sense, the child continuously rediscovers, in a new form, what it discovered in an earlier stage and in so doing will extend its "discoveries" to new areas.

When we say that we move from pre-existing knowledge to something new, we do not necessarily mean that what is learned is of the same nature as our previous understanding, that is,

that it comes from the same cognitive or scientific field. In the child, even from a very early age, natural experiences are formed from the environment in which it lives and develops. These are part of its spiritual world and shape its mental structures. In the future, with an appropriate process, they reappear and are transformed into new experiences, into new structures. Moreover, we cannot argue with the fact that, once the topic gives stimulus to new learning material, students need to discover it for themselves. An element of Vygotsky's framework that it holds in common with philosophy for children is the interaction of the children in groups. For Vygotsky, the child's learning interaction with other children of its age and with adults, namely the educators, contributes to the proper development and evolution of its character and personality. He considers the case of coexistence of children with completely different characters to be particularly ideal, noting that the inhomogeneity contributes significantly to their development. Lipman and Sharp's community of inquiry works the same way, where children discover, shape, and produce knowledge, not just repeating the knowledge provided by textbooks and the overall content of a lecture. Moreover, the teacher with appropriate questions will guide the child's mental activity, so that it passes from the old to the new knowledge. And this is exactly where the art of the teacher lies: In the nature of this transition. The students therefore have the opportunity with a suitable question or suggestion to choose, from previous cognitive experiences, the one that suits them best, in other words the one that has the closest relationship with the new experience that he/she planned to acquire. In this way they lead themselves to the realization, transformation, and integration into the new data, of older knowledge. The child's spirit, says Piaget, is not a "Tabula Rasa" on which we will write ready-made relationships imposed by the external environment. The valid recording of any external data presupposes assimilation tools related to the activity of the subject. However, based on his research, Piaget

(1979) argued that children up to the age of about 11 years are unable to follow the logical course of an inquiry, that is to think purely philosophically, a view that is diametrically contrary to Lipman's theory.

Philosophy for Children (P4C)—Lipman and Sharp's Educational Project

"Philosophy begins with wonder and who wonders more than children?"

(Aristotle)

Once in a while, what we usually take for granted about ourselves, other people and things—that we were born and raised, that the sun rises and sets every day, that words have a meaning—causes us surprise and wonder. Then, unusual "philosophical" questions may arise, reminiscent of those children sometimes ask: Who am I really? Where do I come from and where do I go? Why is there a world? Who created it? What is space and what is time? What happens when people die? What is good and what is bad? Are we free to do certain things or are we driven by deeper powers that we cannot control? What makes "nice" things seem nice?

Lipman's experience as a Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University in New York was an important impetus for his exploring children's ability to think. He believed that thinking, exploring, and reflecting are skills that can be taught from an early age if children's inquiring and their tendency to ask questions and explore them is innate. While observing a teacher's efforts to teach reading to neurologically impaired children, his suggestion for exercises with logical inferences seemed to have assisted those children to better comprehend the meaning of what they were reading (Lipman, 1992, p.3). His experience as a professor of Philosophy at the university motivated him to explore ways to cultivate thinking skills from an early age and he decided to rely on the practices of Socrates. As is well known, Socrates used to encourage his interlocutors to participate in a discussion, listen carefully to others (because listening entails

thinking), to think before speaking and to repeat in their minds what others have previously said because, a dialogue means examining, discovering, recognizing, and ultimately creating a research community.

This effort began in the 1970s at a University near New York, Montclair State University, (earlier, a college) in New Jersey with the founding of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) and the effort to integrate philosophy into school programs. This program was developed and established rapidly in several countries worldwide. Its first educational material was a philosophical-literary work (novel) by Lipman for children, *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery*, which was piloted in elementary school in Montclair with great success. The children who participated were administered various tests before and after their participation in the program, as to their active participation in discussions, use of arguments, development of critical and creative thinking (Lipman, 1991, p.4).

The pedagogical framework of P4C points out a way, children can learn how to think, analyze, and argue from an early age, one that is necessary for children's' true learning because, in its absence, their inherent ability to think abstractly is lost. Their abstract thinking brings them to Philosophy, familiarizes them with discussion, while their critical thinking, and their "reasoning" skills bring them closer to Socrates' Dialogue (Lipman & Sharp, 1994). In addition, as has been pointed out by Lipman himself (2003), P4C is characterized by reflective, deliberative, communicative, and dialogic actions, which conclude in both reinforcing individual judgment and, at the same time, solidifying the community. Specifically, individuals' diverse, e.g., in ideas, beliefs, and socio-economic backgrounds, are given the chance to voice their ideas in a democratic, empathic, and respectful manner, and co-construct a community that promotes

trust and well-being, while building a *Community of Philosophical Inquiry* (CPI) (Lipman, 2009).

The main emphasis of the above types of collaboration is on the development of reasoning, reflection, philosophical search, in the sense of the revival of grassroots philosophy outside of Academia (Lipman, 1991) based on the P4C Curriculum that constituted a first attempt at inviting children into a Community of Philosophical Inquiry.

P4C Process: Lipman’s Curriculum, Handbook, and Stories

In history, the critical turn of philosophy toward the dialogic vs. a monologic process—its new conception from Socrates—continued in Plato’s Academy and was completed with the “scientificity” of Aristotle, a well-educated young man, who started as 17-year-old in Plato’s Academy. Central elements of the new method that was introduced by all three of them was the interactive way of exposing philosophical problems, the formulation of opposite-and/or-multiple positions on each issue, the search for definitions, and the critical rejection of dogmatic decisions—in sum, philosophy roughly as we know it today. In his philosophy, Plato used the everyday language of his time, occasionally transforming some words and extending their meaning, and avoiding introducing new terms. Nevertheless, and despite their undeniable charm, Socrates and Plato are essentially strangers (in terms of their methods) to those outside of traditional academia. Perhaps the distance that separates modern humans from the complex problems of Athenian society of the 5th and 4th centuries BC—from the problems that shaped Socratic and Platonic philosophy—seems enormous and unbridgeable regardless of their similarities when studied in depth. There are those few who still read Platonic dialogues with “philosophic” interest, but most read them more as a form of literature, as tiles in the mosaic of an exotic era that has finally passed. Therefore, philosophy and its texts have come to evolve for

most, as an individual quest, which presupposes isolation from current concerns and everyday worries (Kalfas, 2015).

With Aristotle, somehow, the modern reader feels more familiar. First, because Aristotle has written in a way that is reminiscent of the current manner of writing philosophy; in fact, he was the first to establish the scientific treatise as a vehicle for the transmission of philosophy. Aristotelian texts are dominated by the problems discussed and the positions exposed and not the voice of the author himself. There is a specific problem at the starting point of every Aristotelian treatise. Before proceeding with the presentation of his own positions, Aristotle quotes the views of other philosophers (often alongside the perceptions of common people), and then proceeds to their analysis and critique, to arrive at some fundamental questions—philosophical and scientific dilemmas. His own contribution now usually takes the form of an evidentiary process: it is preceded by the formulation of general positions, “first principles” or axioms of each scientific discipline, and then conclusions are drawn from these first principles in a strictly reasoned manner. Reading Aristotle’s writings is like following a researcher who opens a theoretical discussion with his predecessors and then contemporaries, who clearly states his sources and influences, and who claims for himself a new strict philosophical method (Kalfas, 2015).

Aristotle’s specialty, his special attraction, has been the surfacing of critical problems. Aristotle always started from a problem that would give the opportunity to his students to reflect on the existing answers, to proceed to subtle distinctions, and to locate the core in a philosophical dilemma, in a critical “question.” It is well known that Aristotle considered the discussion that led to the formulation of a philosophical position more important than the value of the position itself. Because of this view, he presents philosophy as something useful, not only for the few, and it starts by dealing with practical problems of everyday life.

With that as model, then, it should not seem a coincidence that the first experimental philosophical work (novel) written by Lipman in the 70s, in his attempt to transfer philosophical dialogue to children's society, was the novel called *Harry Stottlemeier's discovery*, which recounts the adventures of Harry and his friends and the conversations they have regarding the world, knowledge, science, and the mind. Although Lipman (1991, pp. 5-6) admitted his lack of familiarity with the principles of education and the writing of fiction he was influenced by his readings of Dewey's educational theory and philosophy of education during World War II, as well as by several French writers in whom he became interested while in France for a period of study after the war. Moreover, the Pre-Socratic philosophical ideas became his foundation for the logical themes and the logic that were to be introduced. The age group that was first engaged was based on Piaget's belief in the formal age of reasoning starting around the eleventh year. The scores of the Experimental group on inspection of their logical reasoning were incredibly encouraging for the possibility of developing children's critical and creative thinking; and logical reasoning and judgement—elements that, according to Lipman, promote not only the individual as an active member of society but also the conditions that prevail in it—values, ethics, democracy, etc. (Lipman, 1998). In the years that followed, a Handbook/Manual with guidelines for teachers was also published by the IAPC, as well as other philosophical literature for the ages of primary and secondary school students (K–12 curriculum)—a dialogical pedagogy—a professional development model for philosophy in schools. In addition to the IAPC material that was written by Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, and others, American P4C practitioners relied mostly on the curriculum with the novels and Handbook for teachers. Other practitioners from the UK and elsewhere, created other kinds of philosophical stimuli that are not exclusively texts (Liptai, 2005). All materials aim to connect childhood with philosophy—with their

common linkage, i.e., wonder and inquiry. The philosophical and thoughtful dialogues that are created in the process do not require someone lecturing about philosophers, but, rather, provide a strong stimulus for discussing philosophical ideas that can be derived from a text (story, poetry, newspaper articles, etc.), art (sculpture, paintings, music, dance, drama, etc.), nature itself (e.g., weather, change of seasons), and/or anything that can engage the students in a philosophical discussion. A path where ideas are explored with questions that are posed either in the ordinary manner of posing a question or sometimes even in other creative ways such as poems, drawings, descriptions, or any other expression that helps students to listen to the others, thinking, reflecting, and building on each other's ideas.

It is however important for the students to learn the rules of engagement, get accustomed to recognizing a philosophical idea and be exposed to and practice creating a philosophical question that brings the community into thinking, reasoning, and reflecting. The ensuing deep discussion also embraces the exercises and/or activities that are suggested in the Manual aiming at the topic on which they need to focus and clarify the meanings at issue. And, most importantly, the inquiry is epitomized with an assessment of the inquiry itself, the community, and the facilitator. The IAPC curriculum can be very helpful, especially for teachers and students new to philosophy, because of the following benefits (Gregory, 2013, p.8): the novels model children's philosophical dialogues, raise philosophical concepts and issues, and offer plenty of exercises and discussion plans that can provide significant support for a novice Community of Inquiry.

Inquiry through questions that are created by the innate need of children to conquer development of knowledge contains fulsome links to philosophy in every dimension and to its greatest depth. With their questions the children wonder and try to discover the paths along

which to further explore their world. They are constantly intrigued by life itself and the discovery of the possible answers to the various questions brings them to philosophizing without realizing that they are acting like young philosophers. These are usually questions that typically surprise adults—who frequently find it even challenging to respond to them. It is, however, the innate search for answers and the exploration of the world which surrounds children that forces them to explore, inquire, and discover multiple and various answers, first at home—if the society is one where philosophical enquiry is “endemic,” and, before long, in the extended school community that includes them, their peers, teachers, and students’ families.

Apart from the continuously growing number of P4C materials—thousands of academic books, articles—that are either much, to a limited degree, or not-at-all related to the Lipman-Sharp model, there is also an emergent interest from researchers, teachers, and other educational practitioners of various educational backgrounds, not just those philosophical, for workshops and teacher training in the P4C area. It is therefore important to acknowledge that there are other aspects that need to be considered for a Community of Inquiry (CoI) to be successful.

Facilitators’ background knowledge in philosophy and P4C specialized training in leading philosophical discussions is still a controversial matter for many P4C practitioners. That is because the facilitator’s role and identity is intricately connected, not uniquely and directly to philosophy, but perhaps most importantly to “philosophical sensitivity” (Mohr-Lone & Israeloff, 2012) as well as to “sustained training in and appreciation of philosophical inquiry” (Turgeon, 2013, p. 10) of the teacher.

The Facilitator's Role

“We will never become philosophers even if we have read all the theories of Plato and Aristotle if we are nevertheless unable to think and express a judgment on a subject of discussion” (Descartes).

According to Lipman (2004, p.121), the teacher should empower students in trying to discover the essence of things, the meanings of concepts, with the help of appropriate stimuli—combining the acquisition of knowledge with the experiences of children and the particular characteristics of the society which they inhabit. For this reason, he tried to discover and create the cornerstone on which someone specially trained could build communities of inquiry. His goal was to differentiate the P4C process from that of the classroom and the way in which the search for knowledge in it is accomplished, abstaining from the traditional way of teaching towards cultivating cooperation, solidarity, and degrading competition (Lipman, 2004, p.112). Therefore, the method used by the teacher should be grounded in the dialogue—that will start with reading-stimuli where the teacher is no longer the expert but rather the co-learner, the co-inquirer who seeks together with the students to discover the outgrowing philosophical paths (Mohr-Lone, 2012, p.20). The necessary tools that the teacher must cultivate during their journey with their younger or older students are argumentation, critique, thinking, searching for meanings, and paths within logic in order to develop constructive dialogue.

Encouraging children, however, to ask and explore key questions about life and cultivating philosophical inquiry is definitely not a product of the teacher-centered education that is usually provided in formal education, globally. Because education cannot constitute just the acquisition of knowledge, but also the journey of exploration and its discovery, education needs to be the foundation for the students in search of the meaning of life through the relationships

that are created in a vibrant school community with the help of constructive dialogue, critical thinking, and reflection. We therefore need a more targeted form of teaching, an educational method such as that of Philosophy for/with Children, which does not focus on philosophical texts but rather on a special pedagogical management, in the art of the philosopher. It is worth mentioning herein the distinction that Richard Rorty (1981, intro) makes between Philosophy as a Platonic tradition of inquiring knowledge, nature, beauty, etc., with philosophy as the ongoing attempt many people make from a very young age to comprehend the world, *not* as an academic exercise. Many studies in recent years have shown that philosophy, as Rorty has described it, can help by clarifying children's thoughts and paving the way for discovery. Moreover, philosophy as a way of life can transform the student from a passive recipient of existing knowledge to an active seeker and potential creator. Through this process, students discover not only the innate need of the self to learn but also to formulate the way in which it learns how to learn, and then cultivate and use it for the benefit of themselves and the community to which they belong. Philosophy could therefore be the way for the child to become a researcher of knowledge since it is the most basic form of research with the tool of thought (Lipman, 1980, 13-15). Among other things, it could also be a potential way for children to exercise a basic right, as clearly described in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child: "The right of the child to express his or her views freely on any matter which concerns him or her" and "the opportunity to seek to receive and disseminate information and ideas of all kinds" (UNICEF, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989)

For this to happen we need to change the way we understand education. To investigate how can one best assimilate anything that is external? Who is the guide, the mentor, the pedagogue that lays the foundation and further empowers the research community and the

interactive relationship that this community brings to life that prompts students to become partners in learning? What is its role, if not that of the traditional monophony? Abraham Lincoln in his famous letter to his son's teacher writes: "Teach him to listen to all men but teach him also to filter all he hears on a screen of Truth and take Only the Good that comes through" (Lincoln, 1966).

The pedagogue who decides to take the facilitator's role must aim to welcome all members to the realm of communal philosophical dialogue and distribute the power of knowledge to the group as a whole. Dialogue leads the members of the community gradually to a deeper level of inquiry with a continual deconstructivism (Kennedy, 2004). Because education cannot only be the acquisition of knowledge, but primarily its exploration and discovery, education can help in discovering and augmenting the meaning of life through the relationships that are created in a vibrant school community with the help of dialogue, critical thinking, and reflection. As noted earlier, thinking is not something taught, but can be developed by practice. People should have opportunities to ask questions, to think, to decide. In order for such teaching to take place, however, "the teacher must also be a thinker on his/her own" (Wegerif, 2010, p. 23). The teacher who takes on the role of facilitator of a philosophical dialogue with children joins the community of inquiry as another co-researcher, willing to consider the question without having predetermined answers and without expressing personal views that would influence the direction of the dialogue. When children ask his/her opinion - and sooner or later they will ask - there should be a return to the attention to the opinion of the children themselves and emphasis on the fact that we can think correctly on our own, without the help of an authority. Its mission is to create an environment of security and trust, to encourage the expression of different views, to ensure that the rules of dialogue are observed and to lead children to deepen and persevere in

investigation. Facilitator's interventions are always in the form of questions, as they ask for justifications, clarifications and reflections. The discussion returns to the main question when it deviates, connections between the ideas expressed are highlighted -in the discussion and on the board- and the disagreements are also exploited. Finally, the facilitator takes care to complete the dialogue with metacognitive questions. The dialogue itself thus becomes the object of a further dialogue aimed at the self-awareness and self-regulation of the group. Strong questioning and reflecting can be the key to cultivating thought because the dynamics of our questions are what guides the zeal for research and even the erasure of other, past paths. The questions through the dialogue stimulate different points of view which the students hear and entertain, whether they agree with them or not. They are what provokes thought in dialogue and make it necessary to look at the issue from different angles. In order for this mental exercise to take place, the process of selecting the appropriate questions should be structured to give the student the opportunity and the freedom to listen as well as to submit his/her own questions. The teacher may not be able to teach the thought itself but may create the environment in which students, themselves will be able to develop the will to discuss, think, express, and contrast their views with those of their peers.

“As birds learn to fly by flying, one learns to think while thinking” (Lipman & Sharp, 1975, p.1).

Nevertheless, engaging children in a pre-college philosophical dialogue can be very demanding from the standpoint of at least two aspects of the educational background of the facilitator. On one hand there is a need for pedagogical and educational training for the philosopher who has no experience with K-12 students. Yet, on the other hand the teacher needs training in philosophical thinking, the amount of which depends again on the age/grade of the

students (Gregory, 2013, p.76-79). Moreover, the need for a philosophical awareness within students' statements and questions as well as how to motivate their philosophical discussions (Mohr Lone, 2012, p.14) can vary depending on the grade- or developmental-level of the students while in other cases the teacher-philosopher may be insufficiently experienced in classroom management, habits of classroom discipline for different ages, and probably less skillful in making connections within the distinct disciplines under discussion (Gregory, 2013, p.74-75). In summary conclusion, the training of the P4C facilitator is perhaps the most important factor (Kennedy, 2004b) for a successful Pre-College Philosophical Inquiry.

The Pedagogy of the Community of Philosophical Inquiry

I think I know what a community of inquiry is when I see it, but I would be hard-pressed to spell out all of its characteristics. It's something you leave year after year so that after a while it becomes a part of you can make it a reality for children (A. Sharp, 1981:213-214)

The philosophical community, phenomenon that comes from antiquity but continues to flourish today, can rightly be considered "community education." Looking back at the origins of philosophy in the fifth century BC, the ancient Greek philosophers following Socrates—particularly the Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics—clearly thought of philosophy as a form of therapy, which cured the toxic false beliefs that cause suffering. Socrates, too, suggested philosophy as a way of life, for better understanding, elaborating, and managing one's emotions, and oneself, while learning through dialogue. Philosophers in the ancient world learned how to examine their beliefs through dialogue and conversation, and they lived in philosophical communities of shared values and shared practices. For Plato, in addition, knowledge was of value only if it led to the moral improvement of individuals and the happiness of the societal whole. So, the dominant element of the Academy was the common way of life of its members,

the common search, the creative dialogue, through which the new generation of students found its way in a community of inquiry (Kalfas, 2015, p.18).

Many have said something about nature; and while everyone individually offers nothing or little to this research, all together they create an important legacy” (Aristotle: Metaphysics, A.993b 2-4, in Kyrgiopoulos, 2006).

So, it is fair to take into account not only the knowledge that we share, but even the most awkward, because they too have contributed to something, since they at least have followed their own research path and perhaps added on our own (Aristotle: Metaphysics, A.993b13-15, in Kyrgiopoulos, 2006).

In philosophy education programs, children form what Lipman and Sharp called the “Philosophical Community of Inquiry” (CPI). For both theorists and those who follow this educational model, philosophy is first and foremost an exploration. By defining philosophical activity as exploration, we shift from teaching philosophy for transmitting information to philosophy as a search process: we seek answers to questions that concern us, meaning in human experience, understanding of our inner and outer worlds. When this search ceases to be individual and tacit and becomes part of a group, it acquires the characteristics of a philosophical community of inquiry.

Socrates encouraged people to participate in discussion. Moreover, he said we must listen carefully to others (because listening to others is thought), we must measure what we say (because speech is thought) and we must repeat in our minds what others have said. Therefore, he signified that participating in a dialogue is examining possibilities, discovering alternatives, recognizing the perspective of others, and creating a community of inquiry (Lipman, Teaching children philosophical thinking, 1980, xiv-xv). A CPI that is also connected to the Piercian

references on community of inquiry (Oliverio, 2012, p.33), appearing in his late thinking attributed to philosophical doubts their introductory purpose for an inquiry, as Lipman has commented in one of his latest interviews.

In this community the members co-examine and co-investigate the questions that concern them, express themselves freely and, with full mutual respect, interact and build on each other's thoughts, participate actively justifying their positions, help each other to draw conclusions from what has been articulated, and try to recognize the hypotheses and hidden cases of others. And they do this not to gain the teacher's favor or a good grade, but to better understand, deepen their search, and give meaning to their questions. The community self-regulates and adapts to the needs of its members and matures with them. There is no better example of the maturity of such a community than when a child acknowledges that the point of view it expressed earlier has weaknesses and that it eventually agrees and adheres to the point of view of the other.

In a philosophical exploratory community, the children themselves ask questions and co-decide (vote) which one to explore each time. This, in itself, is an important step in the process: learning to articulate a clear question about what concerns you is a great skill that needs practice to be mastered. In addition, children understand that the question itself can be the most critical point of a search: a question that does not touch the essence of a reflection can never lead to correct answers. At first the children will struggle to have their own question prevail. But as they are forced to decide on their own, and as they realize that perhaps someone else's question best expresses their own concerns, they learn to back down, to make better choices, to value the common venture more than individual pursuit. This can be considered as an exercise in democracy, a victory of "us" that is being achieved slowly and with difficulty. Consequently, as the community's main component is the dialogue within democracy, it therefore aims to cultivate

democratic citizens capable of thinking and reflecting. A goal that aims to be effectively channeled through education.

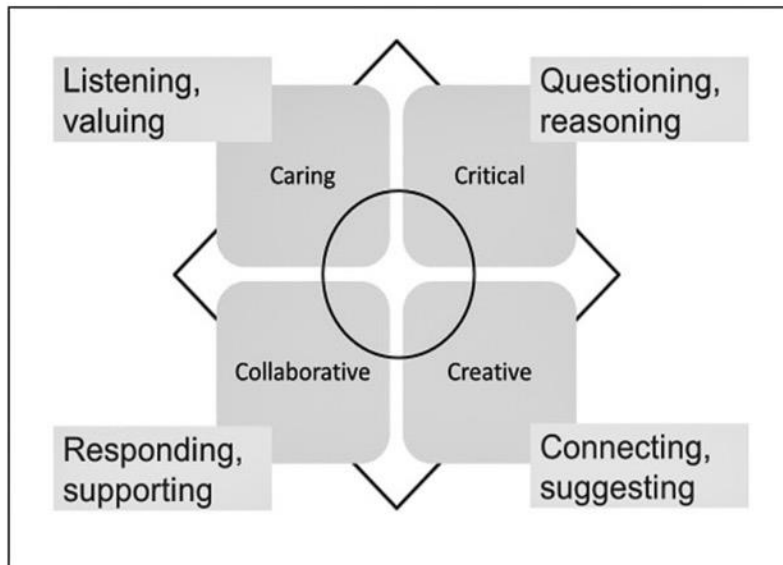
The most common form of space organization in philosophical research does not resemble the ordinary classroom. At first sight it is the furniture arrangement that is different. There are no desks, and the chairs are arranged in a circular formation. This formation ensures on one hand that we delimit what is happening within the circle and on the other it constitutes learning as a joint cooperative discovery, analysis, and justification of the acquired knowledge (Sharp, 1991). A circle is a shape without beginning or end which means that it symbolically defines an imaginary center—the goal of the inquiry—that is equally distant from all members. This may mean that all members have, in principle, the opportunity to approach the center under the same conditions and the guidance of a well-trained facilitator who establishes the necessary conditions for the inquiry to grow and the community to thrive. Given that philosophical inquiry is an unpredictable and open process, it follows that the mental center functions on the one hand as a point of convergence of the thoughts of the members on the other hand in a question. Convocation does not mean something needs agreement as long as the thoughts are focused on a horizon that shares the other thoughts. Also, the question remains a matter of negotiation even if the goal of philosophical inquiry is specific. In addition to the circle, the horseshoe-shaped arrangement is often used. In it there is an open point which is usually occupied by the blackboard where all members' ideas, questions, and main concepts are written and/or drawn as a diagram. The community has rules and common practices. The rules of the community of inquiry are usually associated with the concept of respect. More precisely, and according to Sharp (1991) the community builds on trust, and mutual respect, where one is willing to consider all plausible alternatives, is an active listener, and is ready to offer and request logical reasons for

various beliefs and perspectives. The themes that are explored are adjusted to the ages and common interests of the group and therefore are aiming for outcomes with a practical effect in their lives.

"Philosophy for children" promotes "higher" thinking (Higher order thinking), the criteria of which are critical thinking, creative thinking, collaborative thinking, and caring thinking (the 4C's). This has the immediate effect of improving the quality of life in a democratic society, which, according to Lipman, is the general aim of "Philosophy for Children" (Lipman, 1998).

More specifically, Lipman (1998) aimed to promote complex thinking by cultivating the critical, creative, and thought-provoking (philosophical thinking) that make it up (Lipman, 2003, p.220) with his P4C program. He concluded that the best way to develop and improve the way of thinking of children is P4C, because it encourages them to think critically and creatively. It furthermore, causes them questions and concerns for their peers and their co-thinkers in their journey of multidimensional thinking and that was the third aspect, that of Caring, which raises their imagination even more creatively and productively. Roger Sutcliffe (Philipson & Wegerif, 2017, p.20), a most recent p4C expert in the UK added a fourth mode of thinking, the Collaborative, which explains how Community of Inquiry is built. Therefore, referring to the principles of P4C, the experts have agreed to the 4Cs Framework of thinking for a constructive dialogue. As we introduce P4C to the young and adult students, it is intended to involve some of the ground rules that make possible the P4C endeavor. According to Philipson and Wegerif (2017) those are divided in the four pillars of the 4Cs Framework. (See Fig. 3)

Figure 3. The 4C's Framework of Philosophy for Children



Adapted from Phillipson & Wegerif, 2016.

Based on the characteristics of the collective, in addition to its positive outcomes, an innovative project is generated. The idea of adjusting an educational methodology of philosophical inquiry to another age group—the parents whose children can benefit academically, socially, and emotionally from their parents' engagement in this—has been the core focus of this dissertation. More specifically, this research intended to engage—indirectly—the third part of the school's community triangle (teachers-parents-students), that is the students of the parents being involved in, in an educational framework that their children and their teachers as mentors were already involved in. The specific P4C-based framework that I have modified to immerse parents in a philosophical inquiry, and open dialogue with the teachers and consequently with their children is *Philosophy for Parents (P4P)*.

From Philosophy for Children to Philosophy for Parents

Philosophy is not just a method you use to achieve your goal and then it is useless to you; it is the way and the end together. “In other occupations the result comes after their work is completed. In philosophy, on the other hand, curiosity is combined with knowledge. Pleasure does not come after learning, but, rather, they go together” (Epicurian Letters). When Epicurus became a teacher, he remembered his own initiation in philosophy and wanted his students to start philosophizing without their minds being full of all the indifferent or useless knowledge the school offers. “How lucky you are Apellis,” he wrote to his young student, “that you approached philosophy immaculate from every education” Maybe that is why after years he wrote to the student of Menoikeas: “As long as someone is young, he should not be late to philosophize. He who begins to philosophize at a young age, which is why when he grows up, he sees life as young”. For thirty-five years he organized his teaching and life in the Garden so that it would be seen that philosophy is the art that makes someone’s life happy and that it has value only when it helps us to achieve happiness. But, in addition to whether his views were valid or not, it was important that he found a response in the public, not just in the usual patrons of the schools. It is important to consider that Epicurus’ Garden was open to the Athenian citizens and other Greeks (mainly from Ionia), but also to women, slaves, the poor, and even the uneducated. Everyone was accepted because it was considered that everyone can become a philosopher. After all, as Epicurus said,

and Protagoras at first was lame and carried wood, and Aristotle first ate his father’s money, then went to the army, then became a drug dealer, until he met Plato. He listened to his lessons (he was not brainless) and what happened (To the philosophers in Mytilene). At the time, all this was from disturbing to scandalous for the intellectual

world of Athens, who preferred to imagine that philosophy is an occupation for the elite (who are usually few) and certainly not coming from the lower educational or social level (Kalfas, 2015).

So, what were the main innovations in relation to the old practice at a certain point of time in philosophy? First, the philosopher left the pedestal of the isolated sage and became the person next door. They met ordinary people, wandered the streets and hangouts of the city, participated in its institutions, and were in direct contact with its political leaders. Then, philosophy was presented as something useful for the first time. The philosopher was still appealing to those who were concerned about the salvation of their soul and the moral foundations of human behavior. But at that point in time, the philosopher seems to have been the one with solutions to practical problems as well. He was certainly the teacher of the artistic use of speech, rhetoric, which has been presented as the key to success in various areas of social life. To persuade one's fellow citizens in the Church of the Municipality (Ekklesia tou Demou), to defend oneself in court, and even to properly administer one's household and raise one's children, one was seen as needing philosophical education. Consequently, systematic apprenticeship to philosophers began to function as a form of higher education in the ancient world. In addition, the theme of philosophy was also changing. The interest in nature and the universe in that generation of philosophers was set aside, and philosophers turned decisively to the complex problems that individual life creates in cities. According to the famous saying of Cicero, Socrates (and the sophists, we would add) first brought down philosophy from heaven and installed it in cities and in people's homes. From the world of theory, philosophy became an art of life and well-being was the ultimate goal for the Stoics. The three components (moral, psychological, intellectual) which were correlated with the disciplines of ethics (behavior),

physics (perspective), and logic (thinking) (Gregory, 2013, pp. 11-12). Finally, philosophy seemed to claim its own method. This method was not simple to identify, nor did it appear in a uniform way to the philosophers of the time. Elements of the new method, however, have been the interactive way of exposing philosophical problems, the formulation of opposing positions on each issue, the search for definitions, and the critical rejection of dogmatic positions. This new method was the pedagogical tool that Lipman and Sharp have decided to explore with the children of primary and secondary education as it has been described so far.

Having explored and discussed in this chapter how teachers can be trained in engaging philosophically with children, it is the core idea of this study, to further engage in philosophical discussions with the other important adults with whom the children have a trusting and interacting relationship with, that is the parents. Family is the primary and the smallest community where children form relationships, the foremost source of knowledge. Therefore, it could become the first community of inquiry supposing that the parents can enhance a philosophical discussion that has started from the continuing wonder of the child. However, the philosophical sensitivity is missing from most homes regardless of educational and/or social background as it also happens with the teachers (Mohr-Lone, 2012).

Philosophical Dialogue between Parents and their children

Sadly Adults very infrequently, usually never, pick up on or engage with the philosophical questions or comments that children raise—as one could easily imagine happening when their children return home from school having, earlier in the day, engaged in dialogic philosophical discussion with their teacher, either by their own spontaneous questions arising during the day, or prompted via stories purposefully introduced by their teacher teachers to raise

questions among them, by ethical dilemmas involving fairness in person-to-person interactions that are likely to occur in their everyday life.

Such reticence is, in fact, not surprising; most adults don't concern themselves with philosophical questions in the first place. As Gareth Matthews notes in *Philosophy for Children* (1980),

it is hardly surprising that, typically, they fail to pick up on the philosophical questions the children around them raise or the philosophical comments they make or the philosophical reasoning they develop. Nor is it surprising that adults usually make no effort to raise philosophical questions with their children or set aside time to reflect with children on philosophical issues.

In fact, what I am calling the "Aristotelian conception" of childhood insulates adults from appreciating the philosophical comments, questions, and reasoning that the children around them come up with. Being themselves, presumably, mature specimens of the species human being (*homo sapiens!*), adults naturally assume that they must have the cognitive means immediately available to them to deal with any significant issues their children can formulate. Because these adults won't, typically, have worked out any very good responses to philosophical issues, they often simply do not hear what is philosophically interesting or challenging about what their children have to say. Moreover, it doesn't occur to them that it might be appropriate to venture into unfamiliar territory and explore issues with their children that normal, standard adults do not, as a general thing, spend any time thinking about. But by ignoring the possibility of philosophical reflection and dialogue with their children, adults impoverish their relationship to those children, underestimate the cognitive capacities of children,

to the detriment of both

Therefore, this study explores the idea of involving, adjusting, and sharing with the parents a framework that was initially designed for children (Lipman & Sharp's P4C) with the ultimate intention of enhancing parent-child closeness as well as advancing their children's academics and well-being as well as their own social and cognitive prosperity.

Chapter 4. Parents as Adult Learners

Introduction

In previous Chapters, I have made reference to the mounting research that has documented the positive effects of parents-school partnership on the academic and personal advancement of the students, but that has also consistently verified a widespread lack in schools of such partnerships and therefore the need for new ways for teachers to approach and nurture a relationship of trust with parents. In the just-preceding chapter, an account of Philosophy for Children, P4C, was given as a prominent educational method for the introduction of creative dialogue and reflection in pre-college education and, most importantly, as the foundation for my suggested model of Philosophy for Parents (P4P). Now I will address the connection of the use of dialogue, critical reflection, and the community of inquiry in the school community by students, teachers and parents, with theories and practice of adult education including application of the specialized theory of Transformative Learning, where parents, as adult learners within the school community of inquiry—in a climate of gradually developing relational trust—are given the opportunity to logically discuss, argue creatively, build on each other's ideas and experiences, and engage in purposeful inquiry to learn transformatively in a field of knowledge and skills of common concern. This chapter, then, will outline the basic principles of adult education, as well as the main constructivist theories that inform it. This, because these principles are the ones related to the philosophy of critical thinking, creative dialogue, critical reflection, the importance of relationships in learning that result in emancipative learning, social action and, in most cases, in a change in perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs. There is, at the same time, an urgent need to compare and inquire into similarities and differences in critical thinking relating to the concepts of adulthood, the experiences of the individual and his/her

transformation, as well as the socio-political environment in which the individual belongs—including the influence of the educator on adult learners. And to compare all the just above to the ways that the rational dialogue, advocated within both the Aristotelian and Platonic models, compares to that of Mezirow.

We start with a core question:

Are All Grown-Ups, Adults?

According to Stephen Brookfield (1986), Karl Rogers (1998), Peter Jarvis (2003), and Malcolm Knowles (1998) adults display specific characteristics that differentiate them from children and adolescent learners. First, they hold their own worldview, which comes from the knowledge, experiences, and ideologies they have already acquired and favored in the past. They have very often previously developed a personal style of learning and expect precise results from educational practice because they usually know exactly what they want to learn. In sum, the majority of adults decide to return to some type of education for specific reasons (for professional, personal, or social development) and/or because a specific need has arisen. In contrast, in the world of minors, education is taken for granted and, in most countries worldwide is linked to the age and developmental stage at which they have arrived.

By contrast, adulthood is generally considered to be intertwined with the tendency of individuals to self-determine, emancipate, and actively participate in the formation of situations that concern them, as well as in the adoption at some point of additional roles, which affect the available time and energy they can devote as learners (Polson, 1993). Their desire to be treated as responsible beings in the field of education, as in other areas of their lives, is also characteristic, resulting in the desire for continuous dialogue and communication with the instructor. They usually seek to have their opinion taken into account and the curriculum adapted

to their own learning objectives and needs. These traits are obviously more specifically determined in relation to the distinctive features of adulthood such as maturity, the sense of perspective and evolution, and the responsible and autonomous decision making that is characteristic of adults as learners.

Adult Learning as a Term

UNESCO during the 1976 conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization gave perhaps the broadest definition of Adult Education, according to which, “[Adult Education is] the entire body of organized educational processes, whatever the content, level, or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools or colleges, and universities as well as in apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adult by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualifications, or turn them in a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behaviour in the two-fold perspective of full personal development and participation in balanced independent, social, economic, and cultural development.” (Encyclopedia of Canadian Adult Education).

Steps in the Development of Adult Learning Theories

Adult education was considered necessary from one point onwards in recent history, due to rapidly changing social and cognitive requirements needed in order to increase the active adaptability of individuals. Increasing the competitiveness of people in the labor market and avoiding the social exclusion of certain social groups at risk of being marginalized, were two factors that influenced the development of organized adult education (Rogers, 2001, p.30). Later, the personal development of the individual (self-realization) and the expansion of the

possibilities/need for participation in politics (e.g., in labor movements), in “social becoming” (Anc. Greek: *koinonikon gignesthe*) were sought again in adult education. All this happened thousands of years after philosopher/educators, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and other ancient philosophers had sought to educate adults not only to help them become better citizens but also for their own well-being.

Socrates’ work was a cornerstone of adult education, as his applied pedagogical methods (dialectical, control, obstetrics-*maieutica*) revealed that spiritual exercise and education are not confined to a specific age but last for a lifetime. In this way he engaged in a continuous struggle to educate the citizens in order to help them activate their critical ability to be led to self-knowledge (Kalfas, 2015). The dialogue—and more specifically the rational dialogue of Socrates—motivated adherents to acquire a permanent critical stance. Thus, rational dialogue and critical reflection have for many centuries been inextricably linked concepts and practices.

Plato, with his Theory of Ideas (Greek: *Theoria ton Ideon*), used the philosophical/Platonic dialogue to free his adult students from stereotyped views and lead them to a voluntary (self-directed) acquisition of knowledge which would ultimately benefit society as a whole. He had a close, trusting relationship with his students, and he adapted his programs to their capabilities and interests (Sipitanou, 2004)—always pointing out the role of critical ability and critical reflection in the acquisition of knowledge.

Aristotle, on his part, emphasized dialectics, linking it to logic, in so doing, trying to ensure that one can dialectically arrive at appropriate positions on an issue using right reasoning. In sum, he taught dialectical reasoning—the art of rational argumentation in its dialectical form—and made a guide to conversing “*dialogesthai*”.

The great differences in current adult education compared to the past have probably arisen because of the diverse aims that modern education adapted. In other words, adult education regenerated because, in recent times, specialized training was provided to advance financial competitiveness and employability, was not aimed at the learner as a whole, and did not serve their deeper needs. Moreover, in the current era, it was unable to support modern learners in social skills, communication, collaboration, adaptability, inquiry, and production of new knowledge, i.e., “learning how to learn.” It is obvious that such a revision of training, would presuppose a great conversion in the role of the trainer, from a simple transmitter of the process of dialogics and then current knowledge, to a coordinator, a facilitator, and a mediator. From the early 1980’s, the European Union started to support and fund activities aimed at adult education, and later, on Life-long Learning (European Commission). Many researchers in the same period of time have studied and researched this topic placing special emphasis on theories, teaching methods, and cognitive functions that control learning, and the motivations that drive learners to high performance.

In addition, for adult learning to be considered successful now it needs, primarily, to take into serious consideration the adult learner’s motivation and barriers, learning environment, and learning goals and purposes (Merriam, 2013).

Motivation

According to Maslow (1954), human needs are classified in a pyramidal form where the most basic ones (hunger, thirst, etc.) are placed at the base of the pyramid while self-realization is at the top. In between are placed a hierarchy of other needs such as those for security, for social inclusion and acceptance, but also for emotional integration. The different needs of everyone at the individual level shape the internalized and/or externalized motivations (driving forces) that

drive adults to start or continue their learning. Another well-known theory of motivation is that of the behaviorists, Pavlov, Thorndike, and Skinner, according to whom stimuli lead the learner toward reward and (usually) away from punishment. The Cognitive Motivation Theory also examines, in its own way, the driving force of adult learning. According to this model, the reward for learning can have different meanings and significances from person to person (Lewin, 1935 & Victor, 1964). After all, adult learning motivation is a complex issue for both the instructor and the learner who can seek learning to meet different types of needs.

Barriers

Unlike children and adolescents, adults must face various constraints when deciding to start or continue their studies. Adult learners, during their training, face obstacles which can be due to both external and internal factors. Obstacles such as distance and time constraints, family responsibilities, etc., are mentioned as external factors, while pre-existing knowledge, values, and perceptions, and/or psychological factors that often hinder learning are characterized as internal. Perhaps the most important obstacles, nowadays, are usually the lack of convenient time and financial resources that result from the increased responsibilities of adulthood. There are also obstacles related to lack of information about the opportunities offered for education in various practices (especially in marginalized and technologically degraded communities), bureaucracy, distance from the place of residence (although more online programs are being developed lately), but also the requirements/responsibilities of family life.

Other times, the motivating factors for adults continuing their studies can turn into obstacles. As already mentioned, an important motivation is the demand for professional development, the acquisition of new skills, the upgrading of prior knowledge. However, the need to adapt to a different work environment, with different requirements, obligations, and policies,

or even the uncertainty of a new beginning, can negatively affect an adult's decision to start/continue their studies (Merriam, et.al. 2007).

In addition, adults feel, much more strongly than children and adolescents, that their self-esteem and dignity are at stake when asked to return to education as members of a learning group. In many cases personal negative experiences and/or memories from traditional education work as a deterrent (Knowles, 1973). Because most of the above factors cannot be controlled and addressed by the education system, the goal of adult education/educators is, on the one hand, to attract learners and, on the other, to keep them actively involved until the completion of each program.

Learning Environment and Mentors

The endless hours of lectures and the lack of practice, which historically have been required by formal education, are often what comes first to adults' minds (Coombs, 1985) and currently create a deterrent in the learning environment. Discomfort and rejection increase when the learner's expectations for the program they are attending do not coincide with their trainer's goals as well as when the value of the learners' experiences is not recognized and exploited. Therefore, it is important for trainers/educators to realize, appreciate and take into serious consideration their learners' knowledge, and recognize their many ways of learning in various ways and places that can turn them into active learners in all learning environments including the formal, the informal, the non-formal and, lately, the online environment (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020, p.53-54) which intersects with the other three.

Whichever learning environment the learner chooses consciously or unconsciously there are characteristics that have positive effects such as: being well organized, with knowledgeable and caring instructors, participatory instructional methods, well-crafted lectures, and relevant and

useful materials (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020, p.55). In addition, Knowles (1980, p.47) suggested that the classroom climate should cause “adults to feel respected, accepted and supported”. Consequently, the student’s effort should best be focused on the integration of new knowledge into the previous set in a strictly interactive environment through creative dialogue, exchange of ideas and opinions, reflection of thought, co-construction of meanings, an organized time schedule, goal-oriented, activity-oriented, learning-oriented (Knowles et.al, 2005), self-directed, and technologically updated (online, hybrid, etc.) means wherever it is possible and/or preferable mainly because it compensates for the constraints that were mentioned before.

It is, however, important to bring to the learner’s attention the significance of those adult educators who are capable of carrying, out a plethora of techniques in a wide array of educational—or even non-educational—settings to successfully foster the complex growth of learning. “Becoming an effective teacher of adults depends on acquiring a balance between an appropriate philosophical vision of teaching and the understanding and translation of that vision into a practical instructional process with all its requisite elements” (Galbraith, 2004, p.3-4)

Critical Theory in Adult Education: How Do Adult Education and Critical Theories Apply to Parents in a P4C Dialogic Process?

As we know, starting in 1930s, the Frankfurt School in Germany began to develop “Critical Theory,” a model that links critical thinking to a critical perspective on the wider context of a society in which an individual belongs and that influences the way they think. It is a theory that derives from Marxist philosophy, draws elements from psychoanalysis and sociology, embraces several fields of science, and relies primarily on political and moral assumptions. In that context, critical theory aims at the development of autonomous thinking by reinforcing the critical thinking that leads the individual to doubt and/or disagree with entrenched ideologies,

and finally to free him/herself from prior absolute, dogmatic, and dysfunctional assumptions and to consider and weigh alternative principles for action (Brookfield, 2005). As Brookfield (2005, p. vii) very characteristically points out “. . . critical theory should be considered seriously as a perspective that can help them [adult learners & adult educators] to make some sense of the dilemmas, contradictions, and frustrations they experience in their work . . . a useful lens through which they could view their practice”.

The fact that critical pedagogy, which generally analyzes education as a process in which the social and economic groups in power impose values and views that legitimize the power and control that they exercise in the world, has its ideological roots in the writings of Hegel and Marx, and is practically based on the work of the thinkers of the Critical Social Theory movement of the Frankfurt School such as Jürgen Habermas, Theodore Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Erich Fromm, but also on the ideas of Antonio Gramsci (Brookfield, 2005). However, as approached by most scholars in the field of adult education, critical theory has its starting point in Habermas’ theory of Communicative action. The specific theory premises a dialogue in which two agents are trying to reach understanding of and perhaps agreement with one another’s points of view, while putting aside egocentric calculations of success (Brookfield, 2002b).

Critical Theory as Dialogue in the System of the Frankfurt School

Beyond the strong influence of Habermas, there are scholars such as Stephen Brookfield (2002a), who recognize both the influence of Marcuse on organization of the critical theoretical framework in adult education (subjectivity & integration) and that of Eric Fromm (the alienation that is caused by the capitalist system and its amelioration with the help of adult education). Despite the just above, if we look for the *first* theoretical learning framework in adult education with roots in critical theory, we would probably end up with Paolo Freire. Especially in the

1970s, Friere seems to have played a very important role in linking critical theory to emancipation in adult education. Perhaps a connection even more intense resulted from Habermas' attempt in the 1980s to approach Critical Theory in the context of communicative action and his differentiation of the three areas in which human interest generates knowledge: the technical/instrumental, the practical/communicative and the emancipatory (Mezirow, 1991, p. 72).

The famous theorist distinguished learning initially in two main areas, instrumental learning which involves controlling the environment or people, and communicative learning that refers to the understanding of others during a conversation (Habermas, 1971). A third one, the emancipatory, derives from a critical questioning of ourselves and the social systems around us, where self- reflection is seen as the feature of reconstruction that frees the individual from problematic attitudes and views (Deakin-Crick & Joldersma, 2007).

Mezirow Sees Transformations as Occurring via Critical Thinking

It is at this particular point that Jack Mezirow undertakes to extend the aforementioned theory by highlighting transformational learning as occurring through critical thinking. Moreover, he sees that by reflecting, the individual is able not only to process data and understand new information but also to enrich practice with it, thus linking theory with practice in "the creative implementation of a purpose" (Mezirow, 1991, p.12). The conclusory outcome is that to produce knowledge, critical thinking must influence experience.

Habermas has long been a dominant figure of the Frankfurt School and was a source of inspiration and influence for the theory of Transformational Learning to which we will refer in more detail below. He is a seminal thinker, as seen in his work, *Theory of Communicative Action* on the importance of interactive discourse on the basis of which one can detach oneself from the

operation of the system that subjugates and excludes the individual. During the discourse the interlocutors stand in the same relative positions and have equal rights to express their judgments, views, and reasoning, or to express their objections and disagreements about the stereotypes in the ideas of others (Brookfield, 2005). An analogous form of a democratic dialogue is proposed in my innovative model for enhancing the school-family relationship via transformative learning of its interlocutors as presented in this dissertation.

Habermas' Public Sphere Equated with the School Community

Mine is a model that embraces transformational versus informational learning for parents within Habermas' "public sphere" which, in this case, is the school community. Habermas' public sphere, according to Brookfield (2005), is the domain where people meet others to explore, discuss, organize, and conduct their communal affairs, and which is threatened by certain social developments that prevent the democratic way of life (Habermas, 1976).

It is no coincidence that even in modern philosophy, thinkers of great substance raised the question of critical thinking directly, even if, as might be expected, the question arose through their own framework of concepts, propositions, and their own aims. In many ways, of course, this focus on thought, had been seen as an evasion of the object for action, with all the possible interpretations of the term. An action could possibly mean I act, I set, I declare, I claim, I come to a rupture, I challenge, I transform, I change. But insofar as all these are projected into a system, they take place within a system (i.e.: a structure, a society, a state, a formation of states, communities, a mechanism, an institution, or a grid of them). As Zinn argues in Brookfield's (2005, p.33), "it is precisely this self-critical posture toward its own propositions that a critical theory of adult learning must display". The relevance of adult learning to the principal values of Critical theory is elaborated and acknowledged by Brookfield (2005) in relation to formation of

the philosophical vision of a democratic society. Brookfield (2005, p.39-40) continues, emphasizing the “learning tasks of Critical Theory” that embraces “learning recognizing and challenging ideologies, unmask power, overcome alienation, reclaim reason, pursue liberation and practice democracy”. These skills could be in the case of the suggested P4P Model not just relevant but also very significant in its success as albeit implicitly, how things work in critical theory, brings within it an idea of how things should be. This is how things should be and where we could look in order to activate dynamics of change in the situation in parents-school partnership, touch many fields at the same time and this common place be defined by the meeting of the learning fields that were mentioned and have been attributed to Critical Theory.

In conclusion, critical theory in adult learning, as it emerges from the literature, could begin with the “learning tasks that are embedded in Critical Theory” (Brookfield, 2005, p.39), and which can be enhanced with a critical and reflective discussion by all actors in the school community (students, teachers, parents). They would therefore engage their daily thoughts through critical thinking—which they can certainly use in their everyday conversation, and pass it along from one generation to the next.

Selected Adult Learning Theories and Frameworks

In this part of this chapter, we will briefly explore three of the most basic theories of adult education and significant aspects of constructivism, whose tenets undergird, theoretically, my proposed model for strengthening the school-family relationship which is explored in this dissertation. These theories are the Andragogy of Knowles, Freire’s educational Social Change, and Mezirow’s Transformative Learning.

From Dewey to Knowles: Andragogy and Self-Directed Learning

As with many concepts in education, the genesis of adult learning can well be attributed to John Dewey, who focused primarily on the empirical (practical or experiential) discovery of knowledge by the student. And who, although mainly concerned with the education of children, is nevertheless considered one of the major theorists of *continuing* education. This is because his theory linked schooling to continuing education in an inseparable continuum. Dewey considered education to be a key element of human development, which, however, is not limited to the basic, school education of children and adolescents, but can continue at any stage of a person's life. In his fundamental work "Experience and Education" (1933) he claims that every human being can be in a continuous process of development, which is based on their continuing education as long as the basic education they have received has set the appropriate grounds. Dewey's views became a central point of reference and deeply influenced the founders of adult education such as Edouard Lindeman, Carl Rogers, Malcolm Knowles, Jack Mezirow, and Kurt Lewin (Kokos, 2005). David Kolb has also evolved theory on the experiential role of adult learners (Cranton, 2016, p. 3). However, in the last half of the 20th century, the concept was more directly promoted by Rogers who, as a psychotherapist, behaved more as a lay person than as a recognized authority. However, this set of principles was developed in the context of adult education mainly by Knowles who describes adult learners among others, as being self-directed and as those who voluntarily enter an educational activity with a life-centered, task-centered, or problem-centered orientation to learning driven by intrinsic motivation (Galbraith, 2004, p.23). Knowles (1973) turned Rogers' "self-guidance" into a key element of his approach to adult education, even adopting the forgotten 19th-century German term, "andragogy" (teaching adults), which he claimed stood separately differentiated from pedagogy (teaching children) and

that is how he tried to describe it to educators (1985). His theory came gradually to the following conclusions, which he found foundational for organizing adults' programs (Merriam et al., 2006, p. 85):

- Adults need to know why they are learning something.
- Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities
- They need to treat learning objects as problems that seek solutions.
- They learn best when the subject is of interest to them.
- The reason for teaching these topics must be explained.
- Teaching should be focused on practical application and not on simple memorization.
- Teaching should take into account the diversity of students' characters and backgrounds.
- Since they are self-guided, teaching should allow them to discover things for themselves.
- They need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of teaching.
- They are more interested in issues directly related to their work or personal life.

Nonetheless, many scholars have raised questions about andragogy as a “proven theory” (Brookfield, 1986, p. 98) and the “sustainability” of its assumptions (Merriam et al., 2006, p. 86). Knowles, (1989, p. 112) himself, was skeptical about this and therefore refers to andragogy only as a conceptual framework or basis for an adult learning theory. Furthermore, it seems clear that the focus of Knowles' understanding of self-direction in learning (SDL) emphasized learners' responsibility and freedom to construct their own learning experiences through a process (critical reflection, motivation, experiences), driven by the personal attributes of the learner (skills, abilities), and within a specific context (culture, political climate, learning environment)

(Knowles, 1989). As Philip Candy takes note, it is this major distinction within the model of self-directed learning as a goal and as a method—that many researchers have examined for decades (1991)—that “complexifies” it evermore. Because, for some SDL, was construed as a process of organizing instruction, while, for others, it has been seen as a learning characteristic/personal quality for adult learners to embrace if they did not have it already. It was also considered a rejection of overly teacher-centered traditional methods, which very often did not show the slightest confidence in and respect for learners’ ability to take responsibility for the way they learn. Knowles’s definition of SDL continues to be the most widely cited: In its broadest meaning, “self-directed learning describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes” (1975, p. 18).

One of its consequences has been Allen Tough’s (1971, 1982) work on Adult Learning Projects, who considered SDL as occurring mostly outside formal education and generating major concerns about the role of the adult’s educator (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020, p.137) in promoting and sustained learning how to learn, and life-long learning in every-day life. His work generated numerous research studies around the globe (Merriam & Baumgartner, 2020, p.138) that also confirmed the “prevalence” of SDL in adults’ lives, without, as Brookfield criticizes (1985), differentiating the significance of the various kinds of learning.

Even though, the intention of the chapter is to apply brief descriptions of the selected theories, it is nevertheless, significant to acknowledge the three main goals for SDL that Merriam describes:

1. To enhance the ability of learners to be self-determined in their studies, their ability to plan, carry-out and evaluate their own learning. (. . . not all learners are automatically self-directed merely by virtue of being adults, or even easily trained to become . . . Sometimes they are asked to change the way they know and understand the world . . . and transition to higher stages of development . . . (Kegan, 2018 as cited in Merriam, 2020)
2. To foster transformational learning. (“ . . . critical reflection and self-awareness on one’s own learning” (Mezirow, 1985 as cited in Merriam, 2020)
3. To promote emancipatory learning and social action as an integral part of SDL (. . . critically reflecting on themselves, and social, economic and political context in a cooperative learning environment. (Merriam et al, 2006, p. 121).

Paulo Freire and the Theory of Social Change

Paulo Freire (1970), the great Brazilian adult educator, formulated a learning theory which he referred to as “self-awareness.” It was based on his experience as a trainer of impoverished groups in Brazil and a leader of liberation efforts in Latin America and Africa, and Freire is now very popular as a theorist and partitioner throughout the Western world. He believed that adult education aims to develop critical awareness among individuals and groups in parallel with their educational endeavor. His work was inspired by the desire for political liberation and the removal of oppression. “Critical awareness” refers to a process in which students develop the ability to analyze, ask questions, and take action on the social, political, cultural, and economic contexts that influence and shape their lives. According to Henderson it sees Mezirow’s “disorienting dilemma” as a transformative learning experience (2002).

Freire proposed an important distinction between the school process and education. He considered the school process as a mode of social control, while education is characterized by the

possibility of transforming society—considering the learner as an active subject for both individual and social transformation (McLaren, 2003, pp. 191-2).

It is obvious that Freire (1984) perceives the educational process in relation to the influence of the existing power structure as a process of confrontation and conflict of interests. He argues that various kinds of power use education to *reproduce* the oppressive ideologies that prevail in the space-time environment at the expense of the popular masses and against which the educator must take a stand.

As a result, the basic demand of Freire's theory is education for all, with the aim of freeing the population from all forms of oppression and inequality in order to achieve the transformation of society (Morros & Torres, 2002, p.116). Deepening our study, we recognize that Freire perceives education as a political act and not a mere transmission of knowledge and skills—a sociological experience (Shor, 1992; Guadiano & de Alba, 1994, p. 132) which, as a transformative act, is constructed by ordinary people who are given the opportunity to work out their potential in a collective political-social context (Guadiano & de Alba, 1994, p.132-3). There, based on dialogue and communication, critical awareness emerges in a progressive process of self-liberation and collective liberation (Freire, 1976, pp.158-9). Therefore, in order to solve the educational problems/difficulties of his/her students, the teacher should look for solutions in the general cultural, historical, economic, and political context of each society (Darder, 2002, p. 35), utilizing the experiences that the students bring to the classroom at all levels to be critically processed with the help of the active participation of all students (Freire, 1985, p. xx). That processing is accomplished, both by introducing the topics of interest to learners in the learning process for reflection and, through a structured dialogue with clear goals, rules and directions, elucidating how to understand reality and seek their transformation (Freire,

1977, pp. 101-109). In Freire's (1976, p. 20) pedagogy, the educator cannot be a simple transmitter of knowledge addressed to passive recipients. Rather, he/she acts as a leader to create the conditions for an effective search for knowledge by learners, to strengthen their curiosity; their questions and energy; and to encourage constructive dialogue aimed at awareness and liberation (Freire, 1976, pp.76-90); and ultimately to drive action and change.

Emanating from Freirean empowering education is a critical-democratic pedagogy focused on interaction and active intervention. It approaches the development of the individual as an active, collaborative, and social process enabled by the inherent interdependence of the individual in society. McLaren describes the pedagogy of empowerment as the process by which students learn to critically approach knowledge and aim to broaden their understanding of themselves, the society in which they live and beyond and, ultimately, its possible transformational cultural lifestyle (Shor, 1992, pp. 16-18).

As can be seen, the two most foundational elements of Freire's theory, which the proposed model of this dissertation recognizes as its pillars in their transformative action for the parent community as an integral part of the school community, are the dialogue (face to face) and "critical awareness" in the process of which learners, as learning subjects, gain insight, not only of the reality that shapes and surrounds their lives, but also of their ability to transform, reshape and recognize this reality, and the choices that are opened to them (Freire, 1977, pp.74-84, 1985, pp. 72-80). Freirean dialogue nurtures love, humility, hope, faith, trust, and critical thinking/contemplation (1976, p.114), and is directed from action to thought and, from there to *new* action (Perry, 2000, p.17).

The basic principles of Freire's theory are as follows (Freire, 1972):

1. **Principle of Value:** Education should raise students' awareness so that they become subjects, not objects, of the world. This is done by teaching students to think democratically and to constantly wonder about the meaning of what they are learning.
2. **Principle of Knowledge:** Knowledge is a social construct, and is divided into two types: unconscious or practical knowledge and contemplative or emphatic knowledge. The various beliefs are transformed into knowledge after discussion and critical thinking.
3. **Principle of Human Nature:** The ability of humans to design and shape the world for their future needs is what separates them from animals. Oppressed groups need to be taught how to imagine a better way to shape a more humane future. However, some poor people see no way out of their situation and the role of the teacher is crucial in this.
4. **Principle of Learning:** Freire considers the view that the education system as a bank, a large warehouse, where students come to "take up" the knowledge they need for life, to be mistaken. Rather, students must construct knowledge through that which they already possess. Teachers need to understand how their students perceive the world so that they can discover ways in which they can teach better.
5. **Principle of transmission:** Teaching must be a political and democratic process in order to avoid dependence on the authority of the teacher. Teachers must become students and students must become teachers.
6. **Principle of Society:** Freire challenges the conventional assumption that there is equal opportunity in a democratic society. He often argues that education is a political process: schools are becoming tools used by parents, businesses, and the community to enforce

their values and beliefs. Although this is not always the case, this process often leads to the oppression and exclusion of the less favored.

- 7 **Principle of Opportunity:** Freire's entire educational career is based on his desire to provide greater opportunities to the world's poor and oppressed peoples, and especially to those of Brazil.
8. **Principle of Consensus:** Disagreement is something normal and expected that can be a trigger for reflection and a source of growth. The problem arises when opinions and disagreements are suppressed in the name of some authority or control.

In addition, Freire developed a model of literacy, based on the evolution of the cultural circles of the Popular Education movement, which flourished in Brazil in the 1950s (Freire,1972). In Freire's methodology of "Dialogical Problem-Posing", where knowledge is sought collectively through dialogue and critical thinking, and is not transmitted, and follows three interrelated stages, very similar to the ones of P4C:

- a) Discovering the "generating themes",
- b) Codification, and
- c) Reflection.

The first stage is when a problem that derives from students' context and concerns is posed for inquiry. Learners then begin 'Codifying and Decodifying their prior experiences and knowledge and consequently new knowledge is acquired. Students' critical awareness of existing problems leads, according to Freire (1974, p.46-54), to critical conscientization which ultimately empowers them. The third stage, that of Reflection, coincides with social action. Freire considered this stage as the best way to maintain meaningful communication. Through the

completion of the three stages, learners can achieve awareness, that is, they can then understand how their view of the world and their place in it was formed by social and historical powers that operate at their expense (Freire, 1972). The novelty of Freire's theory lies in the belief that adult learners, once they realize the conditions in which they live, will act with the aim of social change by overthrowing the existing order. Freire believed that the goal of learning is to lead individuals to emancipation and consequently to the change of social structures (Freire, 1973).

The central proposition of his theory that no education is neutral but rather a political instrument, has been criticized. In Jarvis' view, Freire's theory is treated primarily as political, argument rather than as a theory of adult education. It is also questionable whether this model can be transferred to Western societies, as the conditions (political, socio-economic, and cultural) are quite different from those in Latin America. However, Freire's theory, despite the criticism it has received, has influenced many contemporary scholars of adult education such as Mezirow and Jarvis, who also believe that education should lead to emancipation (Freire, 1998).

Mezirow's Transformative Learning

When studying Transformative Learning theory (TL) one would find that in the related streams of adult learning that there is a concomitant plethora of perspectives that span a very broad range of foci in social-science research: "rational vs. extra-rational processes, the individual vs. social change, autonomous vs. relational learning, and many others . . ." (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p.3) with similar outcomes in learning. It is, however, a continually evolving adult learning theory in the complex field of adult education that allows educators to inspire their diverse learners through their self-directed learning paths toward and to transformation.

Following, is a brief report of the theory and its progenitor—intentionally minimal—which

constitutes one of the two cornerstones—the other being P4C—of the model I propose in this dissertation.

Beginning in the last 2 decades of the 20th Century Jack Mezirow contributed to the complicated domain of Adult Education, the theory of Transformative Learning that offered both the educator and the learner who follow its precepts the opportunity—and challenge—of profoundly revising the way they see and make meaning of the world. This through a process of serially correcting now dysfunctional assumptions that were acquired, often unconsciously, in earlier years so that they are replaced by ones that are more open, permeable and in harmony with the operational reality in which the person lives. Within its lens, learning may be defined as the process of making a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience, which guides subsequent understanding, appreciation, and action, what we perceive and fail to perceive, and what we think and fail to think, that earlier were powerfully influenced by ingrained habits of expectation that constitute our frame of reference—a set of assumptions that structure the way we interpret our experiences” (Mezirow, 1990, p. 1, 1991, p.11).

With his theory, Mezirow specifically seeks to explain when learning becomes transformational and what precisely it is that changes as transformation occurs. The trigger for the formation and evolution of Mezirow’s theory, initially was observing the stresses his wife, Edee, experienced when participating in the learning process as an adult reentering college after raising a son. This experience sparked more extensive research on American women who return to and are actively involved in learning after earlier “occupations,” raising children, pursuing a career, etc. Mezirow’s early thinking was influenced strongly by the writings of German social philosopher Jürgen Habermas. Habermas (1990), in whose theories, he grounded his theory of transformative learning—drawing on, and then repurposing, the German Philosopher’s three

kinds of knowledge/learning—instrumental, communicative, and emancipatory—as well as his precepts for reflective discourse and communicative action.

Mezirow defined transformative learning as a process of reflective transformation in a specific frame of reference in which “all of a person’s mental habits are challenged and subject for possible revision so as not to be a hindrance to the evolution of life” (1991, p. 196). Based on this logic, he considered it necessary for the learner to reflect and then redefine and transform the personal perceptions which have been adopted through experience. More specifically, Mezirow stated that “transformational learning refers to the process by which we transform given mental sets to make them more inclusive, diverse, open, emotionally ready for change through critical reflection, in order to generate beliefs and perceptions and to proceed for action based on the new perception that has emerged” (2003b, p. 58-59, 2007b, p. 47). Furthermore, “Transformational learning” is a term that describes a learning process in which “one critically realizes one’s own established positions and assumptions as well as those of others and then evaluates their relevance in order to construct an interpretation.” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 4).

As a frame of reference, Mezirow defines “the cultural, ethical, philosophical and linguistic structures through which we give meaning by giving coherence and importance to our experiences. He sees two aspects—the mental habits and the assumptions that derive from them” (2009, p. 128). *Mental habits* have been defined as the specific way in which a person thinks, feels and acts influenced by the above-mentioned structures and which are structural elements of a person’s personality and change with much greater difficulty from the previous perceptions and assumptions that are, themselves, comprised of clusters of beliefs, feelings, judgments and consequent behaviors (Mezirow, 1991, 2007b). They are among the principal components of TL theory and identified as precisely what needs to change for transformational learning to occur.

The next element, similarly essential for the theory, is what Mezirow bequeathed to the next generations as the ground elements of critical reflection, the critical perception that a person has of him/herself (critical self-reflection) and rational, dialogue-discourse. These two, critical reflection and rational dialogue, have been placed at the center of Mezirow's theory (1990, 1991) and are perhaps the most important conditions contributing to the process of transformational learning.

I acknowledge that Mezirow was not the first to refer to critical reflection as a significant element in adult education. As has been noted previously, some references to it are found even in the works of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (Kokkos, 2010). In modern times, Dewey used this term and separated simple from critical reflection. Only much later, Mezirow presented the correlation of critical reflection with transformative learning in his work "Critical Reflection" (1998). Specifically, he stated in detail that with critical reflection we do not just look back at experiences, events, attitudes, emotions, but proceed to a critical evaluation of them (1998). In this way critical reflection becomes the means for reexamining, understanding, controlling, and redefining past experiences. By this process the individual tries to recognize, evaluate, and reshape any problematic attitudes or views held in relation to the content, the process, and the premise of previous knowledge (Mezirow, 1991, p. 107-108).

Rational Dialogue

Along with critical reflection, an equally fundamental element of TL theory, is discourse as rational dialogue in the process of which of two or more mature, critically minded individuals, converse for the purpose of arriving at a common understanding through critical examination of subjective experiences in matters of common interest (Mezirow, 2007, p. 50). The process proceeds without the disapproval or rejection of opposing views but, rather, with the smooth

integration of diversity through the process of communication and presentation of ideas, assumptions, and logical arguments by the participants in order to analyze experiences in the most democratic way (Mezirow, 2007b). Through such discourse, a person develops emotionally, learns to express his/her experiences, and comes to understand them, and gradually arrives at self-directed learning and autonomy (Mezirow, 1997). A major and catalytic role in a learner's achieving rational dialogue is held by the instructor, who must inspire trainees to participate critically in dialogue and formulate sound arguments so as to get closer to the transformation of their assumptions (Mezirow, 1997) thus freeing themselves from dysfunctional behaviors as well as outdated views and perceptions.

A prerequisite for such a dialogue is a climate of trust, equality, solidarity and freedom that the trainer must create with trainees. A context that can similarly make people thrive is an additional attribute—emotional intelligence—mentioned later by the American thinker, Daniel Goleman (1998) as facilitating the smooth and successful conduct of dialogue through the agency of which the individual becomes emotionally more mature as he/she perceives and manages his/her own emotions, can understand the feelings of others, detects personal motivations, and regulates interpersonal relationships with pure and clear thinking.

Mezirow holds that “[r]eflective discourse and its resulting insight alone do not achieve TL. Acting upon emancipatory insights, praxis is also necessary” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12). Social action, in some form and in certain contexts, to change distorted meanings and assumptions can also be the purpose of a “consciousness-raising group” in such natural settings as the workplace or family environment” (1991, p. 181). A direct correlation between individual and social life is evident in many of Mezirow's written texts; he considers the process of transformation to be a personal affair but one that also requires the acquisition and exercise of social skills. According

to Mezirow, the individual cannot act impulsively but in cooperation and interaction with the people around him/her in the wider social context. That is, in order to be successfully pursued, the transformational process, although a personal matter, must be framed by other people with whom rational dialogue takes place in order to eliminate dysfunctional perceptions and adopt a critical approach to things.

It is also important to note that Mezirow separates learning into instrumental and transformative types—instrumental simply being learning that is *not* transformative. The first refers to the learning of children whom Mezirow (1991, p. 3) holds cannot engage in learning that is transformative until they become adults. In sum, he holds the view that, in childhood, learning comes from authorities, while adult learners who have already over time formed assumptions, habits, attitudes, and, in some cases, can feel the urgent need to acquire new perspectives in order to transform their problematic frameworks of reference and be able to interpret facts better for themselves.

Perspective Change and “Disorienting Dilemma”

At the heart of transformational learning theory is the process of “perspective change” which is defined in three dimensions: psychological (changes in self-understanding), ethics (revision of belief systems), and behavior (changes in lifestyle).

The change of perspective that leads to transformative learning usually arises after a so-called “disorienting dilemma”, which is activated after a dramatic unresolved episode in one’s life, a significant change, or a great loss—although it can also occur after the accumulation of changes in some established systems of ideas, over a period of time. Change of perspective can also occur due to much less dramatic circumstances, such as those created by an educator. In large, Mezirow sees transformational learning as of a kind that transforms problematic

frameworks and outdated assumptions, so that they become more inclusive, open, thoughtful, and emotionally ready for change (Kokkos, 2005). Mezirow described the process of personal perspective transformation, that capture the elements of the theory so far described briefly, in 10 “phases”

Mezirow’s Ten Steps

1. Experiencing a disorienting dilemma,
2. Undergoing self-examination,
3. Conducting a critical assessment of internalized assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations,
4. Relating discontent to the similar experiences of others recognising that the problem is shared,
5. Exploring options for new way of acting,
6. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles,
7. Planning a course of action,
8. Acquiring the knowledge and skills for implementing a new course of action,
9. Trying our new roles and assessing them,
10. Reintegrating into society with a new perspective (Mezirow, 1991, p. 168-9).

The following example serves to illustrate the nature and potential transformative effect of a “disorienting dilemma”: A primary school teacher attends a postgraduate seminar, where the collaborative teaching method is taught. Having firm beliefs about the new method, he is primarily negative about innovation as he believes that conventional didactic practice has been

tested by him and works well. However, the seminar is conducted by applying the new method and he participates in a group where he is assigned an important role, as a result of which his self-awareness is stimulated, and he performs exceptionally well. As he becomes the center of attention, he begins to wonder about the value of the new method in relation to the one he had used until now. He transfers his experience to his own classroom and realizes that his students learn better and more enjoyably. He decides to adopt the new method, thus transforming his older beliefs—and behavior.

In this example we observe an important part of transformational learning—enabling an individual to critically change his frame of reflection, consciously revise his assumptions and beliefs, and adopt a new attitude that will offer new ways of defining and operating in the world around him. This process is largely logical and analytical.

But while the learning process is certainly rational on some levels, it can also sometimes be a profound experience that can be described as a spiritual or emotional transformation. For example, trying to undo racist, sexist, and other oppressive attitudes and behaviors can be particularly painful, as these attitudes are often developed as ways of understanding and successfully navigating a perverse social world. Transformational learning requires risk-taking, as well as a willingness to be vulnerable and to accept our perceptions and mentality being strongly challenged (Dirkx, 1998).

Roles of Teacher & Learner

The role of the teacher is to create an environment that builds trust, nurtures, and facilitates the development of sensitive relationships between students as well as acts as a role-model demonstrating a willingness to learn and change.

The role of the learner is still important as it bears the responsibility of co-shaping the learning environment, with the predominant educator.

Logic, as well as emotion, play specific roles in transformative learning. Although the emphasis is on the rational process, facilitators need to consider how they can help their students use emotions both in critical thinking and as a means of reflection.

When reviewing transformative learning in practice we identify below some connections and differences compared to other adult learning theories discussed

Concluding Briefly in Comparison with Other Adult Learning Theories

In a brief attempt to compare dialectically two of the abovementioned adult learning theories directed toward powerful individual change, contrasting but also connecting elements become apparent. In transformational learning, Mezirow and Freire differ in their views on action. Mezirow favors the psychological dimension, while Freire emphasizes the importance of active resistance to various forms of power and control. Further, Freire advocates that learning achieves its purpose when change occurs through awareness and action (Freire, 1972), while Mezirow embraces the view that learning is a process that gives the individual the opportunity to reexamine experience, resulting in a fuller understanding of both his own existence in the world and the world itself (Mezirow, 2004, p. 2). Mezirow also considers that the process of transformation can be either “. . . individual (as in psychotherapy), or group (as in Freire), or collective (as in the case of social movements).” (Mezirow, 1989), seems to reduce the importance of social action in adult education by separating it from the sociological dimension of Habermas’ critical theory (Brookfield, 2005). A similar critique concerning transformative learning is made by Fleming (2002), who considers that it is not directly related to social action, because it does not seem to provide a satisfactory understanding of the concept of what is

“social”. Another common ground between Mezirow and Freire’s models is the role of the teacher, whom the former defines as a cultural activist, who enhances critical thinking, creative dialogue and the active participation of learners, while the latter speaks of his/her providing “political clarity” (Freire, 1984) referring to his ability to perceive the current operational socio-political conditions with the aim of overthrowing them if they are against working class interests (Freire, 1984, p. 51).

Jarvis on the other hand, considers learning to be a process in which experience is transformed into knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and emotions (Jarvis, 2004, p.50). Moreover, the theory of transformational learning differs from Andragogy in that the design of a program can be created by the person in charge without the student being responsible or aware of it. In terms of motivation, there is also a difference from Andragogy, as, according to Knowles, intrinsic motivations are the strongest, while in the other two theories the extrinsic ones seem to play a dominant role. While in the theories of Knowles and Freire, pre-existing knowledge is used as a background for acquiring knowledge that is new, in Mezirow’s theory it is the conflict with the “old mentality” that prompts the desired result of transformation of mind and the change of behavior. A connecting point of Freire’s and Habermas’ theories is the special consideration they both give to “vulnerable” social groups, whether they are illiterate adults, adolescents with no motivation to learn, the working class, or manipulated citizens (Morrow & Torres, 2000, p.116). In addition, they both maintain that human autonomy and high levels of knowledge and ethics can only be achieved through a learning process where individuals interact. Emphasis is placed on the interaction of oral and written speech in the development and transformation of the consciousness of each person (Morrow & Torres, 2000, p. 116; McLaren & Silva, 1993, p. 67).

Finally, collaborative learning supports the last three theories, with the only difference being that Freire considers disagreement to be part of the process of discovering knowledge.

Conclusively, I agree with Mezirow's claim that "because no one can live without other people since experiences, goals, and values are better understood through communication, the central theme of adult learning is rational dialogue and critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991b, p.2)

"Consequently, education for adults may be understood as centrally involved in creating and facilitating dialogic communities to enable learners to engage in rational discourse and action" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 354).

Therefore, the goal of the transformational educator is to involve parents in a process of transformative learning in a communicative way and invite them to an internal and external dialogue among learners, where they are given the opportunity to critically reflect on their own and others' sociocultural, epistemic, psychological distortions, change them, and be willing to act upon the reformed set of beliefs (Mezirow, 1990).

Educational Tool Needed to Sponsor Active and Reflective Engagement in a Group of Adults

However, in order to enhance active and reflective engagement in a group of adult learners such as bring the parents into involvement with the school's educational strategies and practices, I see the need for an educational tool like my P4P Model, aimed at enhancing the capacity of parents to cooperate, dialogue critically, reflect within the school community as a partner, and institutionalize active engagement in educational dialogue with their children as a primary effort.

Thinking and reflecting cannot be *taught* from one day to the other. But they can be *practiced*, grown and nurtured. People should have the opportunity to ask questions, to think, to reflect, to reason, to decide, and act. This whole process reflects the thinking of the human mind.

The key to deep thinking, then, would be to ask dynamic questions, reflect on one's own and on others' ideas, perceptions, and assumptions, and explore multiple possible answers. The power of thought is fueled by the dynamics of our questions that, in turn, direct the search for different paths that may or may not be based on experiences that may be personal or not, previous, or new. The questions are drawn to provoke deep thinking into dialogue and make the learners responsible for looking at a perplexing question from different angles. The internal or external dialogue that is born from the question or questions can become the spark to ignite new learning.

A rational discourse among learners will bring to the surface different points of view that the learner can accept or not, reflect, or build upon—or not. This process has been found likely to yield learning and change. In order to enable this mental stretching, learners should be given the opportunity, in a designated space and time, to submit their questions and reflect. That must optimally occur in a safe environment, conducive to fresh thinking and dialogue, where learners discuss, think, express themselves freely and learn that the power lies not in each of us individually but in the interaction of the participants.

That the value of parents as a source of information and support, derives mostly from their life experiences, has been acknowledged by researchers (Cross, 1981). As a result, there have been numerous ideas, proposals, and models that seek to enhance parent-school partnership. Various theoretical schemes have been proposed from time to time, which attempt to organize the different ways in which the interaction of school and family can best be maintained. Each of them illuminates the processes that take place during this interaction in different ways where, in the most functional ones, it seems that school retains a dominant role in the wider community. However, the limited and unclear legislative framework for such an initiative coupled with the lack of will and action, that could enable this educational practice with the appropriate tools to

promote parental participation in a child's learning (Manolitsis, 2004) are two key factors that inform the typical, merely superficial, and "formal" relationship between school and family, recorded in related literature (Manolitsis, 2004), particularly for the European countries. Both parents and teachers, the principal actors in this partnership, are adult learners who continually learn individually in their lives (Brookfield, 1986, Cross, 1981), but rarely do so collectively as a learning community (Watkins & Marsick, 1999). Therefore, realization of the concept of the school community as a potential Learning Organization (Senge, 1990; Watkins & Marsick, 1999) needs a bridge for this communication and relational gap, that is originated in a collective manner and with a unified/coherent vision.

Let us not forget that today's children are tomorrow's teenagers, today's teenagers are tomorrow's adults, and possibly tomorrow's parents. We must think in terms of this continuum as we try to conceptualize and seek to foster continual improvement of societal education as a whole

To that end I propose wider trial of my Philosophy for Parents Model to help parents and teachers to develop *together* from a relatively early stage, a democratic and critical way of thinking to help them become familiar with active listening, democratic interaction, acceptance of different views and diversity in general, as well as a collaborative search for effective, creative options rather than the same old easy solutions. P4P offers the prospect of strengthening the relations of teachers with the parents of the students at each school by developing them together through the agency of a democratic dialogical model that can have a positive, integrative effect on the development of individual personalities on a cognitive, moral and emotional level as well as somewhat a consensual one for the group as a whole. Hence, a two-year pilot initiative employing this model has earlier been generated and researched.

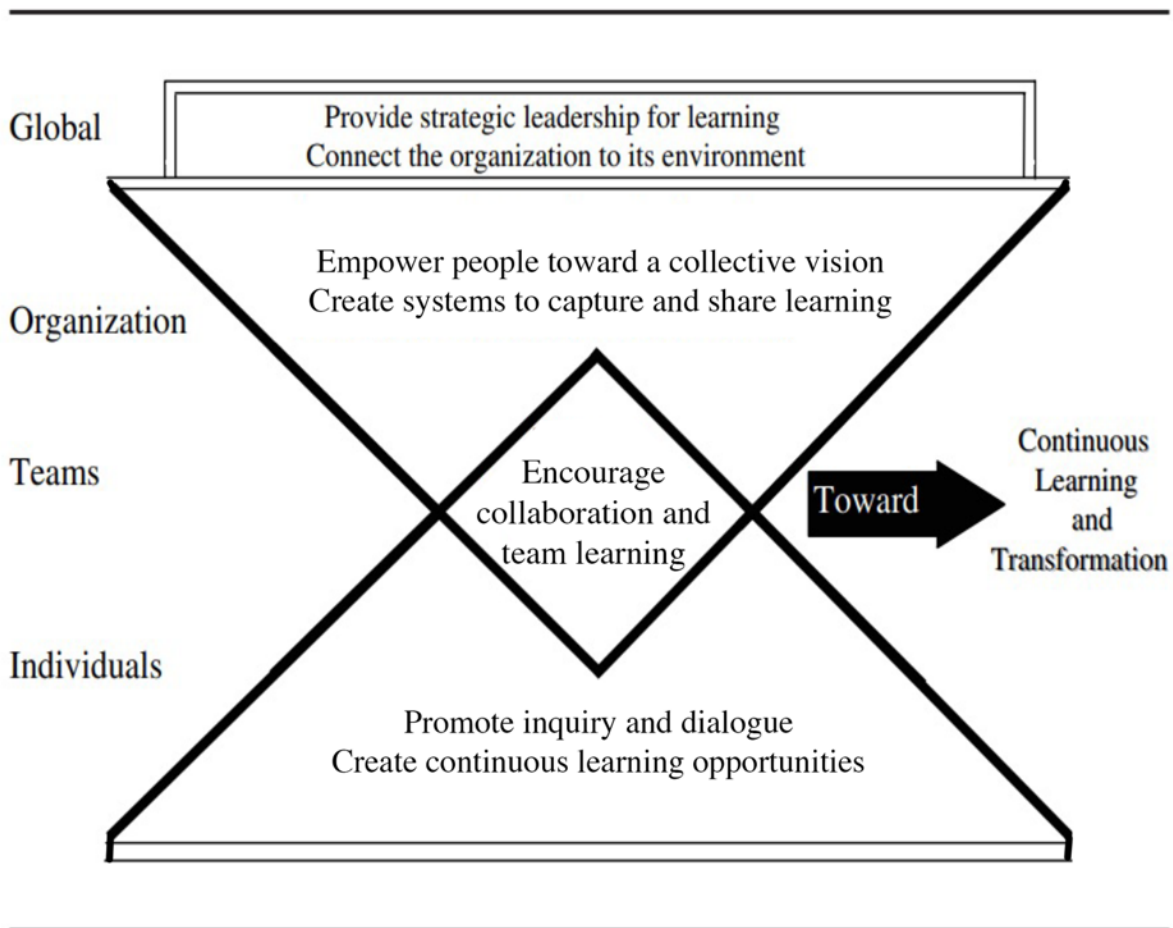
Schools and Parents as Learning Organizations

Naturally, across the years, teachers have also created their own counterproductive beliefs and assumptions that drive them to keep trying to relate to parents only as they provide auxiliary services. Having observed these behaviors from both sides as a parent and a teacher in schools in Greece, Italy, Germany, and the US, and gaining insight from studies on this matter, the need for collective change has become increasingly apparent. For the parent-teacher-school complex envisioned in my model to act and learn together as a unified entity, it is most likely helpful to conceptualize and structure it to operate as a unified learning organization—one that Watkins and Marsick argue, will require deep changes in the actors' mindsets, and the culture of the organization—ones that occur only in a series of interrelated overlapping stages over time (1993, 1999). This is the process that Watkins and Marsick envision in their widely accepted Model, Dimensions of a Learning Organization. The potential seems real that, if it were able to keep learning continually it could potentially transform itself, and its members as individuals, as a group, and, ultimately, as a coherent organization through the three interrelated stages that characterize its emergence in their Model of Dimensions of a Learning Organization (1998).

- Individual learning, i.e., the way in which people make meaning of their experiences, and how the organization provides them with opportunities to build their knowledge and skills,
- Team learning, i.e., the way in which groups of people work and learn collaboratively and, as a result, create new knowledge together as well as the capacity for collaborative action,

- Organizational learning, i.e., shared thinking and the capacity of a system that is embodied in systems, procedures, artifacts, and mental models, (Watkins and Marsick, 1999).

Figure 4. Watkins and Marsick, (1998), Model, Dimensions of a Learning Organization (Watkins, 2005)



Based on the assumption that "learning for organizational productivity cannot be separated from learning for personal development" (Marsick, 1988, p.191) Marsick and Watkins argue that traditional professional development programs are not sufficient for modern needs. Marsick proposes a new model in the field which includes both interactive and reflective

learning as described in the theory of transformative learning. The basic argument is that “individuals are more productive when they can participate fully in the negotiation of their substantive contribution within the organization” (p. 194). Furthermore, Marsick explains that adult education cannot be effective when it is limited to individual and largely predetermined actions rather than being shaped by the thoughtful collaboration of organizational members—a proposition, again pointing to the Theory of TL. In sum, their model utilizes the basic principles of TL to inform a *new* model for coherent organizational learning (Watkins, Marsick, Faller, 2012). So, for the parents-teachers-school community to exist and operate in a unified way, it could best strive to become a *Learning Organization*—where students, teachers, parents, administrators, and staff can join way together to form a Community of Inquiry engaged in a collective effort with a common vision” (Watkins & Marsick, 1999).

The community could then constitute a “circuit” where learning is the ongoing goal for all actors. Sadly, only in the last decades has it been considered propitious—even necessary—for the parents to be an integrated part of the educational whole as well. It surely seems that it is time to involve all members in a continual learning culture that would benefit everyone involved, above all, the students. Such a transformation of the school community would necessitate an ongoing reformation of learning where the actors can overcome their natural predilection for a simplistic “single-loop” direct cause-effect approach to problems, and become willing to engage in the more complex (but usually more effective) double-loop (assumption-probing) learning and rather than the single-loop learning that Argyris and Schön (1978, 1996) have described in the deep dives into examining and challenging the underlying beliefs and assumptions that drive simplistic, symptom-removal, “solutions.”

The process of transformation is an individual affair, but I believe that in order to successfully *realize* it, a reference framework is needed in which learners interact with rational dialogue, which aims to contribute to radical change of attitudes, feelings and beliefs. The dialogue both depends upon and helps the learners to think critically, to change the perceptions they had formed both for themselves and propagated into the wider environment (which in this case is the *same* environment as that of the school and all those who participate in it), and to act *differently* in accordance with *new* democracy -promoting assumptions (Mezirow, 2007b). Then, learning can become transformative when, among other things, dialogue is how the adult—through new, modified functional perceptions and critical dialogue and reflection—can face and solve problematic situations anew (Mezirow, 2007b).

Chapter 5. Research Methodology as Pertinent to an International Survey of Parents’ Readiness for Philosophy for Parents in Action

Introduction and Objectives of the Study

In the context of my intent to strengthen the effectiveness of my proposed teacher-parent (and implicitly children) engagement model that is at the heart of this dissertation, it appeared, on the basis of logic and the necessarily limited survey responses to my five-country international survey, that the theoretical territory most productive to explore lay at the intersection of transformative learning and the principles of philosophy for children. Both stances are grounded on the proposition that personal and social growth are fostered by dialogue in intrapersonal thought as well as by interpersonal verbal communication that is increasingly liberated from the constraints of personal (sometimes society-wide) assumptions that confine thought and action to patterns that have become or were always dysfunctional.

This is not to say that the goal states of the two theories (sets of principles) are identical. Rather they are both striving after personal thought and expression that is increasingly clear, open, and permeable to consideration of alternative points of view.

The function of my model, foundationally premised on the Lipman-Sharp P4C principles operates along entirely congruent lines. It is founded on more open, honest, forthright, and trusting communication between teachers, parents, and their children—who, in sum, are the principal actors that make up a unified educational learning community spanning kindergarten through high school.

The learning taking place aims to progressively enhance critical thinking, rational dialogue, and collaborative action with the ultimate goal of positively changing the perceptions

and assumptions of members of the school community regarding the value of collaboration and ongoing learning via formation of a Community Philosophical Inquiry.

Empirical Background–Action Research in Greece

The design and implementation of the research that I have conducted in relation to this thesis was initially based on the empirical study of Action Research in Greece (Papathanasiou, 2019). That served as a substrate for designing the present study.

The empirical background of the research conducted then, was exploratory action research project carried out within two consecutive school years (2014-2016) in an Athens primary school kindergarten. The research question explored was whether “a community of parents could be built up through an organized conversation upon a variety of themes within the school environment and whether this dialogue would enhance parents’ capabilities.” The leading hypothesis of the research was that “working with parents while using stories, aimed at stimulating the emergence of educational or related questions could be an effective strategy to engage them in a reflective Socratic educational dialogue with teachers that would eventuate in formation of a community of philosophical inquiry—one whose impacts could be carried over to the parents’ children as well through continuation of a child-adapted dialogic process when their children returned from school.

Overarching observation of this process showed that for development of the most effective parent-teacher-school partnership most parents as well as many teachers needed to acquire new knowledge and ways of thinking that, in discussion, could be built on the funds of their previous knowledge, life experiences, personal skills, and learning inclinations while in a supportive, yet challenging learning environment. In broad terms, the community that was built up within the school created a collective and supportive climate among the parent group, itself,

the parents and teachers, and, along the way, their children through extension of a modified, child-adapted dialogic process that could first be initiated on the basis of stories the children had processed with their teacher that day, when they came home from school. Strong and consistent efforts were made toward this end throughout the school community in the two years during which the study was conducted.

In the end, as this process matured, the parents became prepared, as they had not been before, to engage in discussion and design of the school curriculum as well as other issues of particular parental consequence.

Findings of the Empirical Action Research Study as a Basis for Further Research on Implementation of My P4P Model.

The conduct and conclusions of that empirical study were quite favorable as regards the Active parent group who in addition to having their children participate routinely with their teacher—as did also the parents in the Control group—also participated in monthly several-hour-long meetings with the teacher-facilitator who introduced them to and participated with them in the dialogic discussion process leading toward their becoming a community of philosophical inquiry. The summary positive findings observed are presented directly below as a list; the complete set, including the explanatory elements under each point in the list below appear in Appendix 1

Comparative Positive Effects Observed in the Active Parent Study Group across Two Years

- Empowering parents to develop effective parenting strategies.
- Cultivating group climate for the young and adult students
- Integrating parents into the educational process inside and outside the school

- Developing trust relationships in the Educational Triangle: School-Child-Parent
- Developing a positive ethos in school among all participants—as evidenced by the four findings below
 - Parents supported and accelerated the learning of their children academically after assimilating how to enhance and link learning in the family environment with learning at school
 - Parents responded with great enthusiasm to school requests whenever cooperation was sought.
 - The relationships among parents that participated persisted in the following years. 1
 - The parents who participated were looking for cooperation and remained attached to the kindergarten during the next year, regardless of whether their child/ren had moved beyond the study grade level into elementary school. (See Appendix 1)

A similar action research study (Striano & Pettiti, 2013) had taken place in a school in Naples, Italy during the same period by the researcher’s supervising professor with likewise encouraging results. These positive findings argued for creation of a refined version of my model to enhance the valuable parent-school relationship/partnership and collaboration. Having observed indications of success in both Greece and Italy with two similar models, I next aimed to evaluate my continuously revised model in other countries, starting with the United States, where research on communities of philosophy and P4C has been conducted by numerous investigators for several decades.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of the research process in the US, an insurmountable obstacle to accomplishing this objective arose in the form of a worldwide Pandemic that mandated near-universal cessation of in-person teaching in schools. All previously scheduled

meetings with parents had to be canceled as the global population was placed in near-universal residential lockdowns. Of necessity, my next step was to find an appropriate strategy to further explore theoretic and other support for my model in conditions that precluded its direct implementation—and hence, its study under “natural” conditions.

Beyond continuing literature research, in concert with my thesis sponsor, Professor Maura Striano, we elected to survey an international sample of parents with characteristics, similar to those of the relatively well-educated, education-centered, and generally employed parents that had populated my earlier two-year study in Greece.

Continuing Model Literature Research and Development, and an International Survey

Thus, the researcher studied and analyzed in depth the theoretical background of the proposed model, recorded the points where relevant adult and children’s learning theories are connected and, based on earlier experience, created and then substantially refined a manual conveying the process to educators, the “Teachers Handbook for Transformational Parenting” hoping to explore its effectiveness as soon as education and everyday life returned to face-to-face encounters. Through successive revisions the Handbook became more sensitive to the necessity of a healthy and growing school-family relationship and partnership.

The stories for consideration among parents and teacher-facilitator in this manual are very similar in construction, and parallel and in terms of the ethical and other issues raised, to those usually discussed by grade-school age children in classes conducted in P4C. So much so that they would provide “common ground” for parent-child discussions, e.g., when children return home from school. In fact, while it isn’t *necessary* for the teacher to do so, it would certainly be possible to use it to inform classroom conduct for children above kindergarten level.

In addition to my ongoing theoretical analysis and the evolution of the manual, a questionnaire was created in order to search for more data related to this topic among a five-country, international sample of parents of school-age children who had experienced schooling under both “normal” face-to-face conditions and then the remote-learning constraints imposed by the Pandemic.

This questionnaire was built in such a way that with the help of a specialized statistical and qualitative research tool (MAXQDA 2020) to be coded and process mainly a qualitative but also a minimal descriptive quantitative analysis of the data. The results of this analysis, which are presented in the next chapter, seem to support the relevance of the researcher-identified connection between Mezirow’s transformative learning and Lipman and Sharp’s P4C principles in that the responses of the international participants favored communication and dialogue as factors in improving their relationship with their children’s school (Survey Question 18) and socio-emotional learning as a factor that had assumed increased importance for them because of the stresses imposed by the Covid shutdown and online learning (Survey Question 21). While obviously this has to be speculative, since we must assume either all or most of the survey participants were unfamiliar even with the concept of P4C, I suppose it’s *possible* that choices of communication, dialogue and socio-emotional learning in children might signal favorable inclination toward P4C and P4P in which these three processes are important components.

At the same time the relevance of Marsick and Watkins Learning Organization and Lipman and Sharp’s principles regarding the Community of Philosophical inquiry are sui generis in their common need, as noted in Chapter 4, to keep learning continually to the point that it can transform itself, and its members as individuals, as a group—in sum, as an organization

characterized by trusting relationships and robustness of knowledge as a common good to be sought.

Research Methodology

A Qualitative Study Using a Survey Research Questionnaire

Based on the objectives set by the present study and the theoretical framework explored in the previous chapters, the following general research questions were formulated:

1. What are the main/principal elements/features that constitute a successful parent-school relationship and partnership?
2. What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children?
3. How did Online/Remote Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic influence parents-relationship with the school?
4. Do the parents need to participate more actively within the school community?

The detailed substituent questions that were encompassed by these broad categorical ones are all identified along with participant responses sorted by nation in Appendix 2.

Comparative Research–Countries Involved

It has been already mentioned that the primary intention of this research is to study the effectiveness of the innovative model that aims to empower the parents-school relationship and partnership in the US. The main purpose for selecting this country is that many scholars have been studying this matter there for decades. They have verified in multiple research studies its contribution to students' academic success and well-being, to teachers' excellence and family's empowerment, and created policies that supports and ensures their involvement. With this in

mind, the idea has been to explore the Model's efficacy in an educational environment more mature and prompter to undertake this attempt that grounds to a discipline that comes from the ancient years.

However, the barriers that have also been described, delayed the initiation of this effort until it stopped completely because of the major World Health Emergency, and before even half completion of the sessions. Therefore, the primary objectives have changed to a comparative study related to the topic and in combination with the emergency of the Pandemic. The idea for a comparative study of a social phenomenon, has been explored as a tool used for the researcher to compare parents- school relationship and partnership before and during the Pandemic because of its enormous effect in education worldwide.

Since ancient times, thinkers have been concerned about social issues and the influence of culture on people's lives. For example, in classical texts, Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle wondered what the best way was to organize society. On this ground, and while taking into consideration of the limitations in time, costs, researchers involved (it is a PhD Dissertation), people's emotional, and financial mainly distress everyone has experienced, a limited number of countries were selected (five) and a couple more (Ukraine & Germany) remained in anticipation.

The five countries that were involved in this survey were Greece, Italy, USA, Spain and Costa Rica. The intention was to compare Covid's impact on the subject between Southern European countries with the US. As implied before, research and policies on this matter are way ahead compared to Europe and technological growth and use in the educational environment is also lagging (Online Learning).

Consequently, the temptation to explore the same aspect and effect of a universal phenomenon in different cultures has been a challenging undertaking for the researcher aiming for useful academic outcomes. Everything that is recorded in the mind as an experience is formed through mental categories and concepts, which in turn depend on the language and life forms of society and thus can be differentiated.

Ethics & Protection of Human Participants in Research—Institutional Review Boards

“Under FDA regulations, an Institutional Review Board is a group that has been formally designated to review and monitor research involving human subjects. In accordance with FDA regulations, an IRB has the authority to approve, require modifications in (to secure approval), or disapprove research. This group review serves an important role in the protection of the rights and welfare of human research subjects” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on January 18, 2017).

The research work that has been conducted and its results are provided in this dissertation has ensured the conditions of ethics. More specifically, a) personal data are not violated, b) there is no conflict with its operating rules and regulations of the specific Educational Institutions (Federico II, Naples University, Italy & Montclair State University, NJ, USA), and c) prior to the start of the data collection process, authorization was sought, and the approval by the Directors of the IRB of the Educational Institutions in Italy (for the European side of research) and the US twice because of the methodological changes that the research had to accommodate in view of the unprecedented Pandemic worldwide.

The research was approved first by the Ethical Commission at Federico II, Naples university according to the European regulations for research that involves human participants. The next step has been the online CITI Program training and Certification exams on the

protection of human participants that Montclair State University requires for all faculty, staff, students and visitors who conduct research that involves human participants to complete. “The Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) is a web-based training platform that was founded in 2000 as a collaboration between the University of Miami and the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center. Montclair State University joins more than 1,500 institutions and organizations and 2.8 million people committed to research ethics.” Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative, Retrieved November 1, 2011, from www.citiprogram.org.

When certified, the student/researcher is be able to:

- explain the definition of research,
- explain the definition of a human subject,
- describe the differences between private and public information and behavior,
- recognize the elements of consent,
- distinguish between privacy and confidentiality,
- identify privacy risks associated with study designs,
- identify laws that limit the ability to ensure confidentiality,
- identify the three ethical principles described in the Belmont Report,
- provide examples of how the ethical principles can be applied to research in the social and behavioral sciences, education, and the humanities, and much more. . .

After the CITI training and certification, the researcher applied to the IRB for the authorization and approval of the study in the US educational system. As soon as the

study was approved, there has been an extended effort to recruit the schools and districts to the research with the support of the affiliated universities, MSU and TC, Columbia. An approval was needed from the Superintendents of the School Districts and then from the principal of the school whose parents would participate. The unexpected 6 months of delay on the procedure lead the initiation of the sessions with the parents to mid-January - February 2020. In March, all sessions were cancelled indefinitely.

In the next few months after the Pandemic started there was a reform of the study which again needed to be declared to the IRB commission for approval which it got with another delay and the distribution of the online questionnaires started in all countries.

Consent forms were used in all cases because of the minimal risk research activities with adult participants that would be conducted in this study. The Continuing Review or renewal submission was no longer required after that due to the minimal risk level of this study. In both cases for the methodology planning (interviews and questionnaires), the Montclair State University requirements for Minimum data security for protocols involving electronic data in research had to be followed:

- All data collection and storage devices must be password protected.
- Non-University devices for use in research should have up-to-date antivirus protection software.
- Identifiers or keys should be placed in a separate, password-protected or encrypted file.
- Identifiers should not be stored on mobile devices, flash drives or other portable devices [excludes laptop]. If the protocol deems use of a portable device as necessary, then the data files should be encrypted. The PI is responsible for consulting with their departmental IT liaison to determine the most secure method(s) for portable devices.

- If using email for communication the PI should include statement(s) to the participants that email is not secure.
- No protected health information or highly sensitive information should be transmitted via email.
- PI (Prime Investigator) must plan for regular back-ups of data in an encrypted format.

Limitations of the Study

There were a number of limitations and barriers in conducting this research.

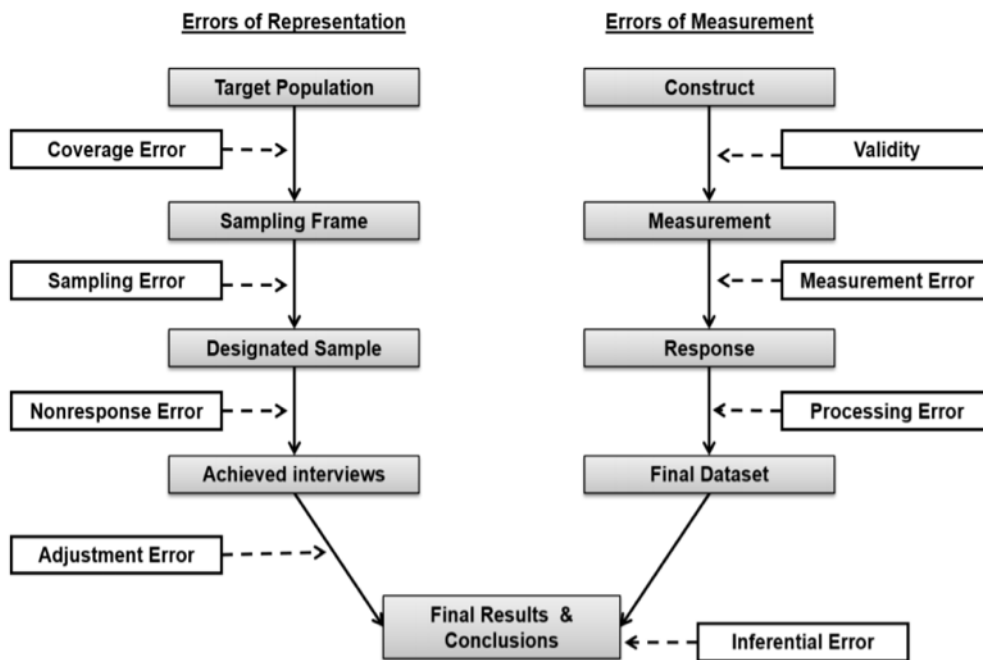
Due to the stresses imposed by the pandemic, the participants were not in a frame of mind, to engage in any extra online activity organized by the school because of their own frustration primarily with their children not attending school and their own issues with their jobs. Many times, there was an impression that even completing a ten-min survey was an arduous task. The issue of the Pandemic and the difficulty that it caused in this research is already described in more detail in a previous chapter.

Another limitation was due to deficiencies in the translation of the questionnaires for the two versions in Spanish (one for Costa Rica and the other for Spain). The Costa Rican one had a few inaccuracies compared to the originals in English. As a result, we had a couple of questions on that one where the responses differed from all the others because of the lack of the same choices.

Random sampling error is used in quantitative research because the selected sample is only a subset and not a perfect representation of the research population. In particular, the values of the observed variables vary in the individuals that make up the sample population. Therefore, population characteristics estimates based on this subset will not match the actual values (Groves, 2004).

Another major limitation of a study that is grounded in surveys is the survey errors in representation and measurement as they have been described in the literature (Biemer, 2010, Biemer & Lyberg, 2003, Groves et al., 2009). The following figure is a summarized representation of the survey errors that can occur during the research survey's cycles. The first cycle, as described in literature, includes the sampling representations errors, the other one the measurements errors.

Figure 5. Total Survey Error framework in the context of the research cycle. Adapted by (Lavrakas & Pennay, 2014, in Reis & Judd, 2014)



Snowball sampling has also aroused a limitation for the study because its initial distribution has occurred through the researcher's social media. The researcher's limited acquaintances in the US could have partially affected the low number of participants in that country. The distribution in Spain and Costa Rica depended mostly on her colleagues' assistance.

Building the Questionnaire

The validity of survey data depends on persuading a scientifically selected group of people to provide accurate and detailed information about themselves, their opinions and expectations, their sense of well-being, their activities, educational background- all to a complete stranger. C. F. Cannell, 1985, Overview: Response bias and interviewer variability in surveys. In Krathwohl, (2004). The methodology in this case was in no way commensurable

The questionnaires were built initially in English and those for the countries other than the US, were translated by researchers, who are native speakers, which is obviously important for comparability with local idiom. It is structured both to directly investigate the research questions and to permit inferential speculation about the respondent's stance toward the parent-school relationship and partnership. The questionnaire was self-completing; the duration of its completion was approximately ten to fifteen minutes.

It was purposefully structured to serve the research primarily by taking into account the scope that it covers with its forty-nine questions (English version) on the one hand and with respect to the required completion time which was intentionally limited because of participant time constraints. Questions generally are of the variety closed, mostly with a diversity of options to cover range of possible answers and a sufficient range of possible answers. In addition, in the set of prescribed possible answers, the participant is often given the option to record a different point of view via the choice, "other"). The addition of the 'other' option gives these "closed" questions a hybrid format with the potential to extend them choices to add their own an option that was taken by a number of respondents.

In many cases the participant was given the opportunity to choose *more* than one available answer to the available questions. This option accelerates the completion of the

questionnaire by the respondent, although it made the analysis of the answers particularly demanding. The challenge was further enhanced by the following two factors:

The expanded and enthusiastic response of the communities, by collecting enough completed questionnaires. It is noted that the Greek version received 286 responses, the Italian 154 and the US 50 while the Spanish community and that of Costa Rica responded with 20 and 16 completed questionnaires respectively. It is, however, not possible to know the response rate as the initial recipients were not limited as to the number of other people to whom they could forward the questionnaire to gain additional participants.

The google docs platform was chosen to create the online distribution and completion of the questionnaire, a fact that greatly facilitated and served the public access and its easy completion, especially in the unprecedented conditions imposed by the pandemic.

The research was designed with the aim of minimizing the variation due to a common method in order to maintain the systematic measurement error at low levels. For this reason, the questionnaire assured participants that they were anonymous. At the same time, it called on them to answer honestly, emphasizing that there are no right or wrong answers. This reduces the evaluation anxiety of the participants and makes it less likely that the responses will be altered in order to be more socially desirable, consensual, forgiving and relevant in the way they believe the researcher would like them to respond (Biemer, 2010).

To help formulate the questionnaire in the first place, I conducted an exploratory (pilot) survey in Italy, for the purpose of exploring related preconceived notions of parents—mainly about school-family collaboration, and parents' interest in their selected subjects to discuss within the school community, with other parents, the teachers or at home with their children. The objectives for the exploratory survey that was conducted are:

- Determine the countries, the townships, and the schools in which that the project would take place.
- Determine the parents' groups that would be explored in each school: either through their own choice, and /or by selecting parents from specific grades.
- Identifying, planning, and implementing the main experimental activity (building a community of philosophical inquiry with the parents with the use of storytelling as stimuli for philosophical discussions),
- Generating activities and discussion plans for every story that is to be read with emerging comments and suggestions of the participants, that would be used to inform finalized construction of the "Teachers Handbook for Transformational Parenting."

This pilot survey proved a useful complement to what had been learned in the two-year empirical AR in Greece in providing overarching insight.

Introduction to the Software Used

Given the possibility of utilizing the products of google docs to overcome the limitations, the analysis platform MAXQDA 2020 Analytics Pro was chosen. During the advanced methodology courses, I have come to realize the expanded capabilities of this platform. What prevailed though of all its features, has been the option of the expanded open question processing capability in combination with the cross-analysis of the answers. Utilizing the application for this survey followed the steps below:

- Export the answers of the respective questionnaires in Microsoft excel format from google docs.

- prepare each Excel file appropriately to serve the processing of the data it brings from MAXQDA to the next step.
- Creating five different projects, one per ethnicity.
- Data entry per project.
- Distinguish the answers in code and variables. The choice was based on the format of the answers per question. The coded analysis prevailed over that of the variables for the reasons mentioned above (on average 28 coded versus 21).
- Coding of the respective question (coded category) of the answer set in two general stages utilizing the word frequency functionality and the review of each of the answers.

In order to serve the research, the comparative analysis of the answers for labeling, each question received a Q + code, and especially for the coded answers, the codes of the English version were used.

- The US and Italian coding system per project appear in Appendices 5 and 6.
- Complete the introduction and coding of the answers on the platform and prepare its utilization for the analysis.

The analysis of the answers includes:

- Statistical analysis of the answers per question.
- Cross-sectional analysis of two sets of questions and answers.
- Most importantly, the comparison of statistical analyzes from the respective answers of the five questionnaires/projects.

Most of the questions have multiple-choice descriptive answers where the respondent could choose up to three (3) possible answers. Almost all of them were given the opportunity to write their own response wherever the existing ones did not represent their view. In a limited number of questions, the measurement was performed with Likert five-point scales and five-point semantic differentials.

The questionnaire consisted of seven distinct sections. In the first section the participants were informed about the purpose of the questionnaire and their rights. In the second, participants answered questions about their relationship and partnership with the school and its role before the outbreak of the Pandemic. The next section aimed to detect the conditions, experiences, and changes in the educational and learning environment during the transition to online/remote learning.

Participants first recorded their assessment on satisfaction or dissatisfaction during the transition of their child/ren's education to a different learning model. They were then asked to determine how they experienced the changes in relation to the teachers'/schools' bureaucratic mechanism or register any reflection or change in their perceptions towards the school and teachers. The fourth section dealt with the communities of parents belonging to the school community, and their own learning. The fifth section was devoted to the expectations and hopes of parents regarding their relationship with the teachers and the rest of the school in the future. The sixth section of the questionnaire recorded demographic data of the respondents, specifically gender, age, level of education, number of children, marital status and locus of residence. An, the 7th section presented the 4 overarching Research Questions along with each of their sub-Questions

Coding in Qualitative Research

All data was analyzed with the constant comparative method (Straus & Corbin, 1998) through coding the transcripts, categorizing the codes and integrating the categories to construct overall themes, aiming to understand the phenomenon. Throughout the data collection process and data analysis it is essential for the researcher to suspend any preconceived notions or personal experiences that may influence the study. That is called bracketing and is actually the process of identifying, and keeping out, any preconceived beliefs, opinions or notions of the researcher about the phenomenon being researched (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

Overview of the Participants in the Sample

Most research in the behavioral and social sciences, and educational research are conducted with the help of human participants. The investigators at Montclair State University value the contribution of those individuals who volunteer to participate in their studies, and vow to observe the tenets of the Belmont Report which characterizes three ethical principles that should govern research that involves human participants. These are:

Beneficence: To maximize benefits for science, humanity, and research participants and to avoid or minimize risk or harm to participants.

Respect: To protect the autonomy and privacy rights of participants.

Justice: To ensure the fair distribution among persons and groups of the costs and benefits of research

The first step in defining the sampling frame is to define the research population. (Sampling involves taking a portion of a larger set.) A population is any complete group of entities, such as people, organizations, etc., distinguished by a common set of characteristics important for the purpose of the study, from which researchers wish—when statistically valid—

to draw conclusions that they will be able to generalize (Zikmund et al., 2000). According to Krathwohl (1998), the population is distinguished from the *research* population as follows: Population is the broad set of subjects about which we hope to draw conclusions. The research population, or statistical population, is defined as the part of the wider population that can be included in the research. Thus, it consists of elements that are candidates to be selected in the formation of the sample (Creswell, 2013). Adopting this distinction and taking into account that the purpose of this doctoral dissertation reported here is to explore the perceptions of parents about the role of their relationship and cooperation with teachers and the school, the population consists of those parents who had children in primary and/or secondary education. in the education system of the country chosen to be explored. Specifically for the American education system, *research population* responses were recorded from a subset of high SES and academically inclined parents who live outside the US but whose children attend American public schools abroad. This extra-national sampling did not happen in the case of other nationalities—except for some very specific cases in which one of the parents (participant) lives abroad while their children are students in schools in Greece.

However, because of various restrictions, the method chosen for recruiting the research sample was snowballing. Snowballing is a method of expanding the sample by asking one informant or participant to recommend others for interviewing or completing a questionnaire (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992). In this case the researcher distributed the survey to international academic friends and acquaintances with the help of social media in all countries involved.

One of the advantages of qualitative methods is their ability to use smaller groups of people to draw conclusions about larger groups whose study would be economically prohibitive

(Holton & Burnett, 1997). When statistically valid, responses from the research sample are used to generalize the general population. Ideally, research samples are selected by a random process so as to be representative in characteristics of the general population. However, as Tabachnick & Fidell (2007) observe, it is actually more common to define that population based on samples than vice versa.

There are two types of sampling: Probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Kent, 1999; Creswell & Clark, 2011). The purpose of the probabilistic sample is to select a large enough number of people who then are representative of the population. Ideally, participants are randomly selected from the population so that everyone has an equal chance of being selected. Probabilistic sampling involves the random selection of subjects based on a systematic procedure, such as the use of a random number table, lottery, or computer algorithm selection programs. In contrast, non-probabilistic sampling involves selecting individuals who are available (as in Snowball sampling) and can be investigated. Also in this category is sampling performed by the researcher when he/she wishes the sample to have specific characteristics that are not proportionally found in the research population (e.g., equal percentage of men-women in the sample) (Babbie, 1990; Creswell & Clark, 2011).

According to Kent (1999), a basic distinction between samples is whether they purposive or representative. *Intentional* samples are taken when the selection of cases is made by the researcher and thus influenced by his/her personal judgment. *Representative* samples, on the other hand, are selected in such a way as to represent the structure and characteristics of the population from which the sample was taken. In this way, they constitute a microcosm of all possible cases. Based on the above distinctions, it could be said that sample specific research involves non-probabilistic sample—as long as it did not come from a random selection of

subjects from a complete list of the population. Therefore, the research sample in this study is representative, but it is also characterized as a convenience sample if it contains factors of choice of the researcher. No stratification criteria of the population were adopted, as it was not considered possible to represent the demographic characteristics of the sample in specific proportions.

Chapter 6. Findings and Analysis

Overview

Researchers have examined the major issue of the critical partnership among teachers and parents for decades. Even though the idea that parents are natural enemies with the teachers (Waller, 1932) has proliferated. Europe and America Research results have documented that involvement of parents in education is vitally important, both for the school community and the family (Epstein, 1985, Henderson, 1987). However, the actual appearance of this partnership as the years have advanced implies the contrary. While a few decades ago, parents would trust, admire, and support teachers nowadays, on the contrary it seems that their relationship is not always harmonious.

Family's involvement in school is a dynamic process of developmental character that reflects societies' social, political, economic conditions. The increasing complexity of modern society makes it all the more imperative to create an organized network of social and cultural activities, in concert with the "powerful" forces of every local community—the school community being one of these. The main objective of this partnership could be the development of creative, innovative initiatives and the upgrading of the school's influence on society as a whole, and furtherance of positive family engagement in school life. The school system is not an isolated island within the ocean of society. It needs a constant critical update, not only of knowledge and learning, but in its engagement and interaction with the broad social, political, and economic environment in order to prepare students for life. School-family collaboration seeks equal but differentiated pedagogical (paidi + ago = guide the child) contribution from each side towards 21st-century's education.

Presentation of Survey Data

Data is displayed for each of the 49 Demographic Sample data points and responses to Survey Research Questions in two different forms:

- First, in the form of column charts for demographics and pie charts for survey research questions—a separate one for the sample in each of the five country populations surveyed, and then,
- Following the five separate visual displays for each question, the numerical data for all five country's responses is presented in a single summary data table—permitting convenient comparison of data from all five countries side-by-side in a single place.
- EXCEPTION: Summary data tables are not displayed where demographic data in the column charts—such as Home-Town—comprises numerous entries that have nothing to do with data from any of the other country samples surveyed.

Brief Summary Analysis of Each Item

In most cases, except where a breakdown of the inter-country demographic data would be meaningless, or is obvious, a short summary of the salient points observed precedes each set of pie charts.

Participants' Demographics

The main goal of this questionnaire was to collect views, attitudes, and behaviors from a section of the population of five different countries (USA, Italy, Greece, Spain, Costa Rica), participating in five different educational systems.

To have a better understanding of the responses to the research questions it is first necessary to refer to the demographic data of the participants, that are presented in beginning of this chapter and enlighten us about the common characteristics of the personal and social life of

the sample population. This information helps us to recognize in principle the limitations in generalization of this research but also, potentially, to deepen inductive analysis of the responses to the overarching research questions and their substituent elements.

For the following demographic column charts and tables, many features have been analyzed, while in some cases, the listing of side-by-side data tables for all five countries gives enough information for thought and analysis. Presentation of responses to each of the 49 questions in the survey follows immediately below:

D1/F4-8 Home Town

Regarding the hometowns of the participants, the distribution in the Greek survey sample is more balanced as compared to the others. It is a fact that more than half of the Greek population lives in Athens and its suburbs which shows on the table. The Italian population that participated comes mostly from Southern Italy and mostly from Naples where the researcher's university is situated. Something that perhaps raises questions is location of the US population many of whom reside in Europe, but their children attend American schools there. That is primarily because the sample that has contributed to the research was drawn from the US active military on active duty with their families living in Europe.

Figure 6. DQ29 CR Home Town

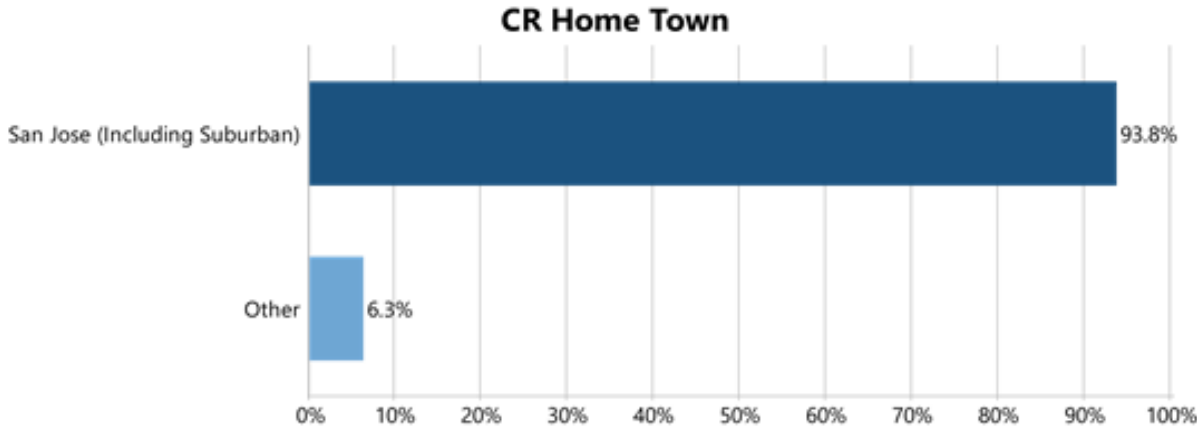


Figure 7. DQ39 ESP Home Town

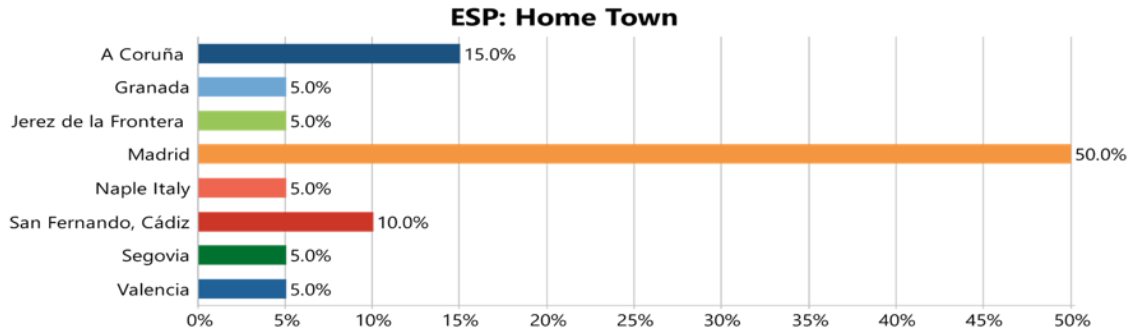


Figure 8. DQ39 GR Home Town

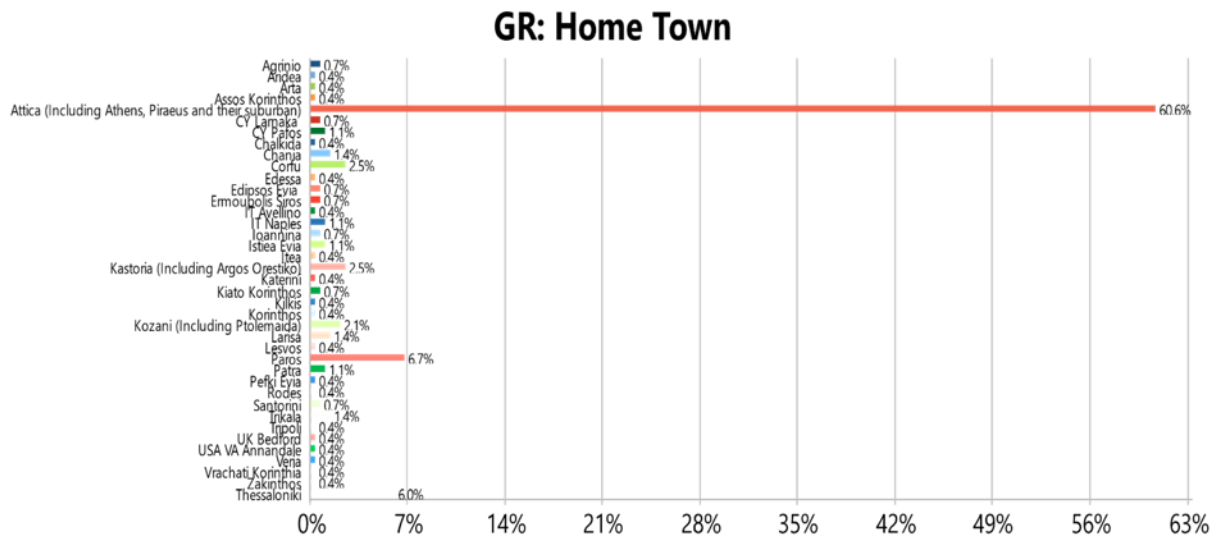


Figure 9. DQ39 IT Home Town

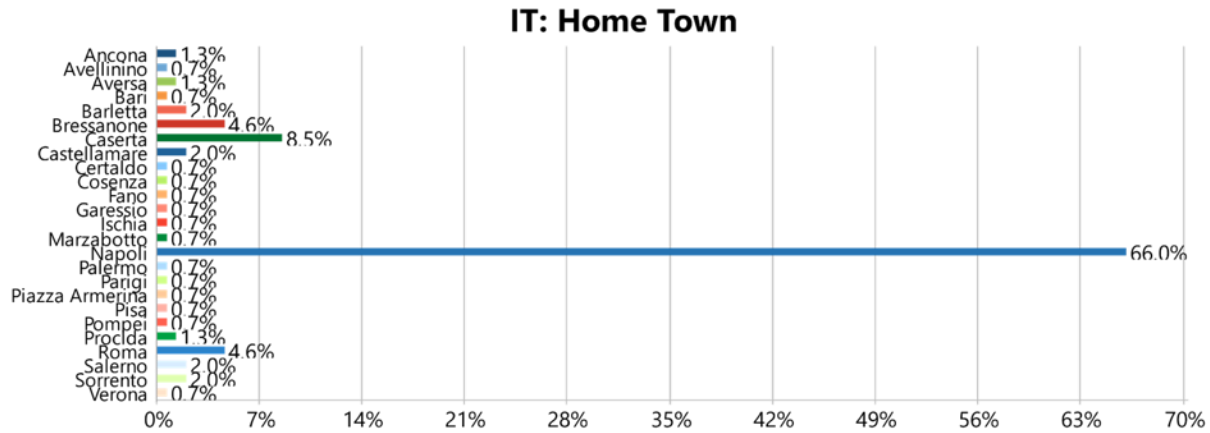
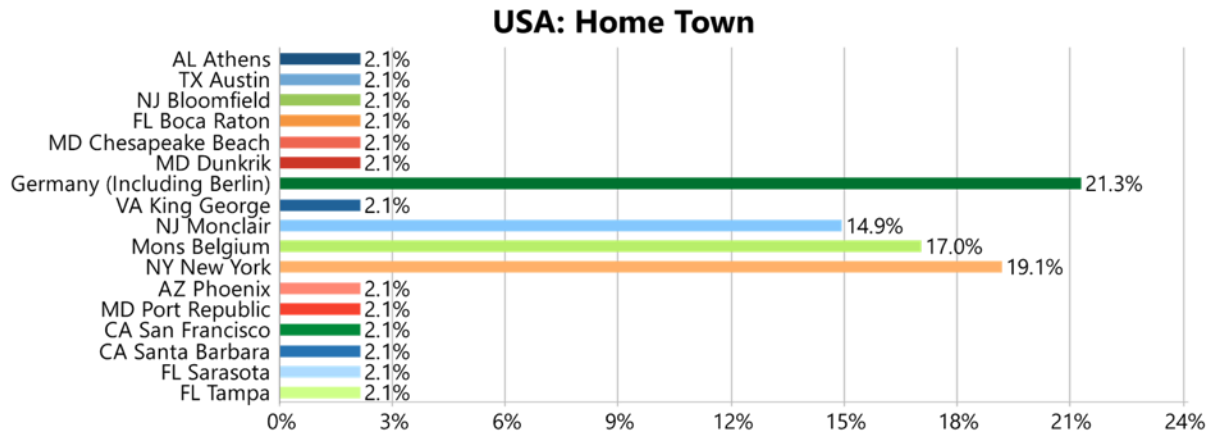


Figure 10. DQ39 USA Home Town



D2/F9-13 Parents' Age

As it seems from the pie charts below, the majority of the participants are in the same age range, that is 40 to 49 years of age. This could be because, as it shows in the tables with the children's ages, that would be the anticipated age of parents with children in primary and secondary education. Another explanation could be that because of the snowball sampling distribution method, the researcher's age affected the result.

Figure 11. DQ40 CR Parents Age Range

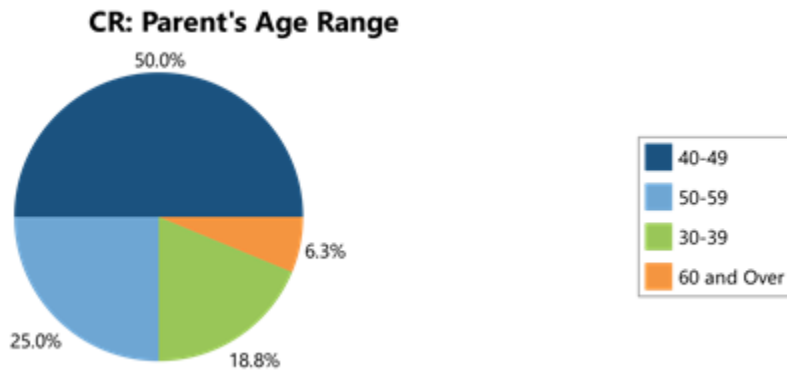


Figure 12. DQ40 ESP Parents Age Range

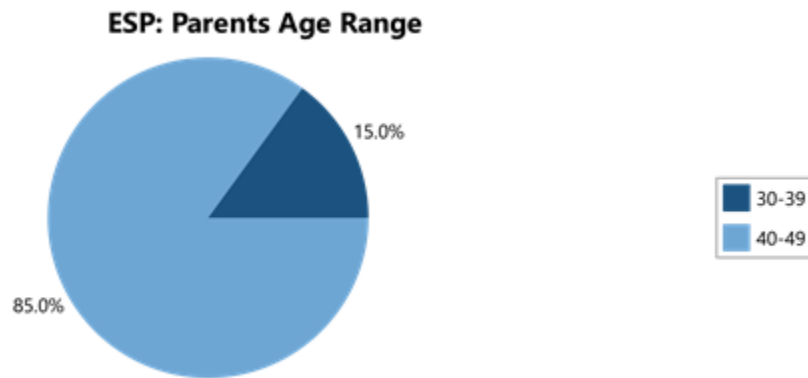


Figure 13. DQ40 GR Parents Age Range

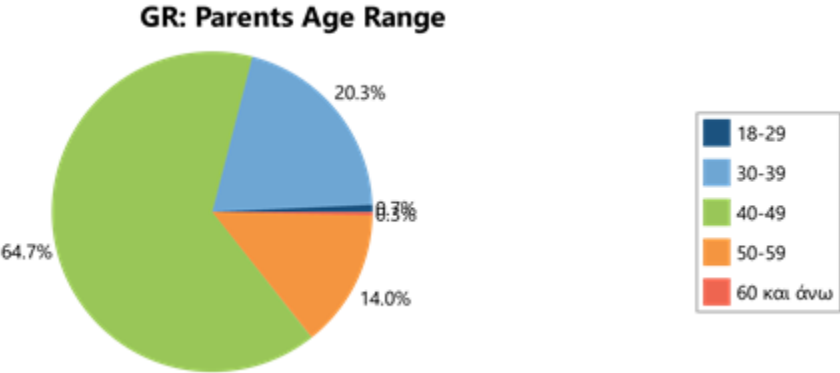


Figure 14. DQ40 IT Parents Age Range

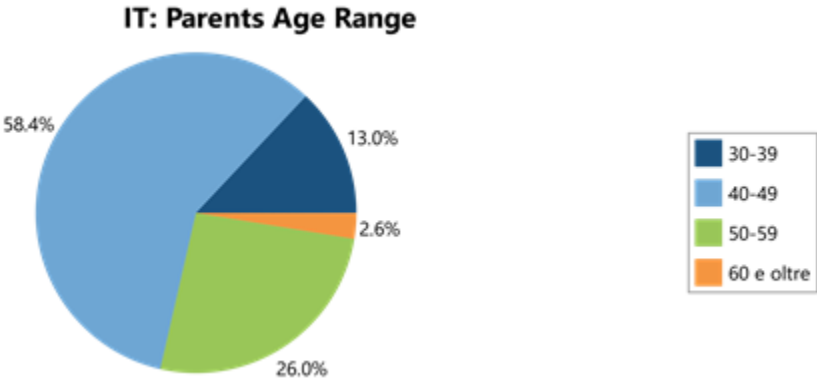


Figure 15. DQ40 USA Parents Age Range

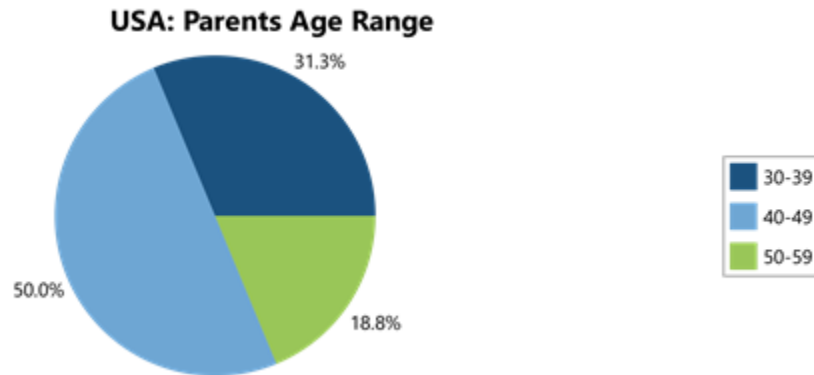


Table 1. DQ40 Demographics, Parents Age Range: Summary Table

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
40	Parents Age Range	CR / Fig 9 / N=16	ESP / Fig 10 / N=20	GR / Fig 11 / N=286	IT / Fig 12 / N=154	USA / Fig 13 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	18-29			0.7		
	30-39	18.8	15.0	20.3	13.0	31.3
	40-49	50.0	85.0	64.7	58.4	50.0
	50-59	25.0		14.0	26.0	18.8
	60 and over	6.3		0.3	2.6	

DQ3/F14-18 Marital Status

All five countries have similar responses on their Marital statuses; the majority has been married in all cases and there is a very small number of divorced participants and other kinds of one-parent situations.

Figure 16. DQ41 CR Marital Status

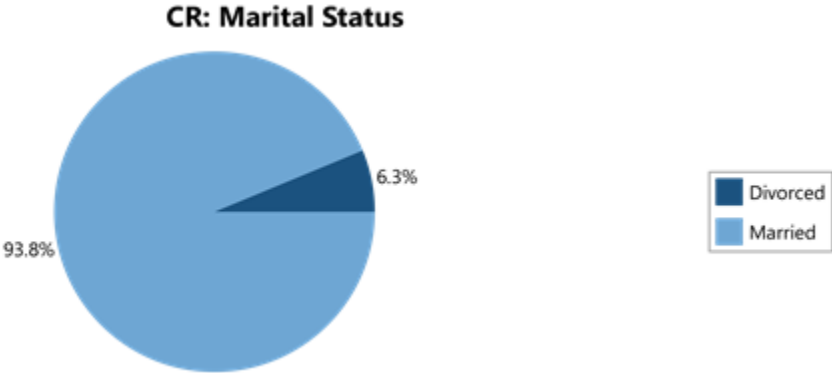


Figure 17. DQ41 ESP Marital Status

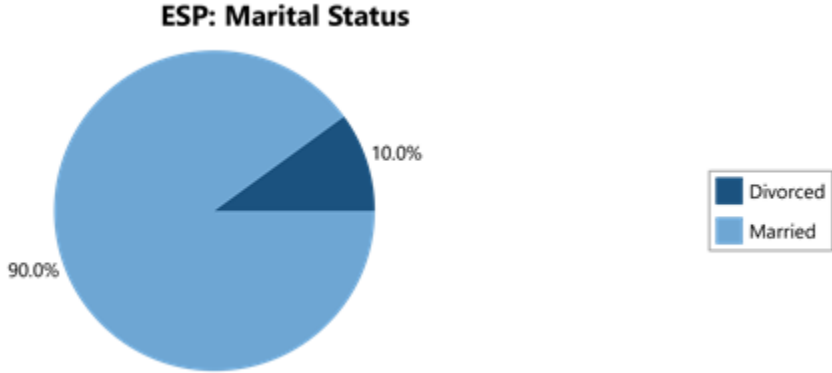


Figure 18. DQ41 GR Marital Status

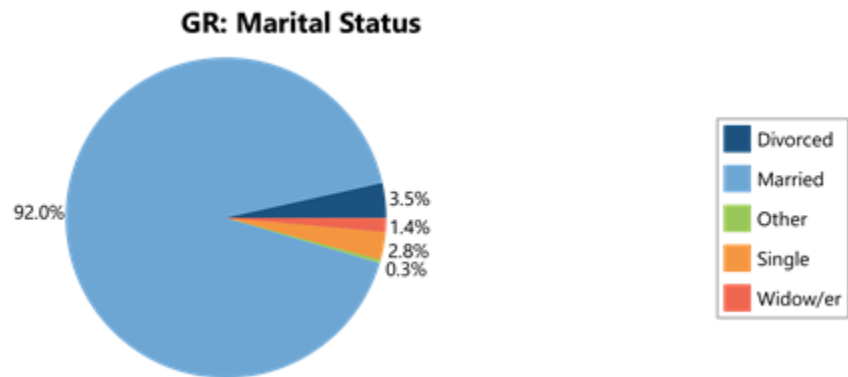


Figure 19. DQ41 IT Marital Status

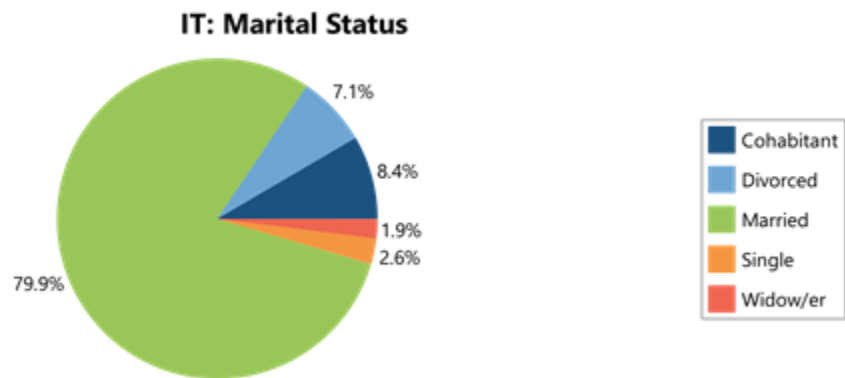


Figure 20. DQ41 USA Marital Status

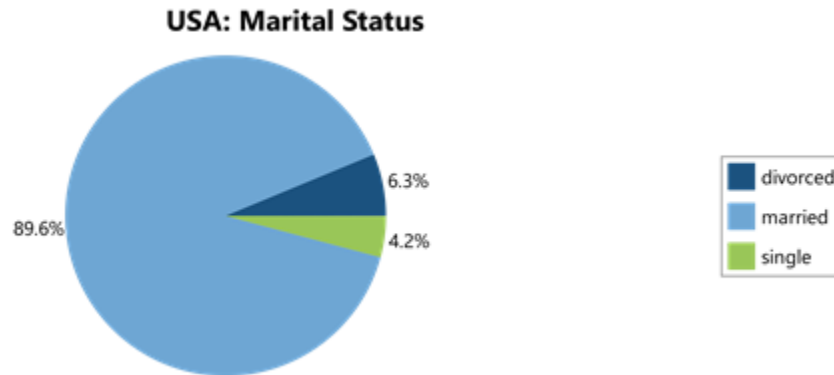


Table 2. DQ41 Demographics, Marital Status: Summary Table

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
41	Marital Status	CR / Fig 14 / N=16	ESP / Fig 15 / N=20	GR / Fig 16 / N=286	IT / Fig 17 / N=154	USA / Fig 18 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Married	93.8	90.0	92.0	79.9	89.6
	Divorced	6.3	10.0	3.5	7.1	6.3
	Single			2.8	2.6	4.2
	Widow/er			1.4	1.9	
	Cohabitant				8.4	
	Other			0.3		

DQ4/F18-23 Parents' Academic Level

The academic level of the participants, as seen on the following tables is not as balanced as the countries' societies. Again, this is a limitation of the snowball sampling which inevitably shows that the respondents did not take the survey accidentally but, more likely, because it was sent to them an acquaintance or friend. On the tables, the participation of highly qualified

Academics among the parents is also obvious and that could be because people who have gone through graduate studies experience and acknowledge the impact of surveys on research and therefore, are more open to participate. Especially in the case of Italy, there is a very high number of PhD and MA graduates. That could well be due to the fact that the survey was primarily distributed among the students and faculty the Federico II University.

Figure 21 DQ42 CR Academic Level

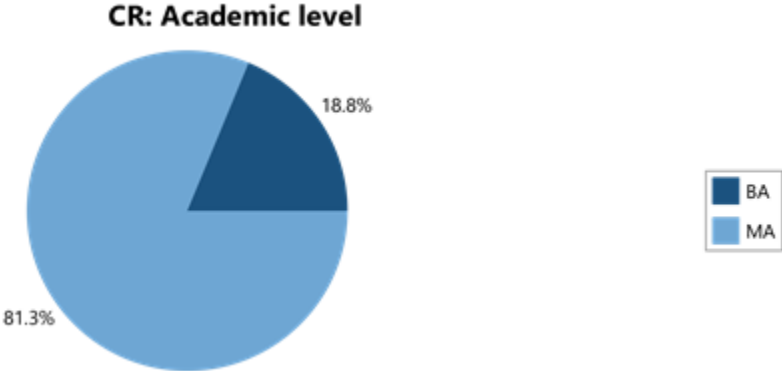


Figure 22. DQ42 ESP Academic Level

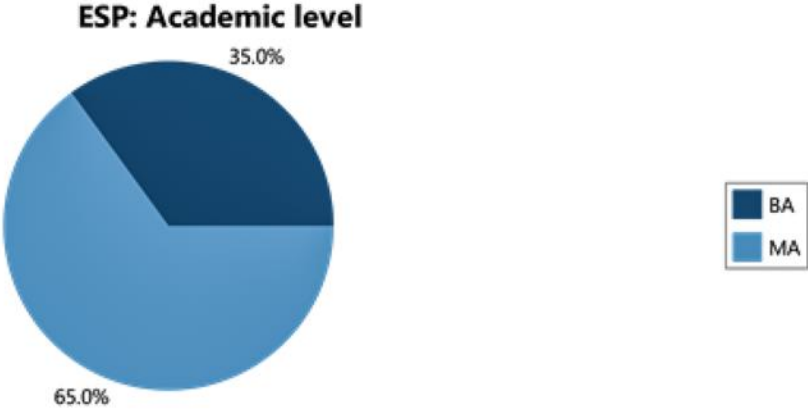


Figure 23 . DQ42 GR Academic Level

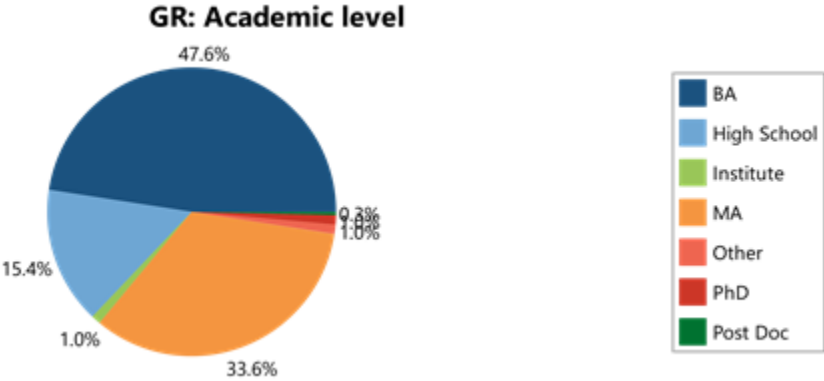


Figure 24. DQ42 IT Academic Level

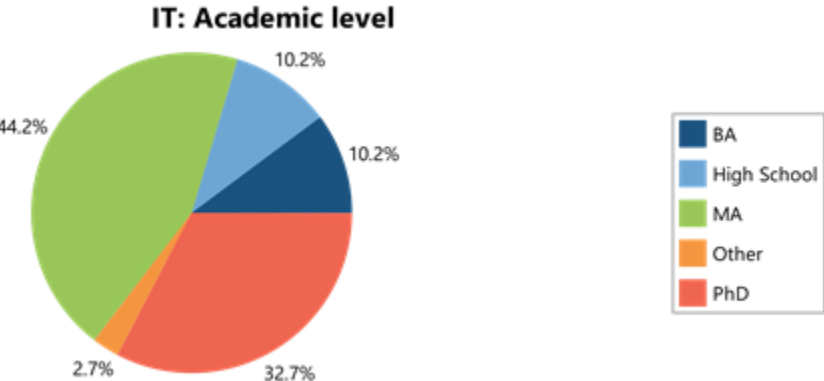


Figure 25. DQ42 USA Academic Level

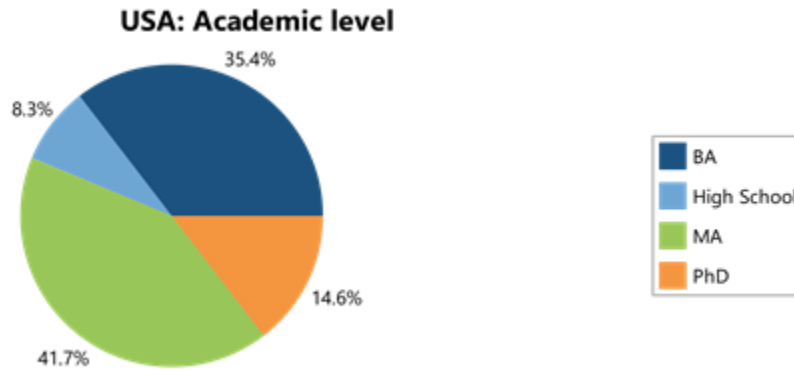


Table 3. DQ4 Demographics, Academic Level: Summary Table

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
42	Academic Level	CR / Fig 19 / N=16	ESP / Fig 20 / N=20	GR / Fig 21 / N=286	IT / Fig 22 / N=154	USA / Fig 23 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	High school			15.4	10.2	35.4
	BA	18.8	35	47.6	10.2	8.3
	MA	81.3	65.0	33.6	44.2	41.7
	PhD			1.0	32.7	14.6
	Post Doc			0.3		
	Institute			1.0		
	Other			1.8	2.7	

DQ5/F24-28 Number of Children in the Family.

The charts and table show that the majority of the participants in all countries have either one or two children which is typical for those of upper and middle socioeconomic status in the

Western countries participating. This result is compatible with that just preceding regarding the Academic level of those in the sample.

Figure 26. DQ43 CR Number of Children in the Family

CR: Number of children in the family

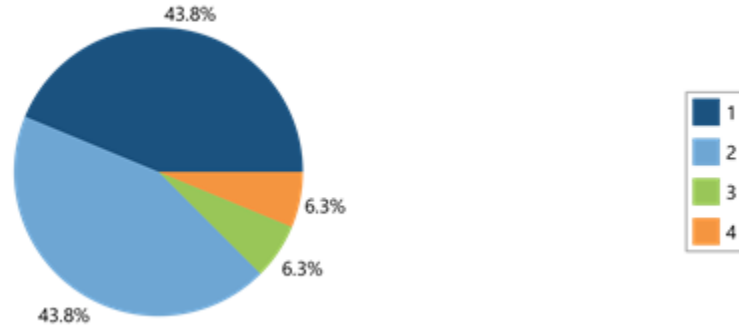


Figure 27. DQ43 ESP Number of Children in the Family

ESP: Number of children in the family

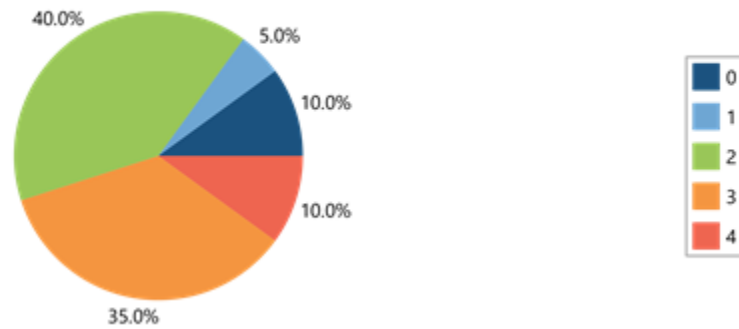


Figure 28. DQ43 GR Number of Children in the Family

GR: Number of children in the family

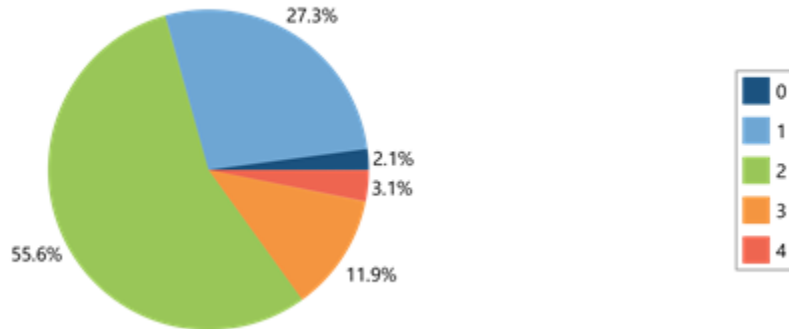


Figure 29. DQ43 IT Number of Children in the Family

IT: Number of children in the family

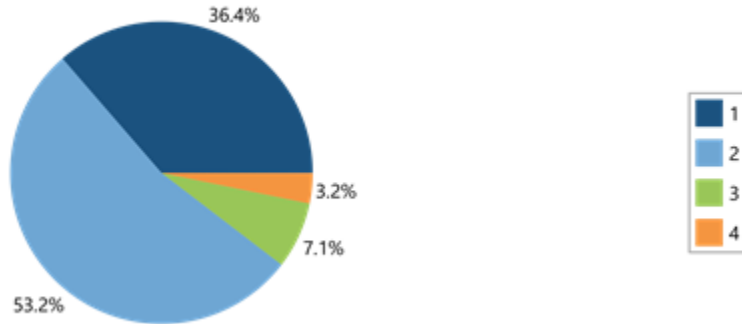


Figure 30. DQ43 USA Number of Children in the Family

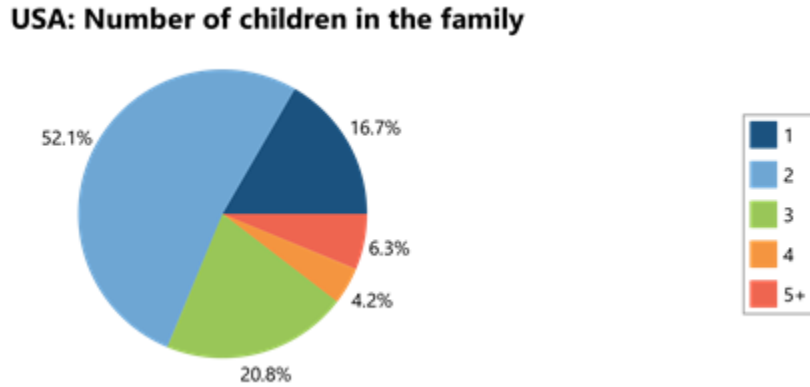


Table 4. Demographics, Number of Children in Family: Summary Table

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
43	Number of children in the family	CR / Fig 24 / N=16	ESP / Fig 25 / N=20	GR / Fig 26 / N=286	IT / Fig 27 / N=154	USA / Fig 28 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	0		10.0	2.1		
	1	43.8	5.0	27.3	36.4	16.7
	2	43.8	40.0	55.6	53.2	52.1
	3	6.3	35.0	11.9	7.1	20.8
	4	6.3	10.0	3.1	3.2	4.2
	5+					6.3

DQ6/F29-32 Parents' Relationship and Partnership with the School.

In most countries that participated in the survey, the families have children in primary education versus the secondary where the US takes the lead. A possible explanation of this fact could be that in Southern European countries, parents are very involved in their children's

education, mostly in primary education. Later, the students who study harder have more opportunities in Public Higher education. By contrast, it seems that upper- and middle-class parents in the US are more involved in and concerned about secondary education and especially in High School, because of the competition for entrance to non-public institutions of higher education and the multiple qualifications required—apart from grades and standardized testing—that a rising undergraduate student must have to get accepted.

Figure 31. DQ45 CR Relationship & Partnership with the School

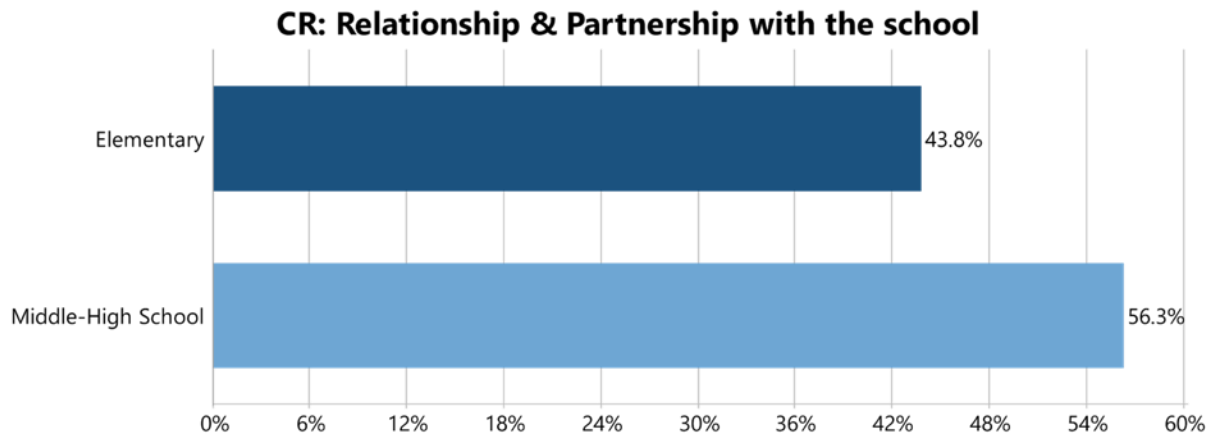


Figure 32. DQ45 ESP Relationship & Partnership with the School

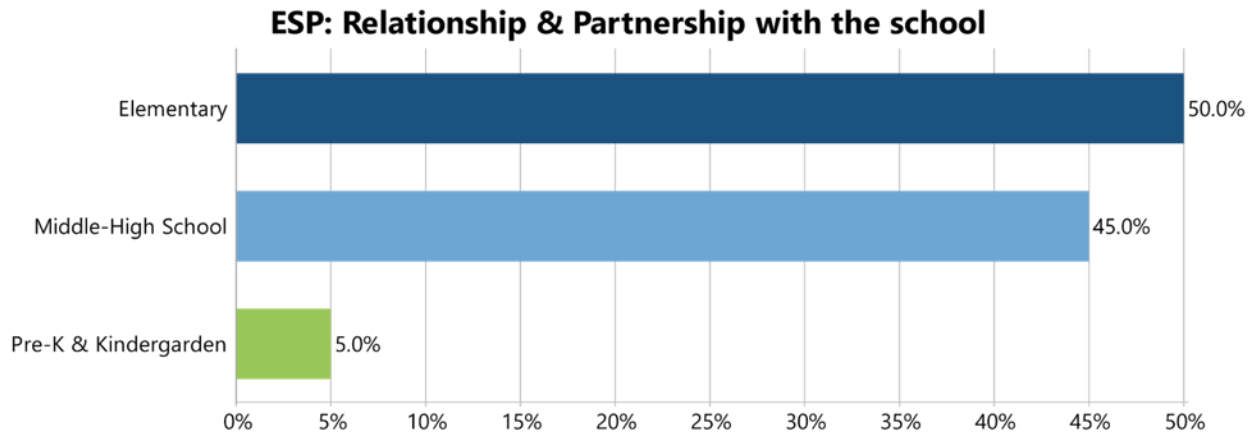


Figure 33. DQ45 GR Relationship & Partnership with the School

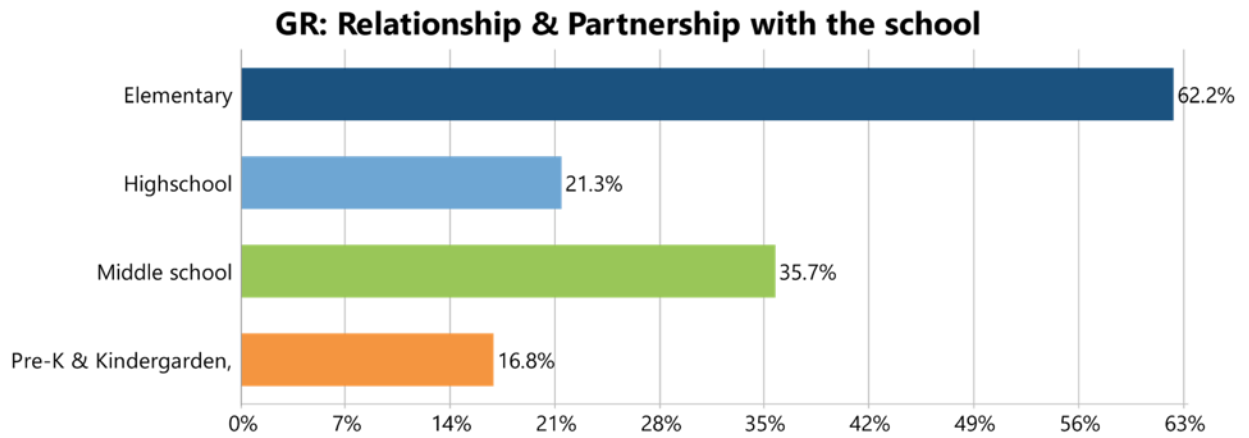


Figure 34. DQ45 IT Relationship & Partnership with the School

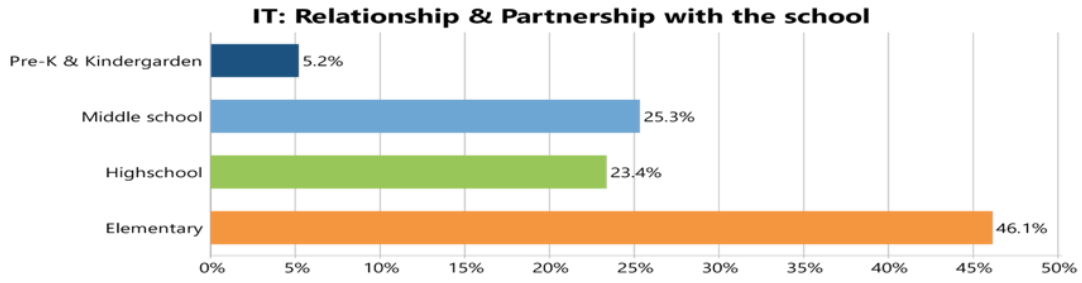
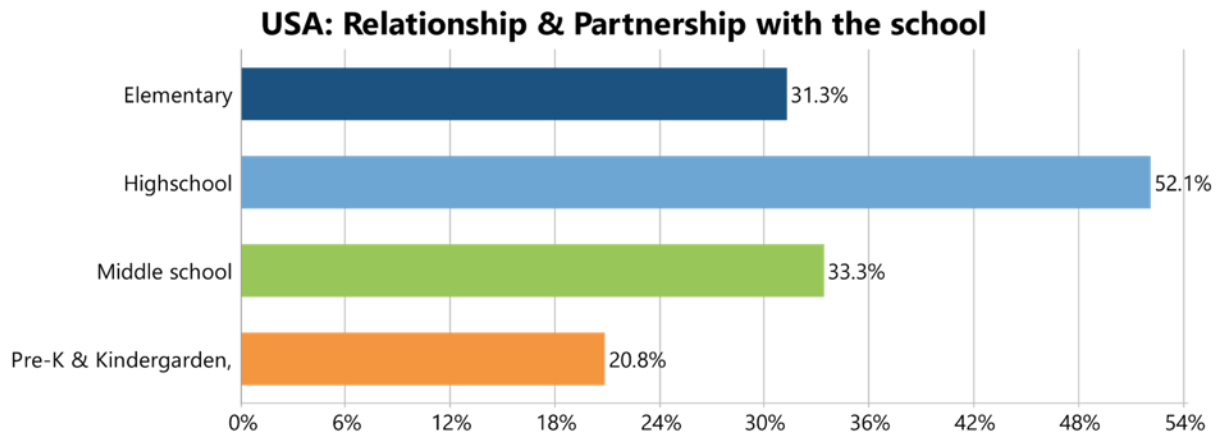


Figure 35. DQ45 USA Relationship & Partnership with the School



**Table 5. Demographics, Relationship and Partnership with School by Grade Level:
Summary Table**

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
45	Relationship & Partnership with the school (by grade level)	CR / Fig 29 / N=16	ESP / Fig 30 / N=20	GR / Fig 31/ N=286	IT / Fig 32 / N=154	USA / Fig 33 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Pre-K & Kindergarten		5.0	16.8	5.2	20.8
	Elementary	43.8	50.0	62.2	46.1	31.3
	Middle school			35.7	25.3	33.3
	Middle-High school	56.3	45.0			
	High school			21.3	23.4	52.1

DQ7/F34-38 Kind of School Child/ren Attended while in RL (Remote Learning)

There is a considerable difference in the types of schools that children of the participants are attending. In Spain and Costa Rica, the great majority of the sample’s families attend private school and it should be taken into consideration when their views, experiences and perceptions are considered in relation to the parents-school relationship. For the families in the other three countries (USA, Italy, and Greece) that participated, the preponderance of parents send their children to public schools.

Figure 36. DQ46 CR Kind of School Attended while in RL

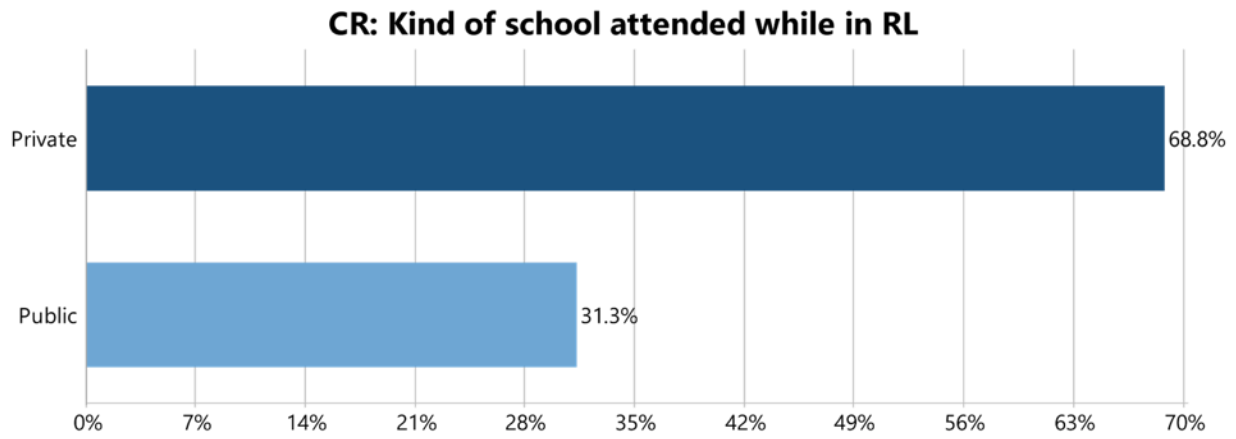


Figure 37. DQ46 ESP Kind of School Attended while in RL

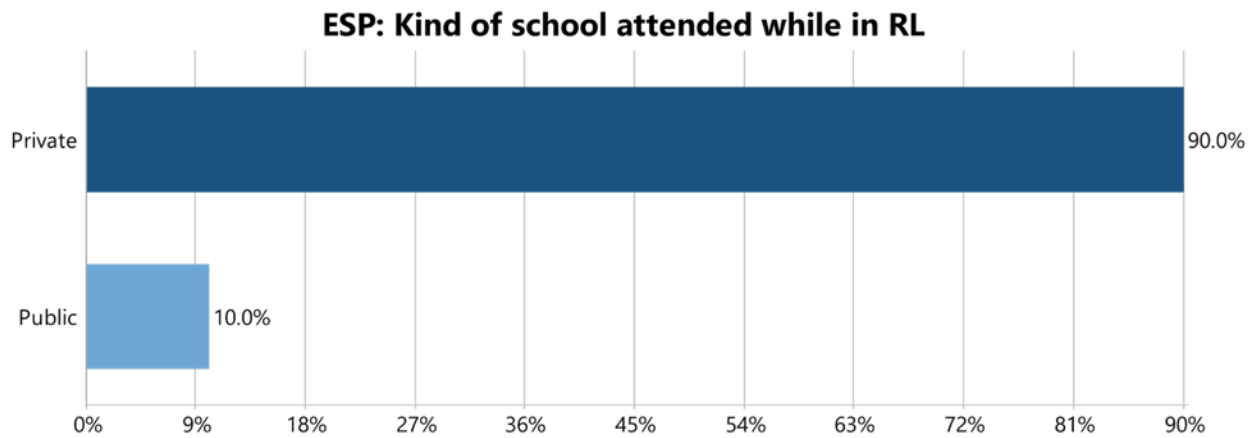


Figure 38. DQ46 GR Kind of School Attended while in RL

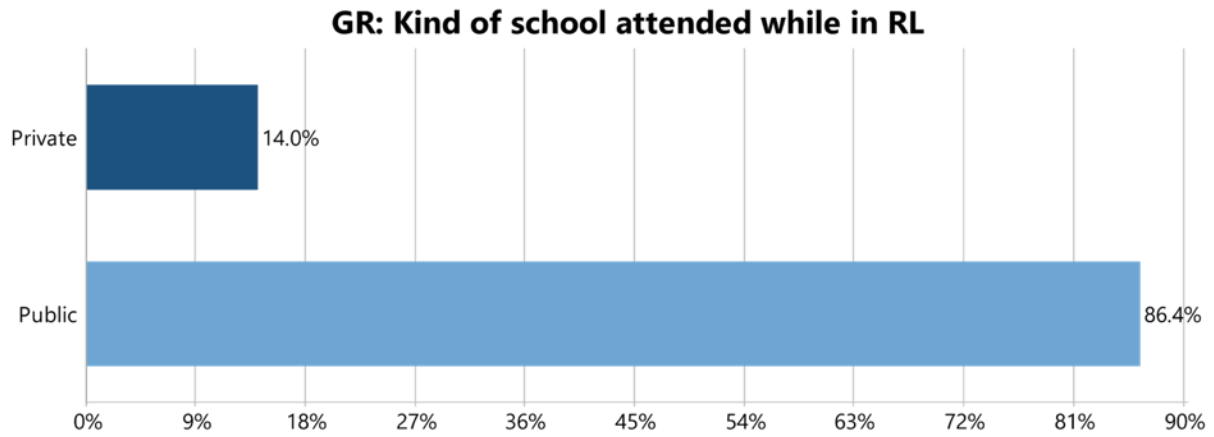


Figure 39. DQ46 IT Kind of School Attended while in RL

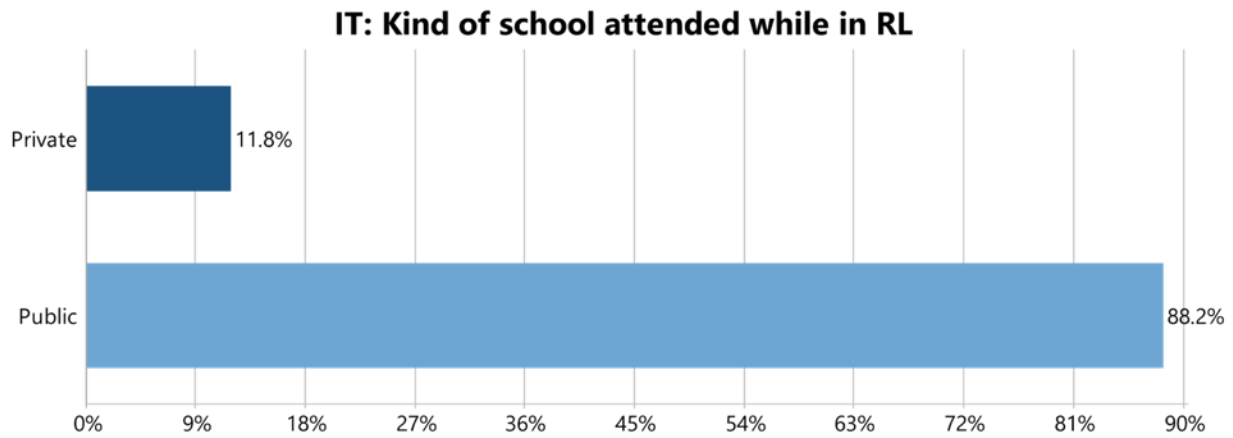


Figure 40. DQ46 USA Kind of School Attended while in RL

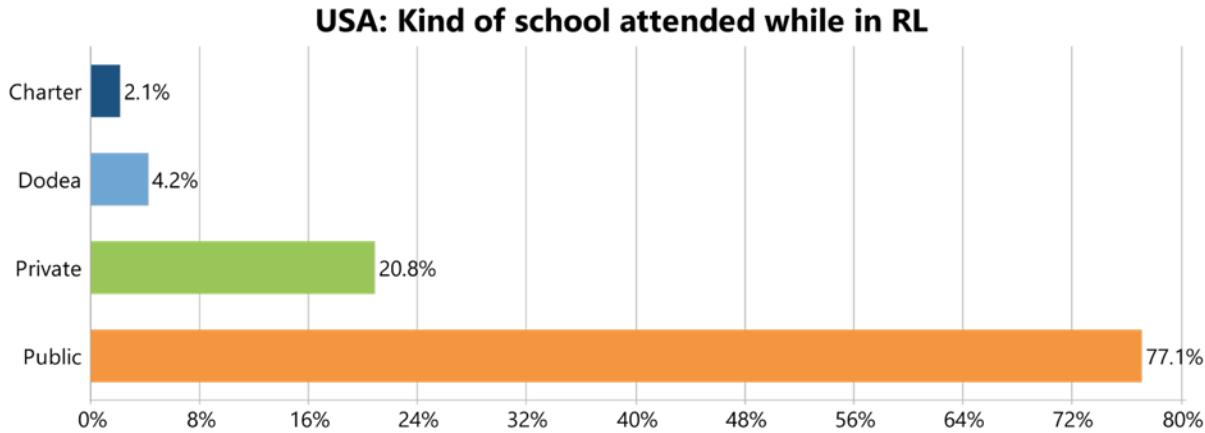


Table 6. Demographics, Kind of School Attended while in Remote Learning: Summary Table

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
46	Kind of school attended while in remote learning (RL)	CR / Fig 34 / N=16	ESP / Fig 35 / N=20	GR / Fig 36 / N=286	IT / Fig 37 / N=154	USA / Fig 38 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Public	31.3	10.0	86.4	88.2	77.1
	Private	68.8	90.0	14.0	11.8	20.8
	Charter					2.1
	DoDEA (US Department of Defense—on military bases)					4.2

DQ8/F39-43 Parents Occupation before the School Closure Due to the Pandemic.

Participants’ previous occupation in all cases correlates significantly with their academic status very likely because of snowball effect that was discussed earlier. Since the distribution was initiated from within the education field, it is to be expected that, in most cases, the respondents and their friends who received and responded to the survey would mostly be in the same field.

Figure 41. DQ47 CR Parents' Occupation Before the School Closure Due to the Pandemic

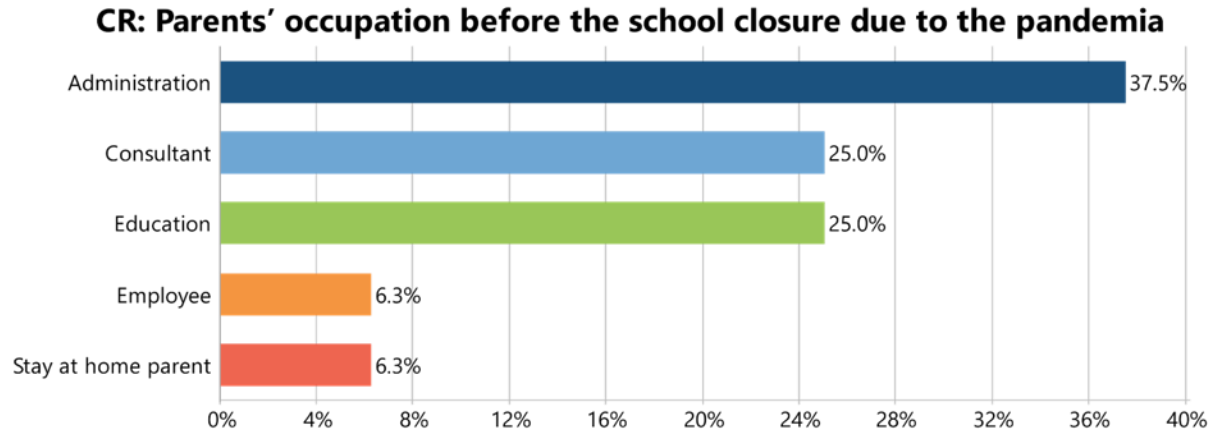


Figure 42. DQ47 ESP Parents' Occupation Before the School Closure Due to the Pandemic

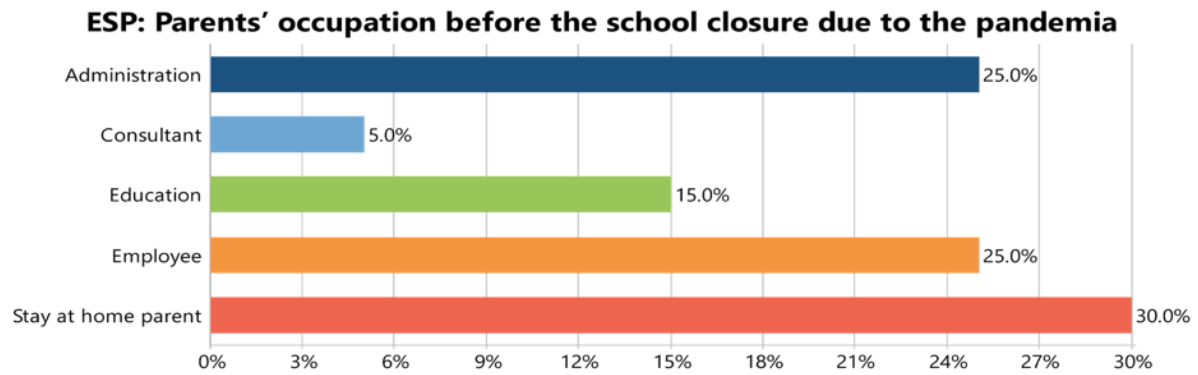


Figure 43. DQ47 GR Parents' Occupation Before the School Closure Due to the Pandemic

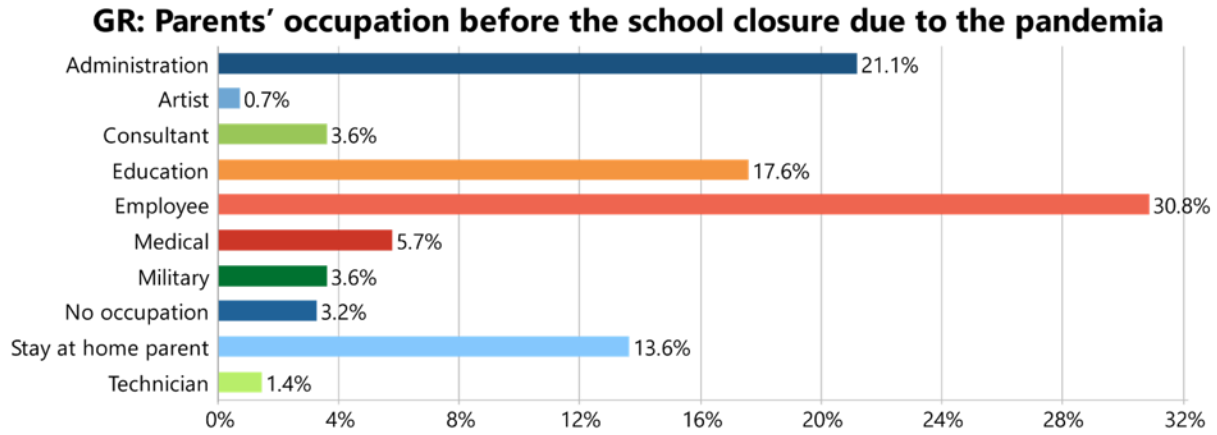


Figure 44. DQ47 IT Parents' Occupation Before the School Closure Due to the Pandemic

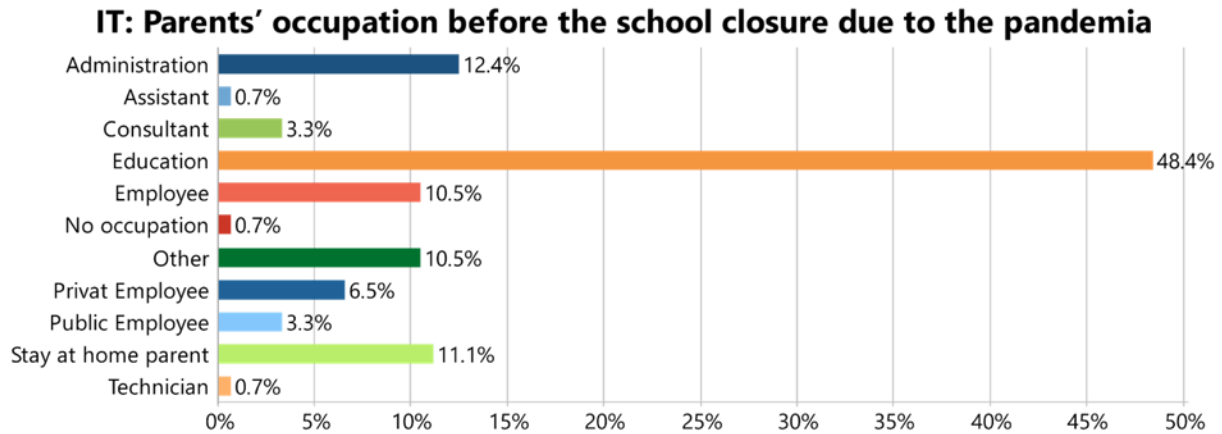


Figure 45. DQ47 USA Parents' Occupation Before the School Closure Due to the Pandemic

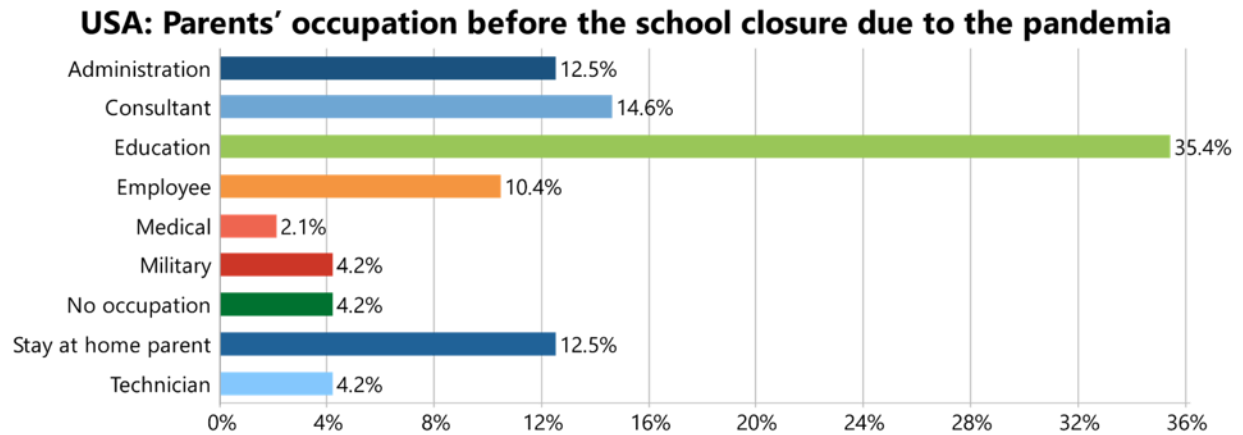


Table 7. Demographics, Parents Occupation before School Closure: Summary Table

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
47	Parents' occupation before school closure due to Covid-19 pandemic	CR / Fig 39/ N=16	ESP / Fig 40/ N=20	GR / Fig 41 / N=286	IT / Fig 42 / N=154	USA / Fig 43 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Administration	37.5	25.0	21.1	12.4	12.5
	Consultant	25.0	5.0	3.6	3.3	14.6
	Education	25.0	15.0	17.6	48.4	35.4
	Employee	6.3	25.0	30.8	10.5	10.4
	Private employee				6.5	
	Public employee				3.3	
	Stay-at-home parent	6.3	30.0			
	Medical			5.7		2.1
	Military			3.6		4.2
	Stay-at-homeparent			13.6	11.1	12.5
	Technician			1.4	0.7	4.2
	Artist			0.7		
	Assistant				0.7	
	No occupation			3.2	0.7	4.2
	Other				10.5	

DQ9/F44-48 Parent's Changes in their Occupation while in Lockdown.

As in most, if not all, the demographic responses it is obvious that the upper and middle class is overrepresented in this sample. The percentage of responses for those who became unemployed during the Pandemic is considerably lower as compared to the statistics for each county's 'job loss' during the health emergency. All the tables below show that most parents managed as they were or moved to telework during the lockdowns and other restrictions due to Covid-19.

Figure 46. DQ48 CR Type of Occupation During Lockdown

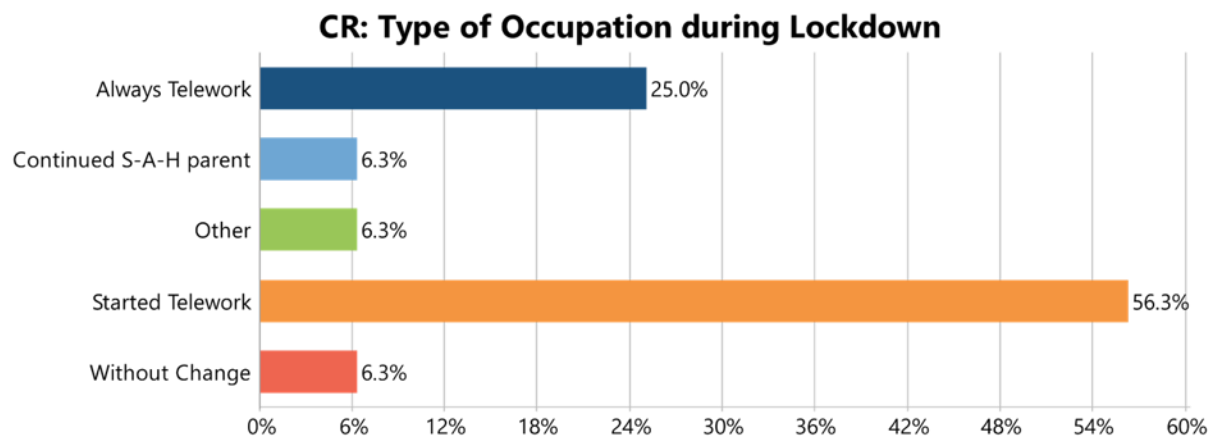


Figure 47. DQ48 ESP Type of Occupation During Lockdown

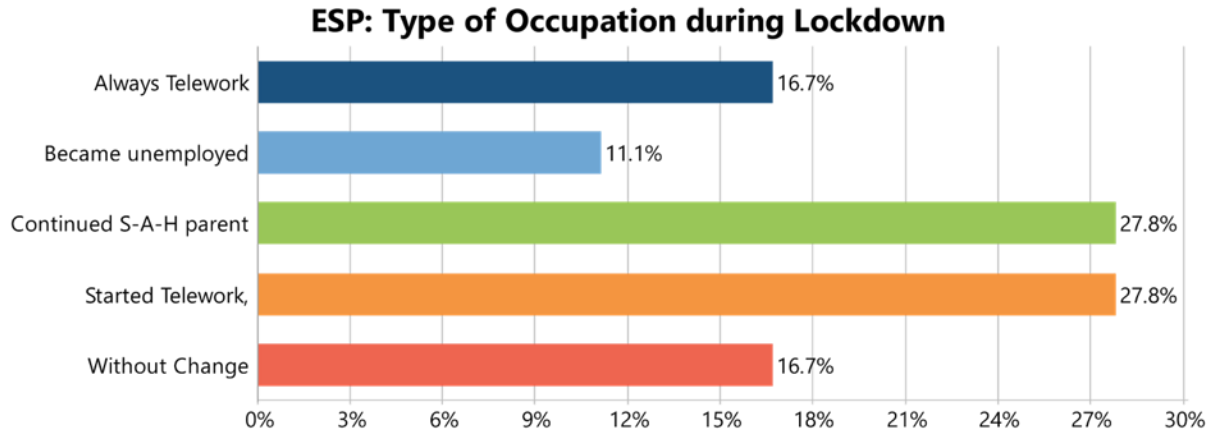


Figure 48. DQ48 GR Type of Occupation During Lockdown

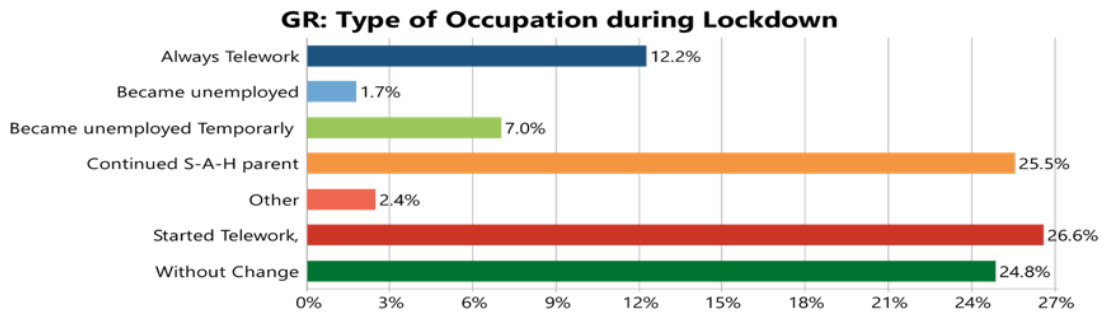


Figure 49. DQ48 IT Type of Occupation During Lockdown

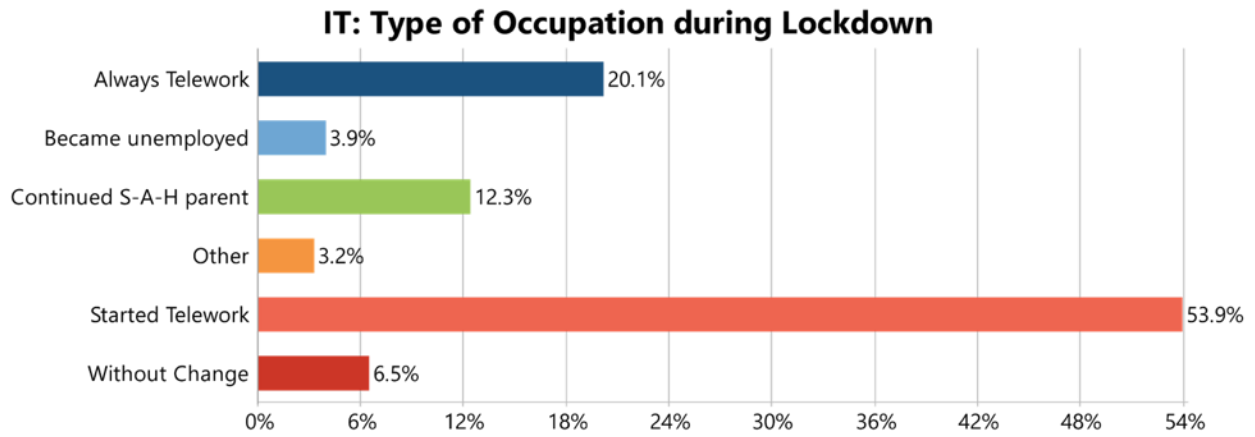
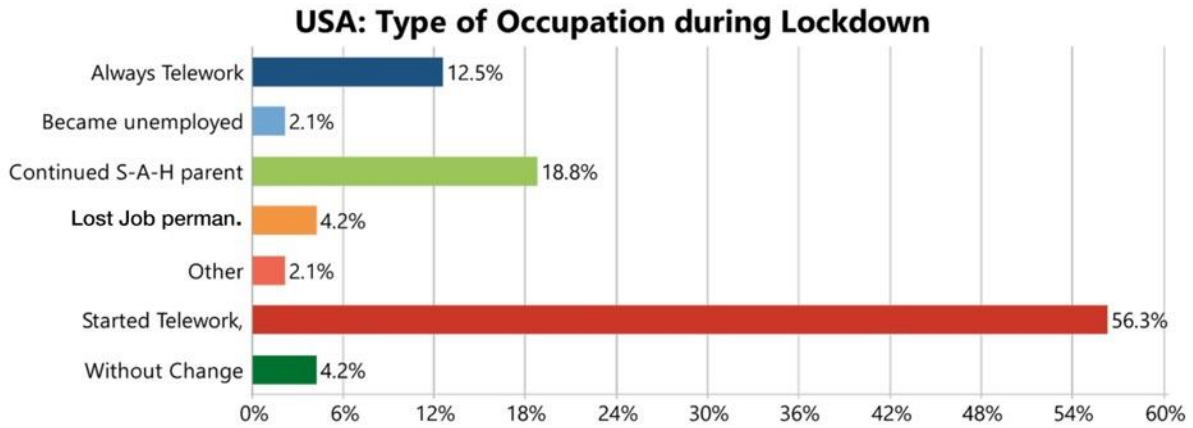


Figure 50. DQ48 USA Type of Occupation During Lockdown



Analysis of Qualitative Research Questions 1-4

RQ1, 1st Research Question: Principal Elements/Features that Constitute a Successful

Parent-School Relationship and Partnership Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18.

For each overarching broad Research Question (RQ), there are two or more constituent sub-Questions (RsQ)s. For the analysis the first research question and sub-questions Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18 were consciously selected from the questionnaire. This choice arose from the relevance of the specific questions to the research question which, in combination with the five different ethnic groups that participated, and the large total number of participants, was expected to provide insight into what the parents valued—and what they *came* to value because of the stresses and conditions of personal isolation imposed by the Covid-19 crisis.

For the RQ's and sRQ's, a brief analysis of the results *follows* the summary data table.

RsQ1/ F49–53: The first question asks parents to define their ideal “family-school relationship,” (Please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that represents your ideal “family-school relationship”).

Responses:

Figure 51. RsQ1 CR Ideal “Family-School Relationship”

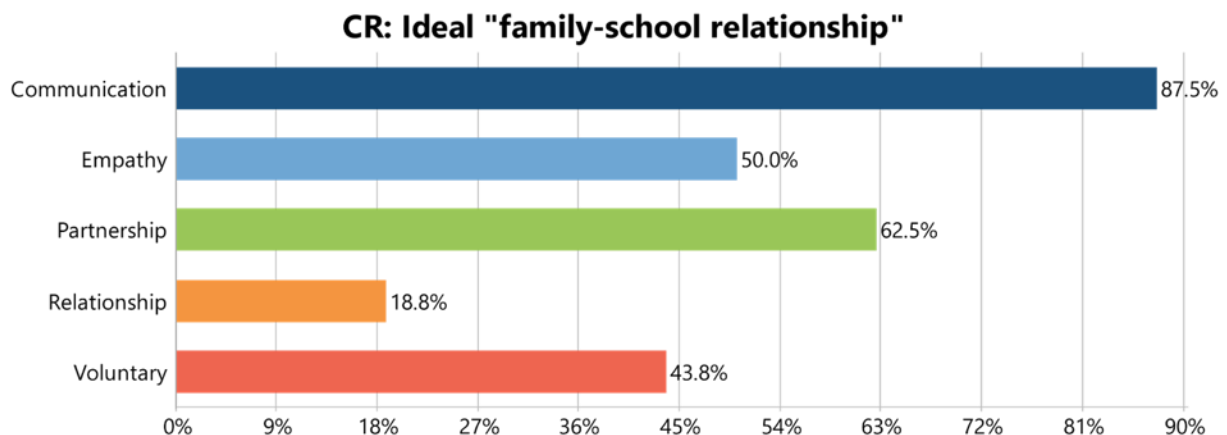


Figure 52. RsQ1 ESP Ideal “Family-School Relationship”

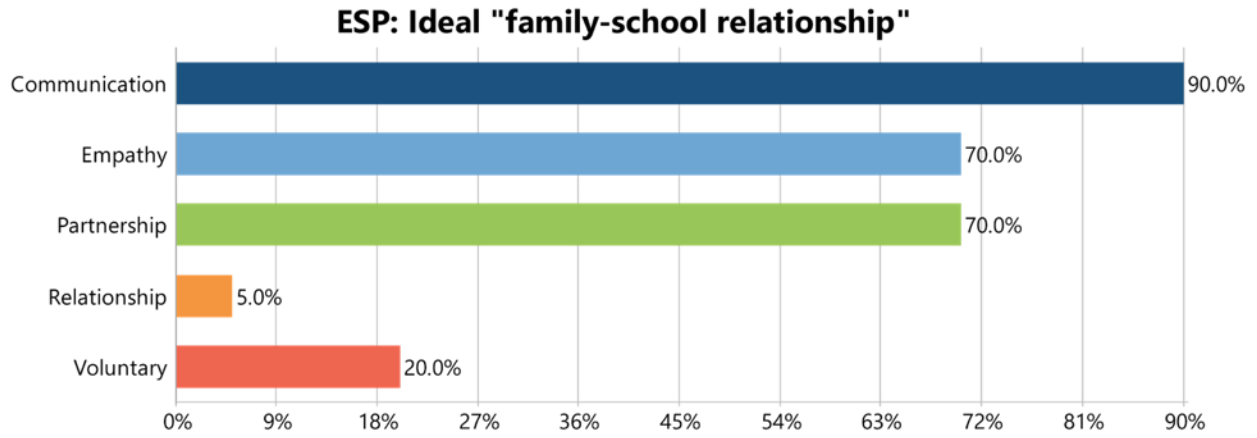


Figure 53. RsQ1 GR Ideal “Family-School Relationship”

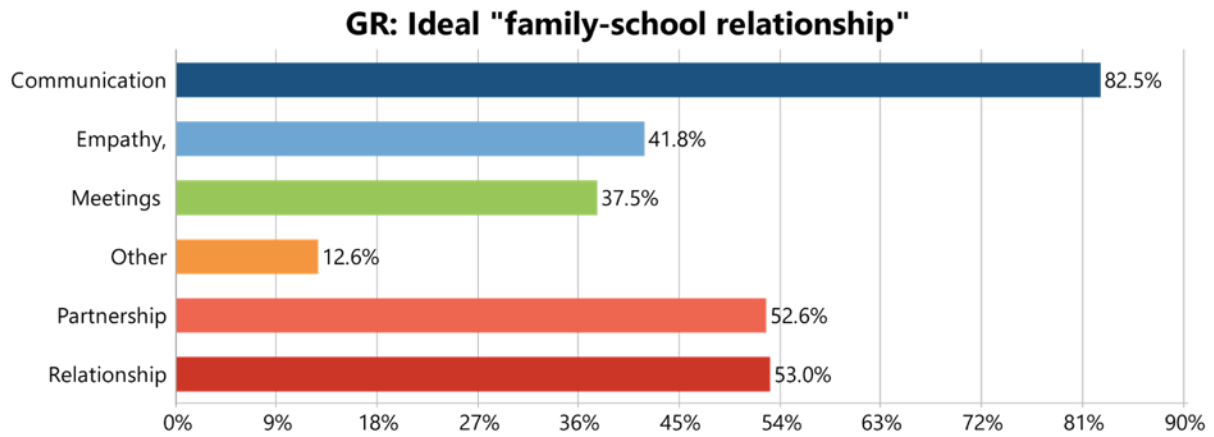


Figure 54. RsQ1 IT Ideal “Family-School Relationship”

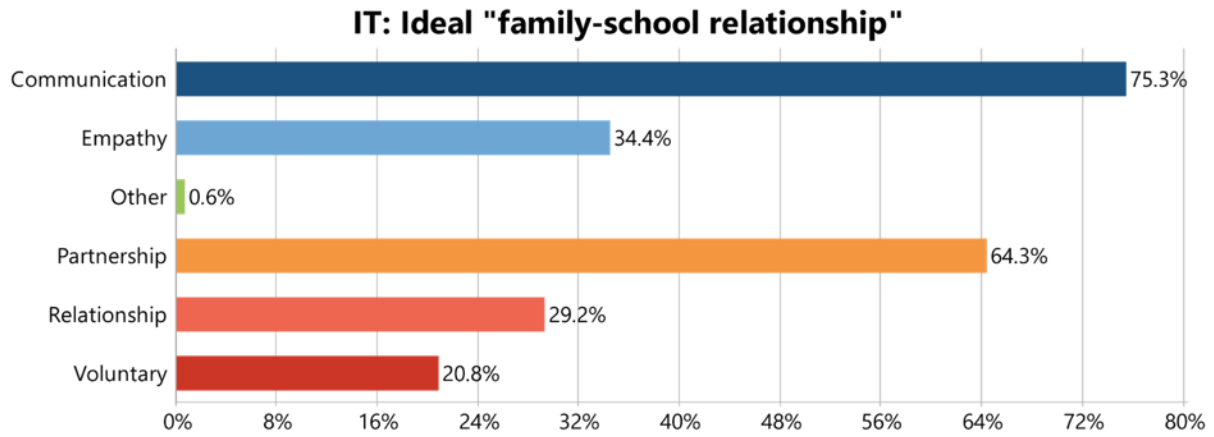


Figure 55. RsQ1 USA Ideal “Family-School Relationship”

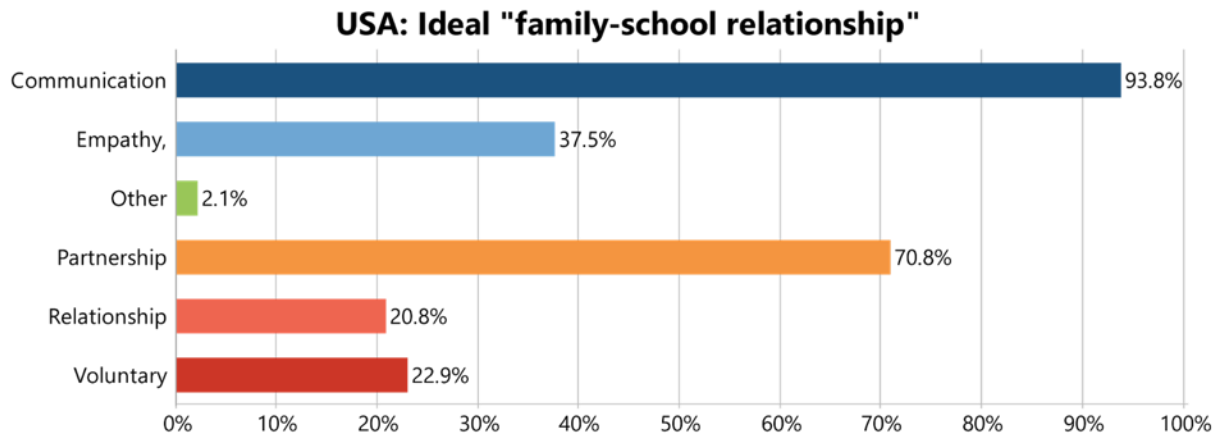


Table 8. Sub-Question 1: Summary Table

SURVEY RESPONSES PERTINENT TO RESEARCH QUESTION #1 What are the main/principal elements/features that constitutes a successful parent-school relationship and partnership? Chosen for analysis: Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
1	Please check one (1) to three (3) words / phrases that represents your ideal "family-school relationship". * Communication (meetings, emails, etc), Empathy, support or/and enhancing family-school partnership, Voluntary parents' engagement in school, relationship, Other// FIG 49-53	CR / Fig 49 / N=16	ESP / Fig 50 / N=20	GR / Fig 51 / N=286	IT / Fig 52 / N=154	USA / Fig 53 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Communication	87.5	90.0	82.5	75.3	93.8
	Empathy	50.0	70.0	41.8	34.4	37.5
	Partnership	62.5	70.0	37.5	64.3	70.8
	Relationship	18.8	5.0	12.6	29.2	20.8
	Voluntary	43.8	20.0	37.5	20.8	22.9
	Meetings			12.6	0.6	2.1
	Other					

In their attempt to define the ideal family-school relationship, parents found that choosing one of the available answers alone was not enough. Most of them chose more than one concept to describe this relationship. To be even more precise, almost all of them exhausted the maximum number of three options available for this question. In addition, it appears that the available options were relatively sufficient to provide adequate answers as few of the respondents answered by adding other features.

Quantitative inspection of the answers produces similar inter-national data. Qualitatively analyzing the data in the charts and table, we see that the five groups of parents, despite their given social, cultural, economic, and experiential differences, all have a common understanding

of the relationship. It seems that the parents who responded to the questionnaires, prefer communication as the main feature of the school-family relationship, while they also consider cooperation and emotion important. It is interesting to note that volunteering at school, despite its active nature, lags the importance of partnership for parents. If the answers are classified, communication and volunteering could be characterized as techniques while empathy and partnership respectively could be considered as having an emotional basis. The qualitative comparison of the two sub-sums highlights a balance between techniques and emotion. If communication is not considered to express emotion, then the scales of the ideal relationship lean towards emotion.

Q2/F54-58: The 2nd Question is asking parents to identify activities enhancing “family-school partnership”. (Could you please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that enhance "family-school partnership"?)

Responses:

Figure 56. RsQ2 CR Enhancing “Family-School Partnership”

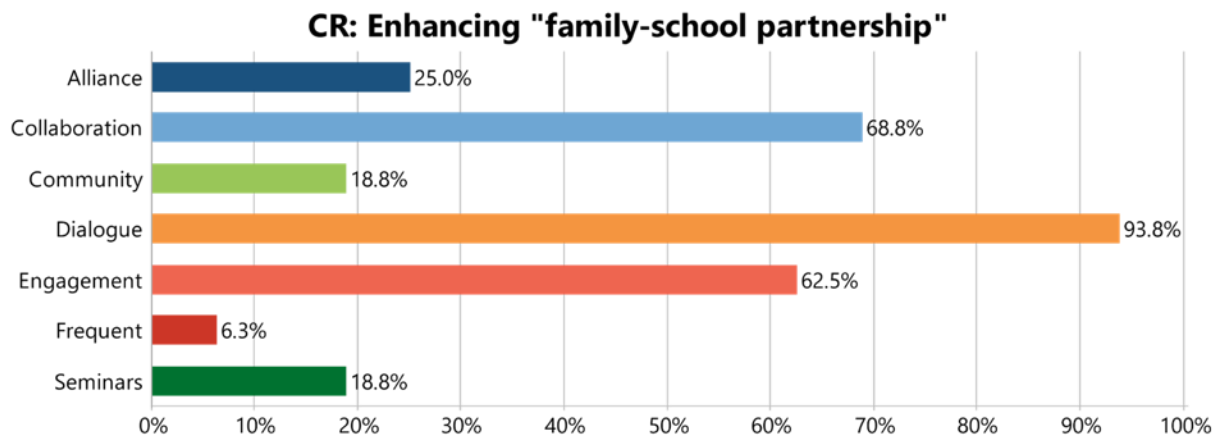


Figure 57. RsQ2 ESP Enhancing “Family-School Partnership”

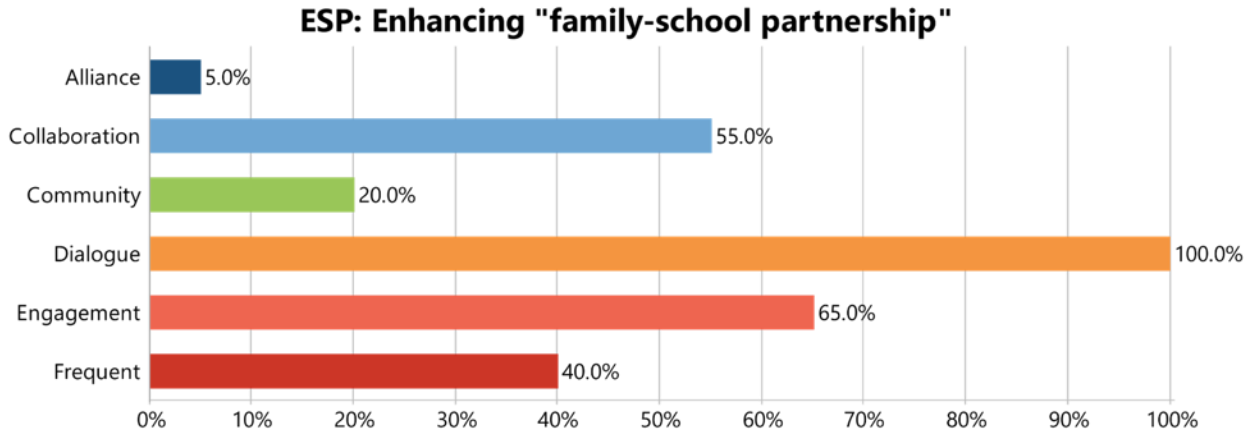


Figure 58. RsQ2 GR Enhancing “Family-School Partnership”

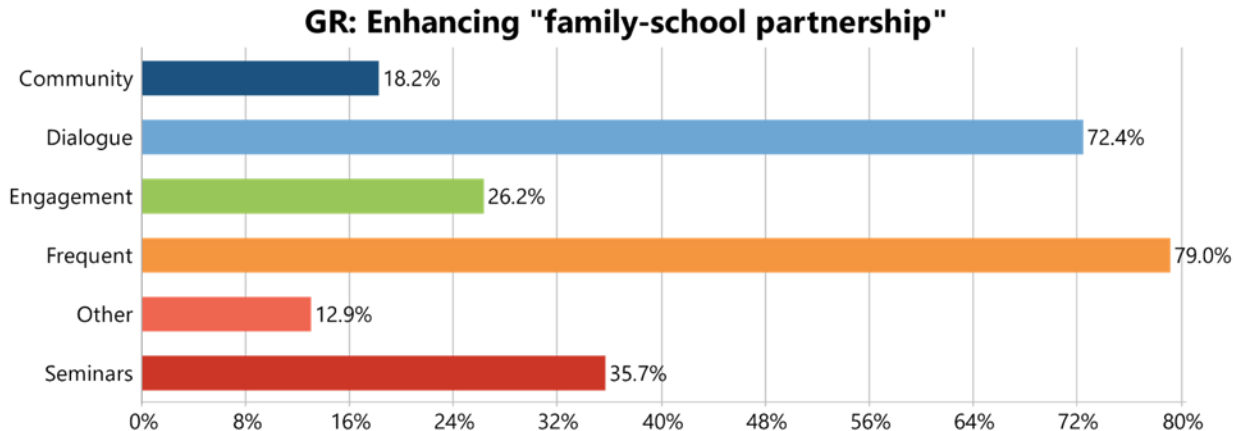


Figure 59. RsQ2 IT Enhancing “Family-School Partnership”

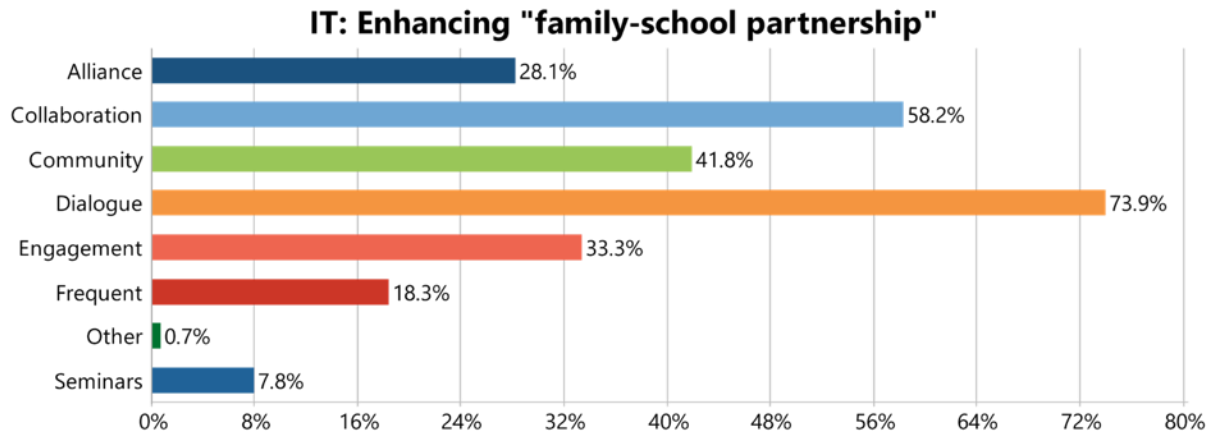


Figure 60. RsQ2 USA Enhancing “Family-School Partnership”

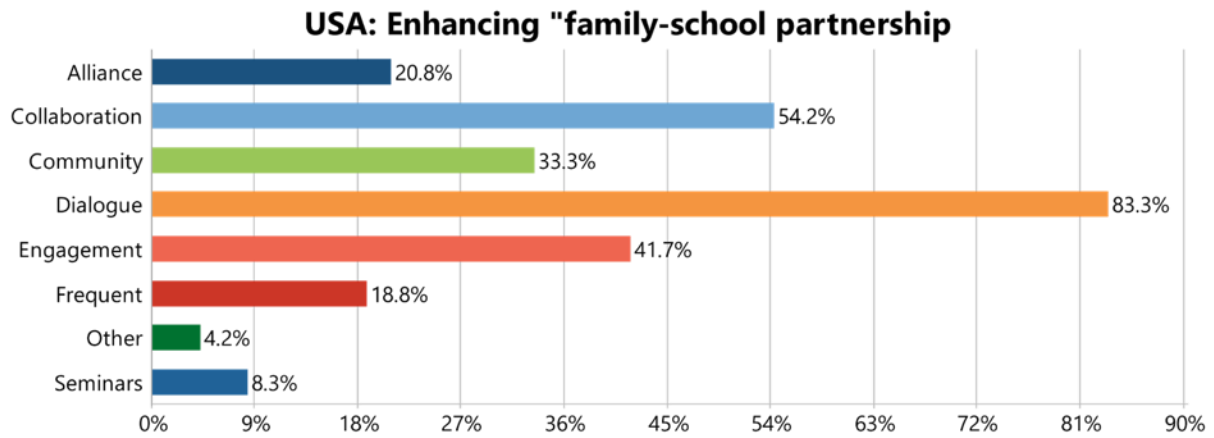


Table 9. Sub-Question 2: Summary Table

SURVEY RESPONSES PERTINENT TO RESEARCH QUESTION #1 What are the main/principal elements/features that constitutes a successful parent-school relationship and partnership? Chosen for analysis: Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
2	Could you please check one (1) to three (3) words / phrases that enhances "family-school partnership"? * Check all that apply. Dialogue, Frequent meetings, Parents' engagement (eg., PTA meetings) Seminars, Community building, Collaboration, Alliance, Other	CR / Fig 54 / N=16	ESP / Fig 55 / N=20	GR / Fig 56 / N=286	IT / Fig 57 / N=154	USA / Fig 58 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Dialogue	93.8	100.0	72.4	73.9	20.8
	Frequent Meetings	6.3	40.0	79.0	18.3	18.8
	Parents' engagement	62.5	65.0	26.2	33.3	41.7
	Seminars	18.8	20.0	35.7	18.3	8.3
	Community building	18.8	20.0	18.2	41.9	33.3
	Collaboration	68.8	55.0	12.9	58.2	54.3
	Alliance	25.0	5.0	12.9	28.1	20.8
	Other				0.7	4.2

In responses to the first question, above, the desire for a qualitative and emotional relationship emerges. This second question asks parents to discern activities through which their desired family-school partnership can be enhanced. The particularity of the question is identified by careful choice of the word *partnership*. While it is not unlikely that some or many parents may not have been aware of the egalitarian implication, the term denotes an *equal* relationship between distinct entities working to achieve a common goal.

From the answers it appears that the respondents have, at least to some extent, understood the meaning of partnership as given above and responded to it by probing possible behavioral implications. Very interestingly in relation to possible readiness for implementation of the P4P

Model, “Dialogue” is a top choice stating that the partnership and its improvement requires will, mutual recognition and activation of those involved. It is a quality of communication sponsoring equal exchange of information and views. The preference for dialogue is perhaps emphasized by the fact that active alternatives such as seminars, are not high among their preferences.

Speculatively, the preference for dialogue may also capture the importance of the role that parents consider the family to have in the learning process. The collaboration, and parents’ engagement options logically follow dialogue, and downstream, feed into the community building and alliance options. There is a maturity and emphasis on family-school engagement that augurs well for strengthening of the parent-teacher-school partnership—and perhaps, inferentially, receptivity to engagement with activities and the mindset featured in my P4P model. (It was pointed out in the previous chapter that preponderance of the choice could possibly signal future appreciation for the conduct of Socratic dialogue in application of my P4P model. The same might be said of preference for collaboration and community building among Italian respondents)

RsQ7/F59-63: The 7th question asks parents to consider further factors—sometimes more remote or abstract—they believe will enhance the relationship with the school. (Which of the following would you consider that enhances the relationship with the school?)

Figure 61. RsQ7 CR Enhancing the Relationship with the School

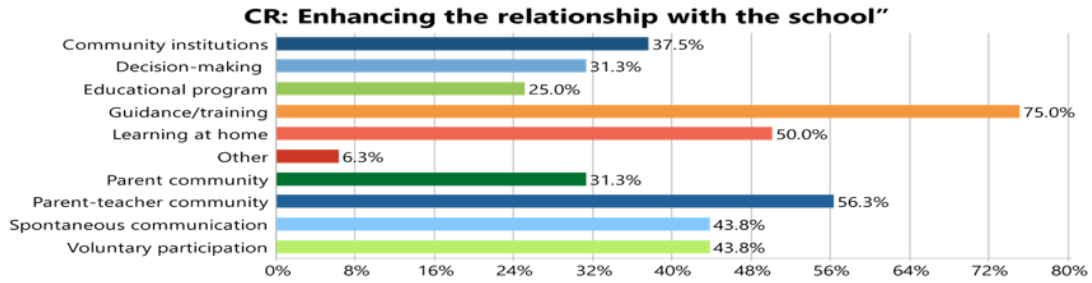


Figure 62. RsQ7 ESP Enhancing the Relationship with the School

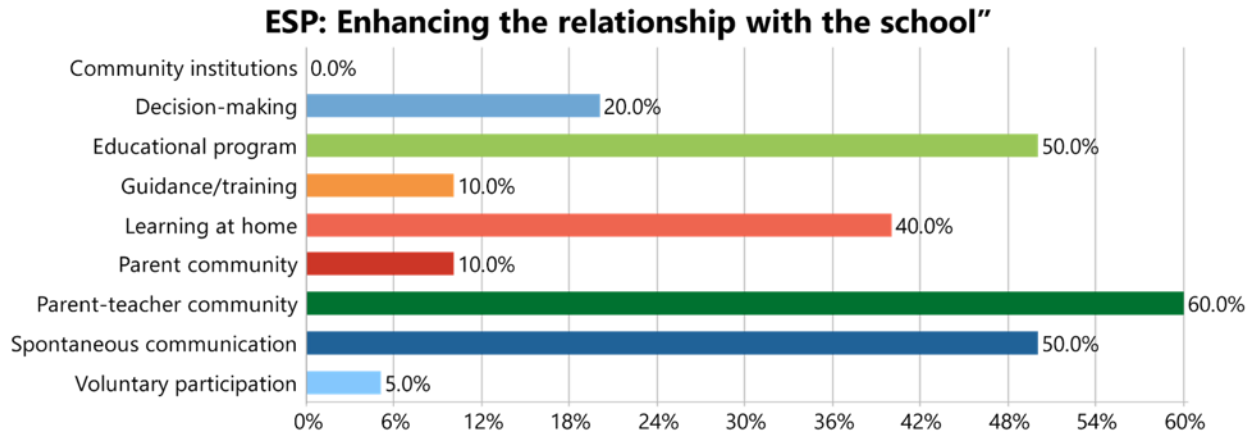


Figure 63. RsQ7 GR Enhancing the Relationship with the School

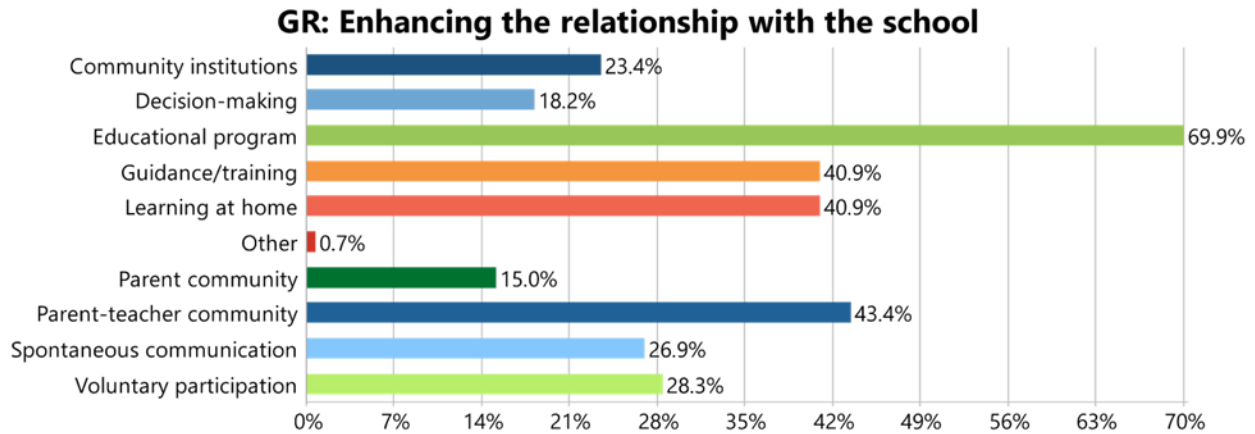


Figure 64. RsQ7 IT Enhancing the Relationship with the School

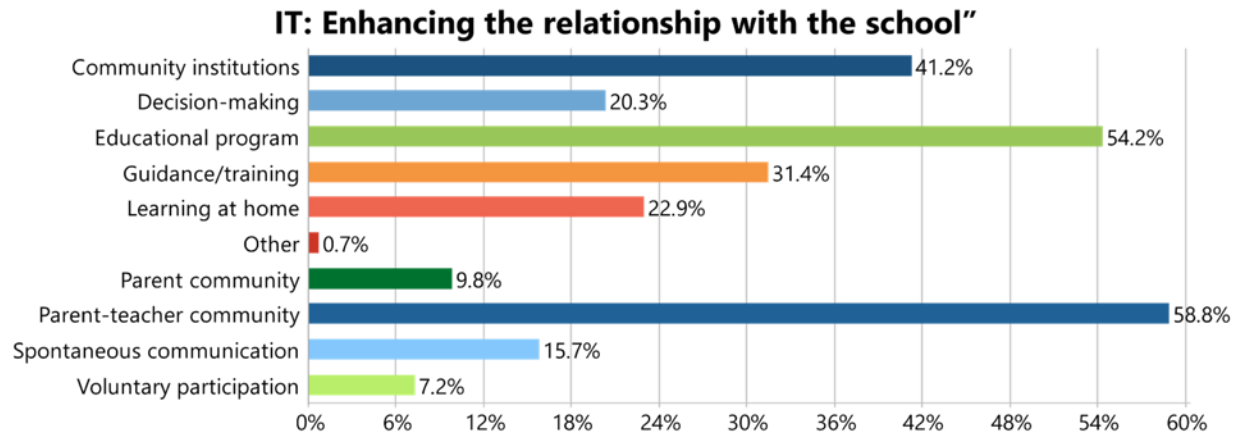


Figure 65. RsQ7 USA Enhancing the Relationship with the School

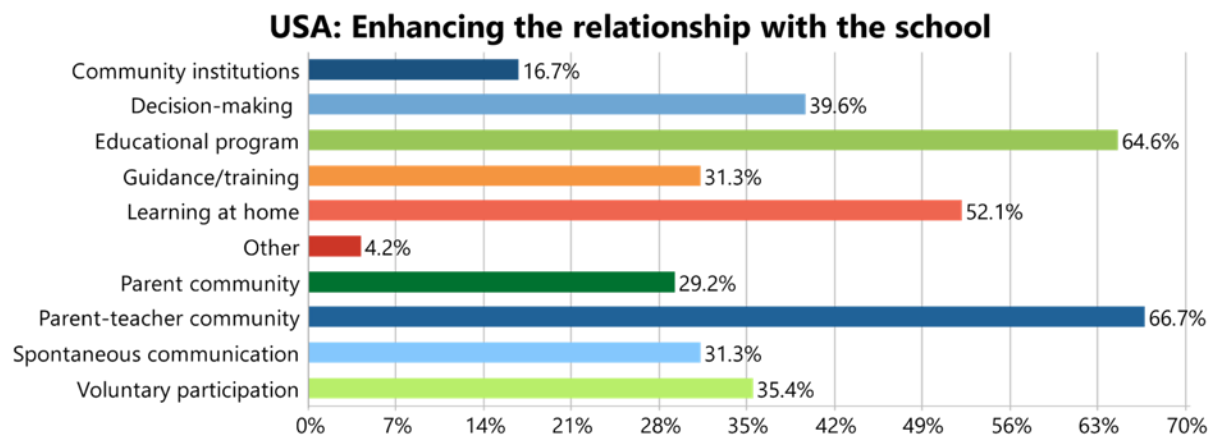


Table 10. Sub-Question 7: Summary Table

SURVEY RESPONSES PERTINENT TO RESEARCH QUESTION #1 What are the main/principal elements/features that constitutes a successful parent-school relationship and partnership? Chosen for analysis: Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
7	Which of the following would you consider that enhances the relationship with the school? Check all that apply. Regular meetings & information about the educational program, Spontaneous communication, Build-up a strong parent-teacher community, Build-up a strong parent community within the school, Voluntary participation of parents, Guidance/training of parents, Guidance/ support of children's learning at home, Participation in decision-making within the school community,	CR / Fig 59 / N=16	ESP / Fig 60 / N=20	GR / Fig 61 / N=286	IT / Fig 62 / N=154	USA / Fig 63 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Community institutions	37.5		23.4	41.2	16.7
	Decision making	31.3	20.0	18.2	20.3	39.6
	Educational program	25.0	50.0	69.9	54.2	64.6
	Guidance/training	75.0	10.0	40.9	31.4	31.3
	Learning at home	50.0	40.0	40.9	22.9	52.1
	Other	6.3		0.7	0.7	4.2
	Parent community	31.3	10.0	15.0	9.8	29.2
	Parent-teacher community	56.3	60	43.3	58.8	66.7
	Spontaneous communication	43.8	50	26.9	15.7	31.3
	Voluntary participation	43.8	5	28.3	7.2	35.4

Consistent high scores for educational program, guidance training, and learning at home, and parent-teacher community further appear to signal enthusiasm, and hopefully intention, toward reification of the parent-teacher-school community that, not only align with almost all recent favorable research findings, but also likely with successful operation of my P4P model.

RsQ18/F64-68: Accepting the statement the “relationship with the school could be improved” The 18th question is asking parents to openly suggest ways that could possibly empower this relationship (If "yes or maybe", would you please suggest ways that could possibly empower this relationship?).

Figure 66. RsQ18 CR Ways that Could Possibly Empower your Relationship with the School

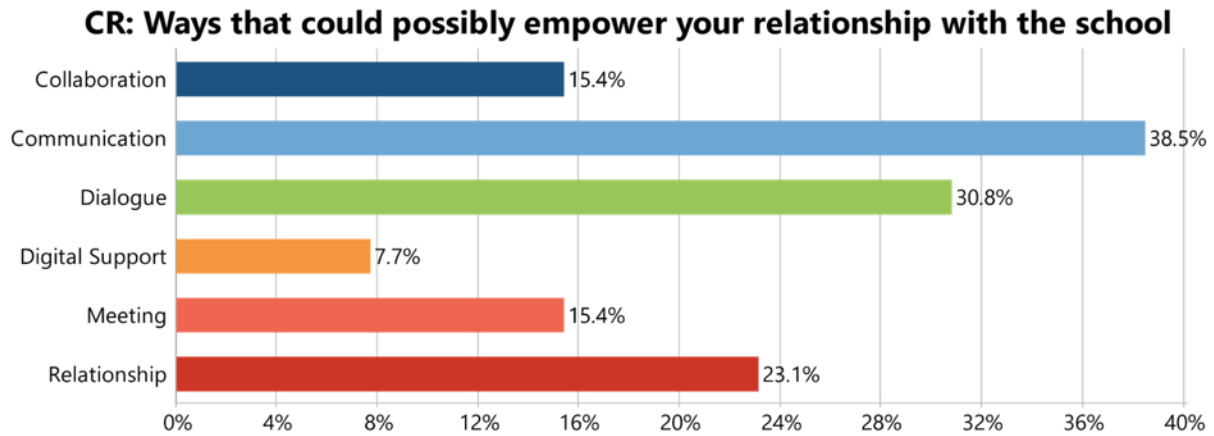


Figure 67. RsQ18 ESP Ways that Could Possibly Empower your Relationship with the School

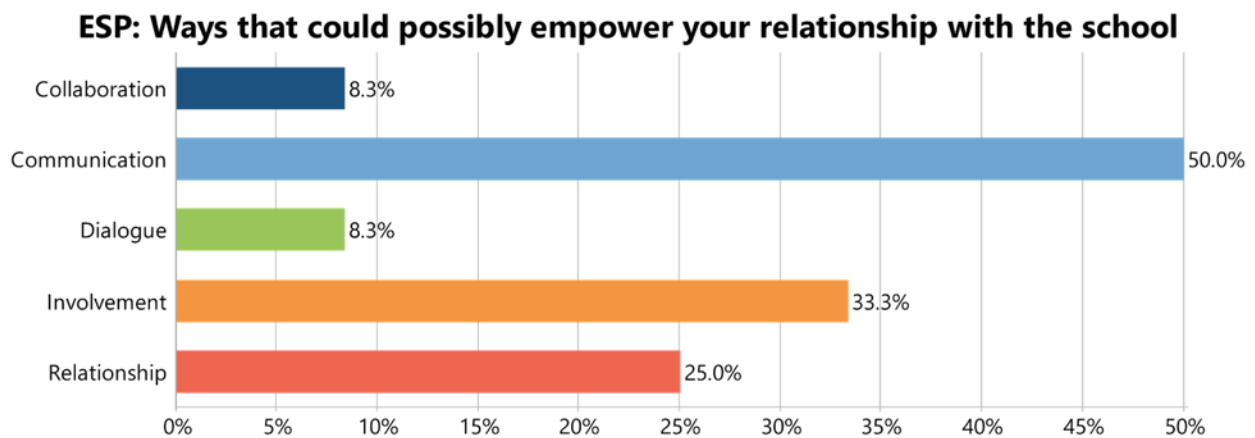


Figure 68. BRsQ18 GR Ways that Could Possibly Empower your Relationship with the School

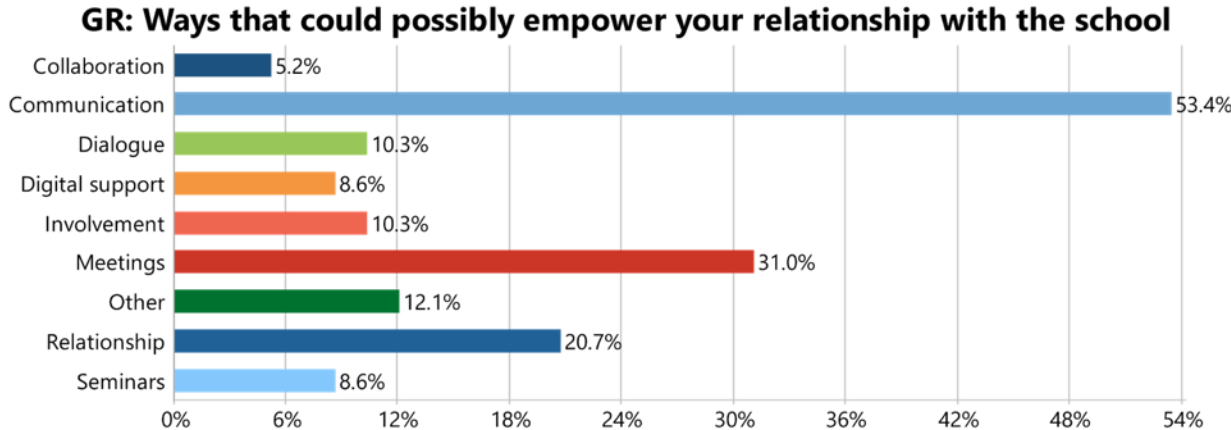


Figure 69. RsQ18 IT Ways that Could Possibly Empower your Relationship with the School

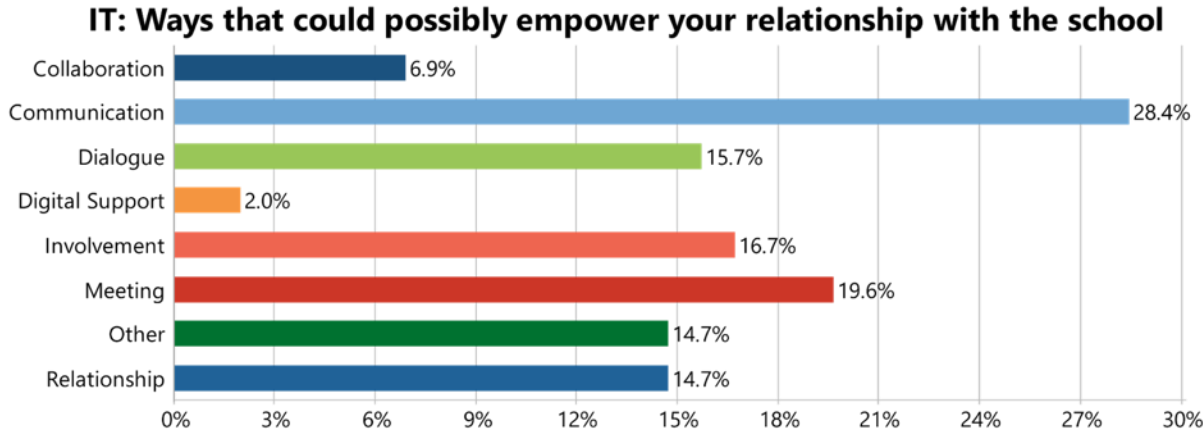


Figure 70. RsQ18 USA Ways that Could Possibly Empower your Relationship with the School

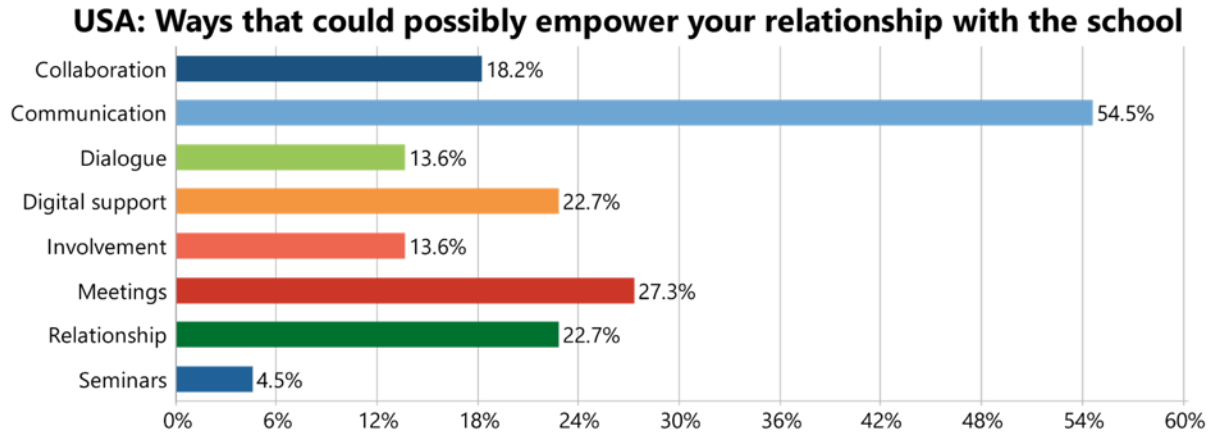


Table 11. Sub-Question 18: Summary Table

SURVEY RESPONSES PERTINENT TO RESEARCH QUESTION #1						
What are the main/principal elements/features that constitutes a successful parent-school relationship and partnership? Chosen for analysis: Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
18	Do you think that your relationship with the school could improve? * If "yes or maybe," would you please suggest ways that could possibly empower this relationship? (Followed by 5 blank lines)	CR / Fig 64 / N=16	ESP / Fig 65 / N=20	GR / Fig 66 / N=286	IT / Fig 67 / N=154	USA / Fig 68 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Collaboration	15.4	8.3	5.2	6.9	18.2
	Communication	38.5	50.0	53.4	28.4	54.5
	Dialogue	30.8	8.3	10.3	15.7	13.6
	Digital Support	7.7	33.3	8.6	2.0	22.7
	Involvement			10.3	16.7	13.6
	Meeting(s)	15.4		31.0	19.6	27.3
	Relationship	23.1	25.0	20.7	14.7	22.7
	Seminars			8.6		4.5
	Other				14.7	

This overview analysis will compare responses to the open-ended question with those of the earlier closed 7th question—both seeking insight into factors that respondents felt would improve the school-family relationship.

The 18th question on the other hand with a sufficient space-time distance from the 7th asks the open submission of opinions. Both questions seek to provide feedback on activities that can enhance the family-school relationship. The striking relevance of the graphs resulting from the answers of the different ethnic parent groups and highlighted above can also be seen in the answers to these questions.

The answers can be classified here in the two categories that emerged from the analysis of the answers to the 1st question. In the first category are classified the practical activities that were selected and stated by the respondents while in the second are those social and emotional.

In the first category from the 7th question the actions are classified as regular meetings & information about the educational program, guidance/training of parents, guidance/support of children's learning at home, cooperation with local community institutions aiming at the support of school programs. The coding of the answers given by the 18th question, offers in this category actions under the terms: meetings, seminars, digital support, and communication in the informative sense of the term. When analyzing Qualitatively the answers in this category, it is discovered that parents seek actions aimed at raising awareness of the school environment and information on developments planned or taking place in it. The search for this support is also in line with the conclusions of the 2nd question about partnership and this necessity as the selection of the partnership as an option of the relationship presupposes the parity between the partners (common level of perception). The main action (seventh question) is that of regular meetings & information about the educational program as they are a decisive factor in shaping the school

environment. Parents then seek guidance/training in order to obtain the appropriate level of knowledge. This action, it is estimated, serves the environment as a whole, as it will improve the level of communication of the school family. In the answers to the 18th question the above actions are reflected in the requirement for effective communication and the need for meetings. The communication and the meetings of the 18th include the other two "technical" actions of the 7th question, i.e., guidance/support of children's learning at home and finally cooperation with local community institutions aiming at the support of school programs. The action guidance/support of children's learning at home receives high support finding that highlights those parents who consider themselves to have a significant role in the learning process that takes place at home. Impressive is the particularly high demand for guidance/support of children's learning at home by US parents which is attributed to the differentiation of roles and the transfer of learning competence at home brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Finally, the variation of the quantitative representation, from the five parent groups to the 7th question of the action cooperation with local community institutions aiming at the support of school programs is important. The variation is attributed to the respective role and responsibilities that the local community institutions play and have respectively.

The actions are classified in the second category as Spontaneous communication, Build-up a strong parent - teacher community, Build-up a strong parent community within the school, Voluntary participation of parents και Participation in decision-making within the school community. The coding of the answers given on the 18th question, offers to this category actions under the conditions: Dialogue, Involvement, Relationship, and Collaboration while the code: Communication also contains elements of Dialogue. Essential Communication and Dialogue are the dominant views highlighted by the answers to the 18th question. Regarding the answers to

the 2nd question, Collaboration και and Involvement strengthen the family school relationship. It is reiterated that partnership, collaboration and involvement presuppose effective communication and dialogue. The free recording of the views of the 18th question that fall into this second category is also verified by the answers to the 7th question. The Actions Build-up a strong parent-teacher community, Spontaneous communication, shows a particular preference, giving value to the development of a meaningful parent-teacher relationship. The recognition of the value of this cross-boundary bond is also highlighted by the qualification of the action Build-up a strong parent-teacher community vs. the Build-up a strong parent community within the school. Parents, in addition, recognize their position as important actors in the school environment and the value of this social and emotional relationship, desire participation in decision-making within the school community and offer to be involved and participate voluntarily.

RQ2, 2nd Research Question: The Role of Relationships within the School (Community) and Family Itself for the Academic Success and Well-being of Children. Q6, Q10, Q11

Questions Q6, Q10 and Q11 were consciously selected from the questionnaires for the analysis of the 2nd research question. This choice arose from the relevance of the specific questions to the research question which in combination with the five different ethnic groups that participated, and the large total number of participants is expected provide insight into the perceived importance and role of family relationships within itself and with the school community for the child/ren's welfare and academic Success. For thinking about conclusions, a comparison of the quantitative results per question between the five different reservoirs of answers (per nation) and between them follows.

RsQ6/F69-73: Do you Consider a Good Relationship with the School of Great Importance?

Figure 71. RsQ6 CR Do You Consider a Good Relationship with the School of Great Importance?

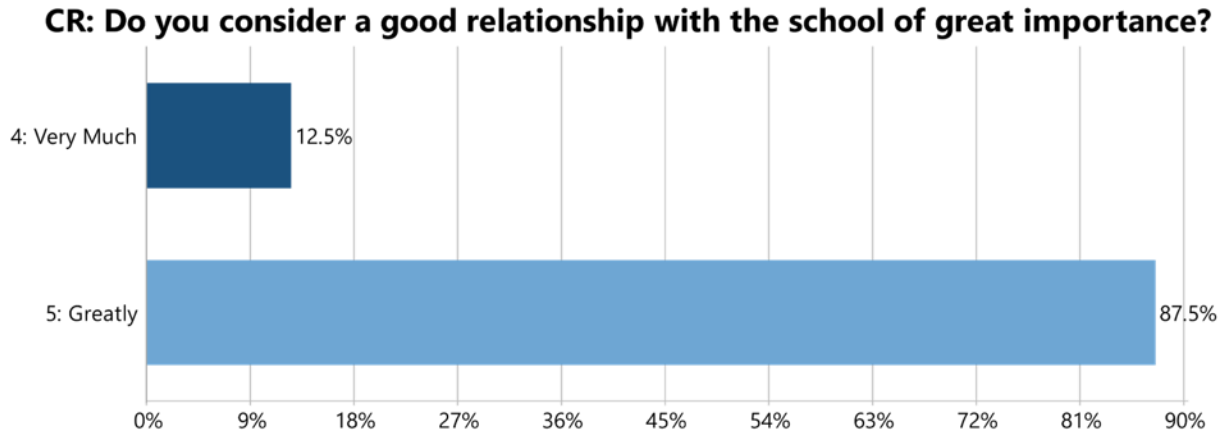


Figure 72. RsQ6 ESP Do you Consider a Good Relationship with the School of Great Importance?

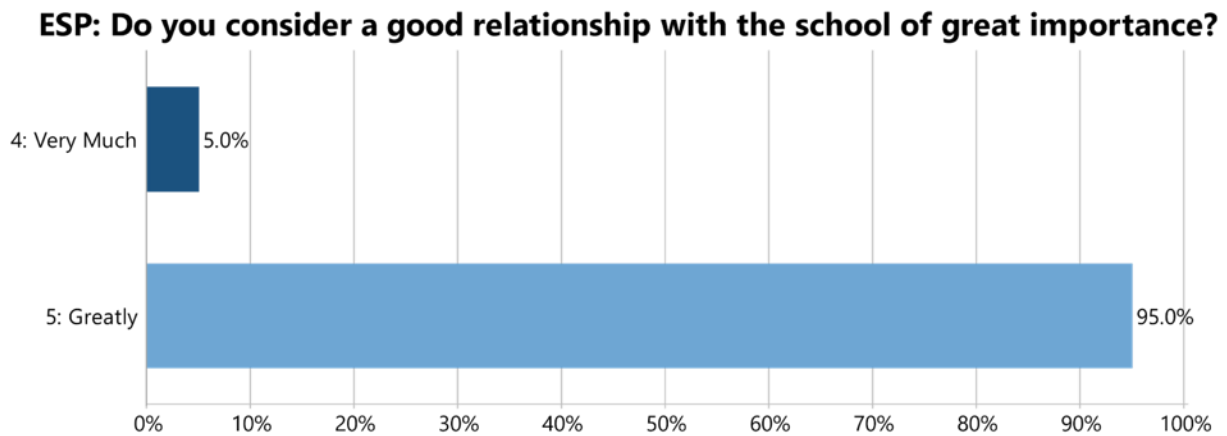


Figure 73. RsQ6 GR Do you Consider a Good Relationship with the School of Great Importance?

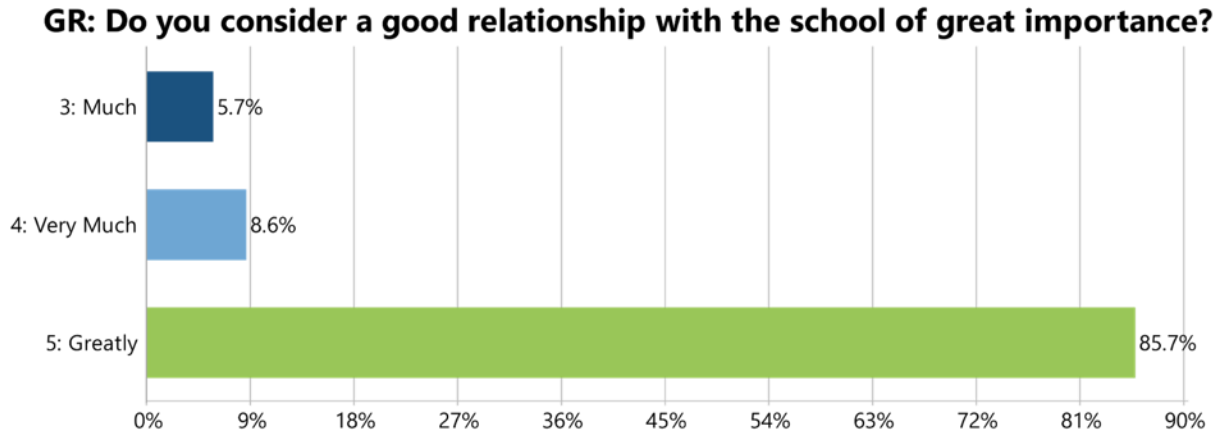


Figure 74. RsQ6 IT Do you Consider a Good Relationship with the School of Great Importance?

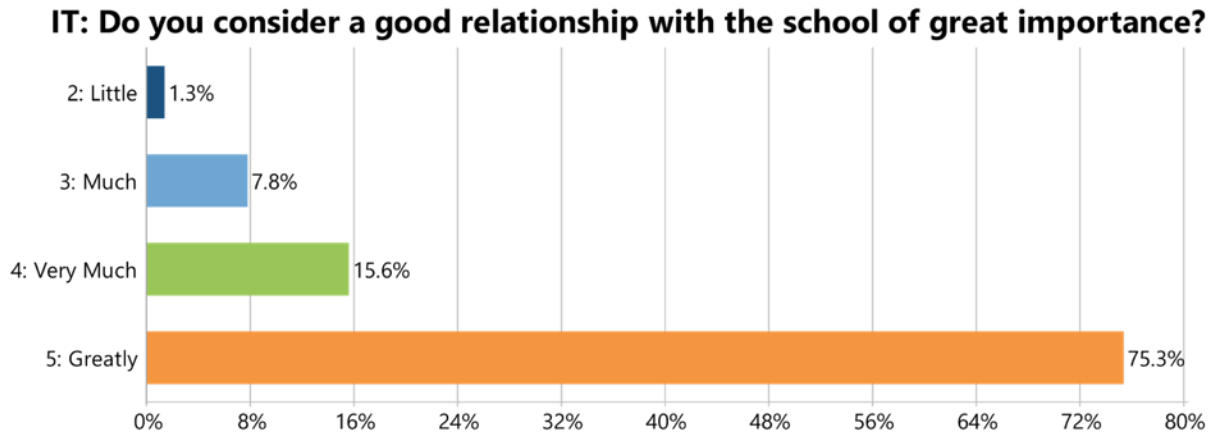


Figure 75. RsQ6 USA Do you Consider a Good Relationship with the School of Great Importance?

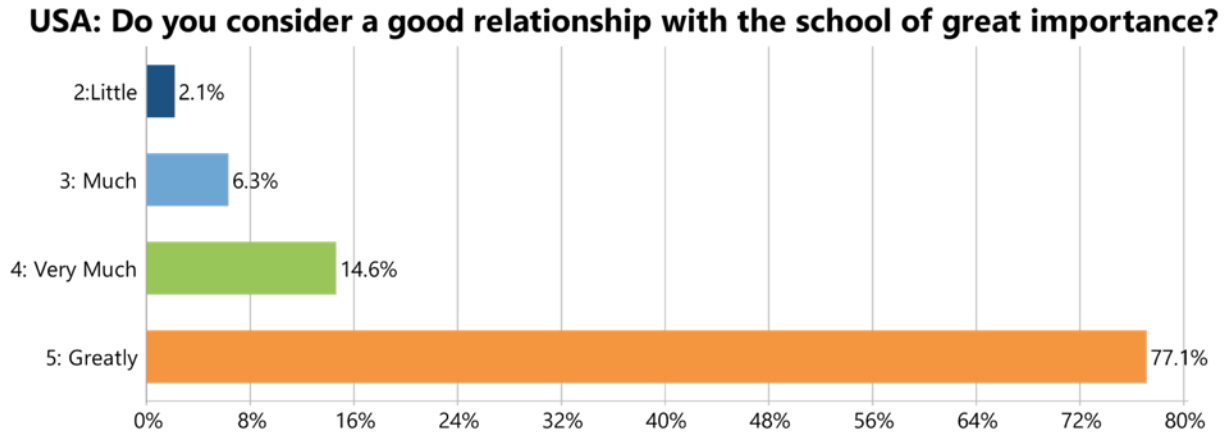


Table 12. Sub-Question 6: Summary Table

What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children? Chosen for analysis: Q6 (p. 189), Q10 (p. 192), Q11 (p. 194)						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
6	Do you consider a good relationship with the school of great importance? * Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all, and 5=Greatly)	CR / Fig 69 / N=16	ESP / Fig 70 / N=20	GR / Fig 71 / N=286	IT / Fig 72 / N=154	USA / Fig 73 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Little				1.3	2.1
	Much			5.7	7.8	6.3
	Very much	12.5	5.0	8.6	15.6	14.6
	Greatly	87.5	95.0	85.7	75.3	77.1

Question 6 asks parents how important they consider the existence of a good relationship with the school. Although there is some variation among the five ethnic groups, as above the

majority of the responses confirm the great importance of a relationship between family and school.

RsQ10/F74-78: How Important are Relationships within the Family for Your Children's Future Success in Life?

Figure 76. RsQ10 CR How Important are Relationships within the Family for Your Children's Future Success in Life?

CR: How important are relationships within the family for your children 's future success in life?

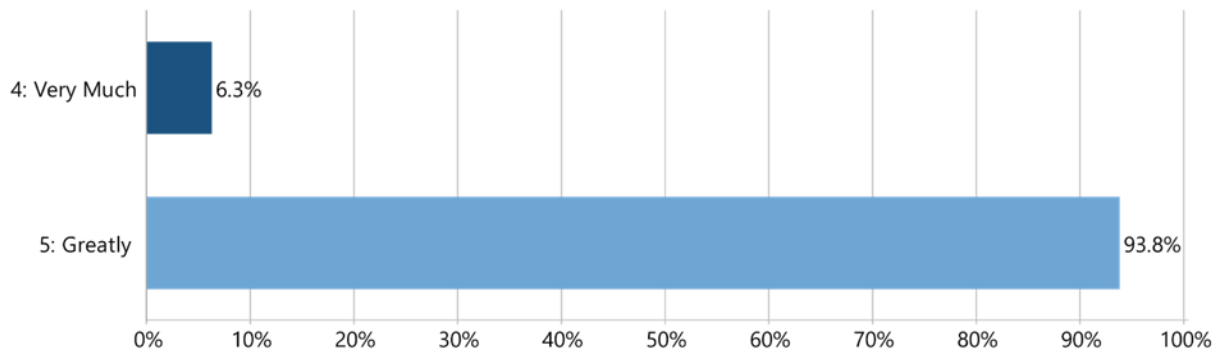


Figure 77. RsQ10 ESP How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Children's Future Success in Life?

ESP: How important are relationships within the family for your children 's future success in life?

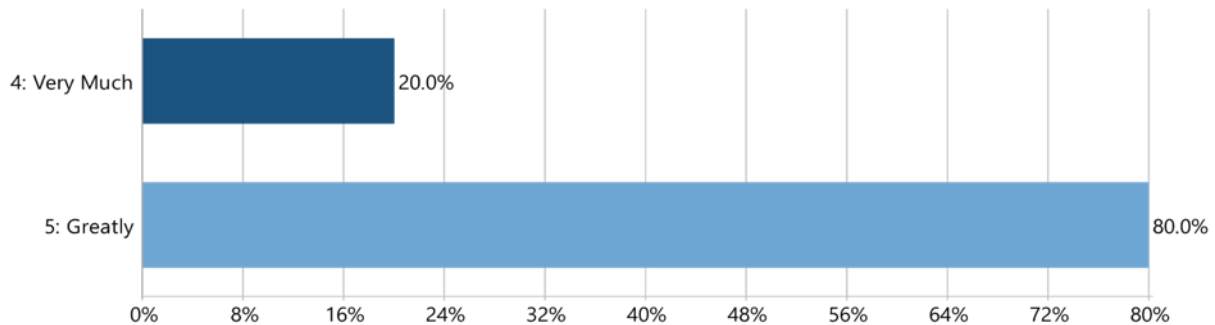


Figure 78. RsQ10 GR How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Children's Future Success in Life?

GR: How important are relationships within the family for your children 's future success in life?

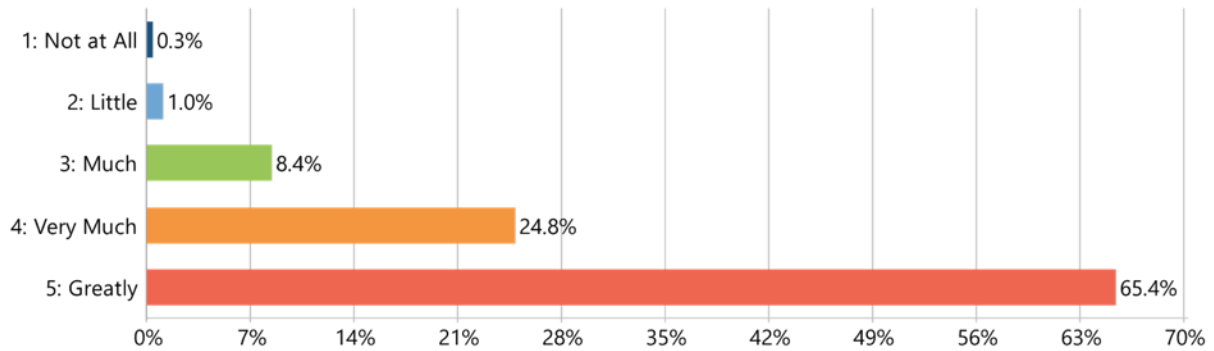


Figure 79. RsQ10 IT How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Children's Future Success in Life?

IT: How important are relationships within the family for your children 's future success in life?

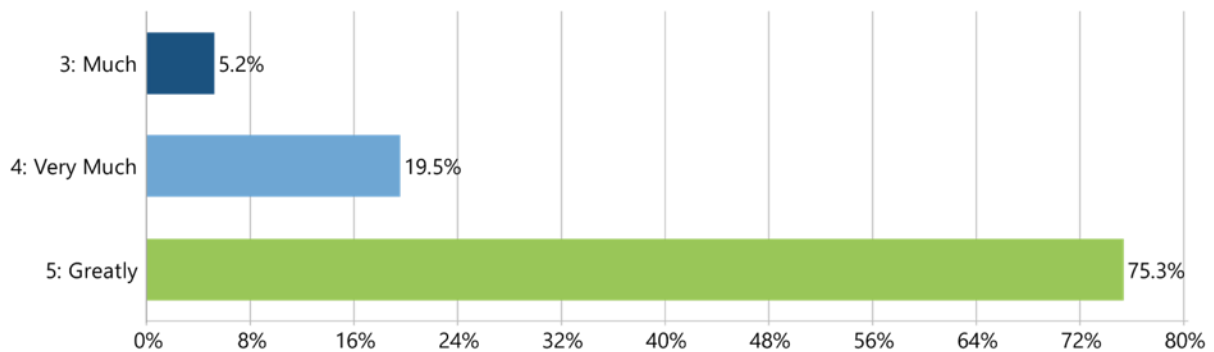


Figure 80. RsQ10 USA How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Children’s Future Success in Life?

USA: How important are relationships within the family for your children 's future success in life?

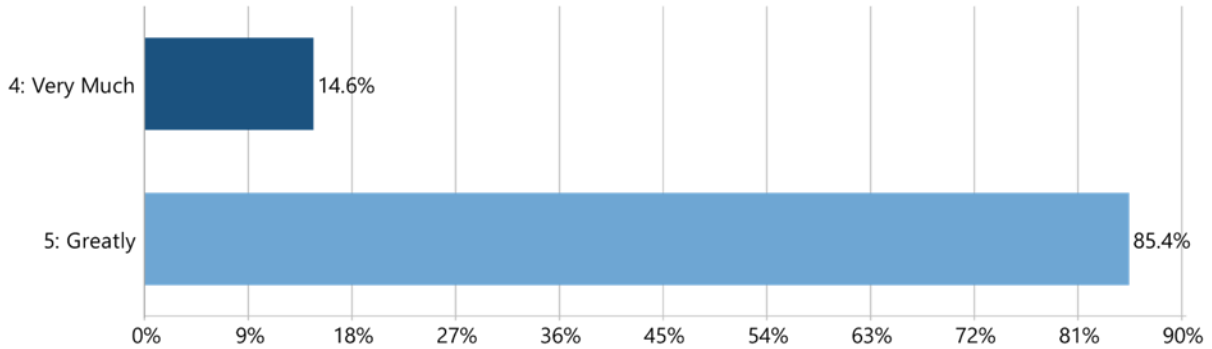


Table 13. Sub-Question 10: Summary Table

What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children? Chosen for analysis: Q6 (p. 189), Q10 (p. 192), Q11 (p. 194)						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
10	How important are relationships within the family for your children's future success in life? Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all important, and 5=Greatly important)	CR / Fig 74 / N=16	ESP / Fig 75 / N=20	GR / Fig 76 / N=286	IT / Fig 77 / N=154	USA / Fig 78 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Not at all			0.3		
	Little			1.0		
	Much			8.4	5.2	
	Very much	6.3	20.0	24.8	19.5	14.6
	Greatly	93.8	80.0	65.4	75.3	85.4

The 10th question, similarly, to the sixth, asks parents directly how they much value the importance of family relationship for their child/ren’s academic success. As was the case for the

question above, the majority of the responses confirm the great importance of relationships within families in this regard.

RsQ11/F79-83: What is the Role of Relationships within the Family for your Child/ren’s Academic Success?

Figure 81. RsQ11 CR How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Child/ren’s Academic Success?

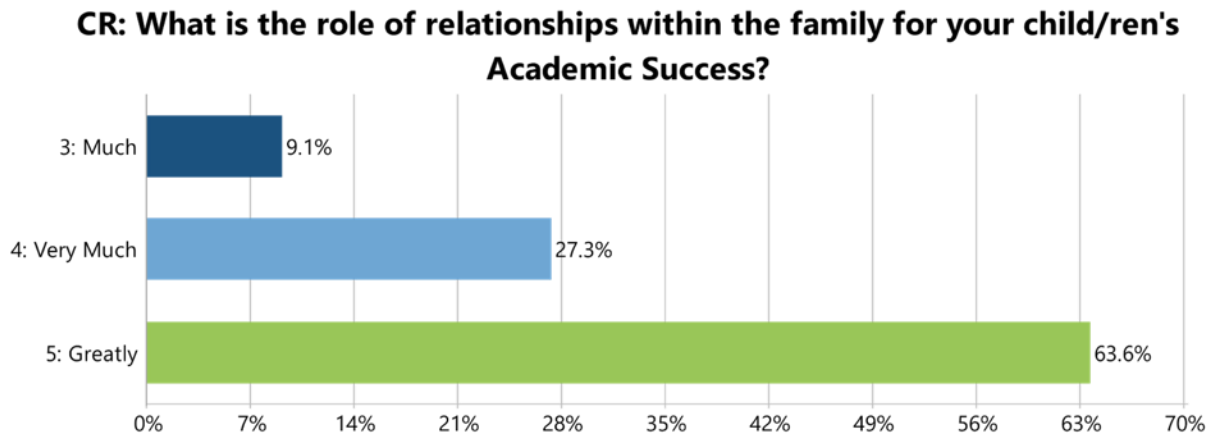


Figure 82. RsQ11 ESP How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Child/ren's Academic Success?

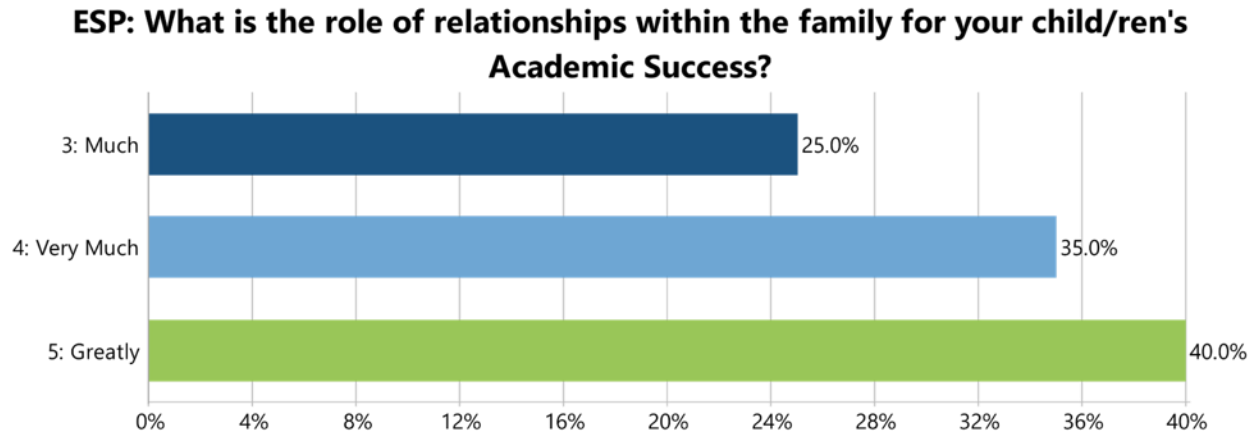


Figure 83. RsQ11 IT How Important are Relationships within the Family for for your Child/ren's Academic Success?

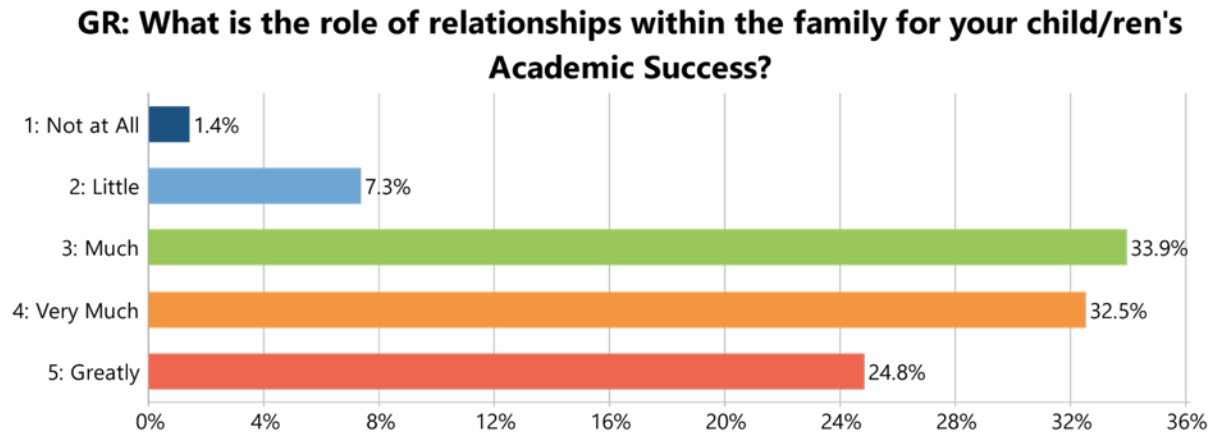


Figure 84. RsQ11 IT How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Child/ren’s Academic Success?

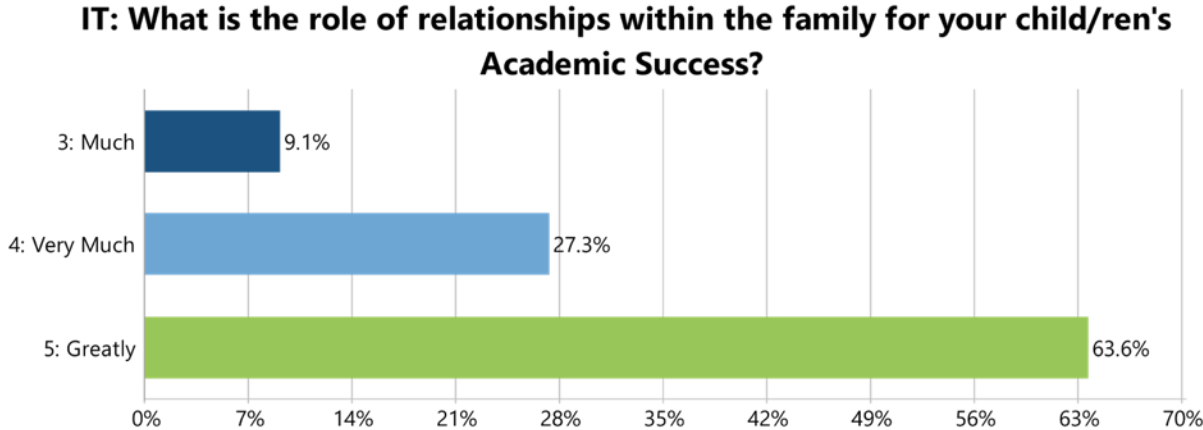


Figure 85. RsQ11 USA How Important are Relationships within the Family for your Child/ren’s Academic Success?

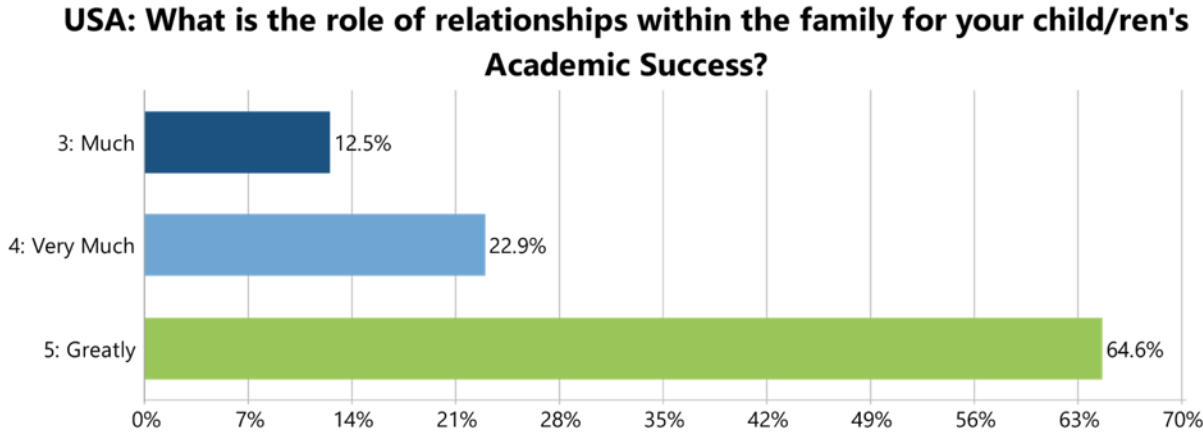


Table 14. Sub-Question 11: Summary Table

RQ2 What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children? Chosen for analysis: Q6 (p. 189), Q10 (p. 192), Q11 (p. 194)						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
11	What is the role of relationships within the family for your child/ren's Academic Success? * Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all important, and 5=Greatly important)	CR / Fig 79 / N=16	ESP / Fig 80 / N=20	GR / Fig 81 / N=286	IT / Fig 82 / N=154	USA / Fig 83 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Not at all			1.4		
	Little			7.3		
	Much	9.1	25.0	33.9	9.1	12.5
	Very much	27.3	35.0	32.5	27.3	22.9
	Greatly	63.6	40.0	24.8	63.6	64.6

Academic success is in demand during children’s school years considering the crucial role that the educational system has in their future. The 11th question asks parents their opinion about the importance of the relationships within family. The majority of all ethnic groups responded, with greater than 70% in average, that relationships between family members is of great importance for children’s academic success. Only the Greek group responded with lower percentages, but even they agreed that the within-family relationship is at least significant.

As the answer to the first research question highlighted, relationships are crucial. The parents agreed that relationships are a prerequisite for their children’s success. The above three simple questions provided direct proof regarding the second research question about the respondents’ perceived importance of the relationships within the family of the family with school: not only for children’s academic success but also for their future life.

RQ3, 3rd Research Question: How Did RL (Remote Learning) in the Pandemic Influence Parents' Relationship with the School? RsQ20, RsQ21, RsQ31

All the participants from the five ethnic groups answered the above-cited three questions. Conclusions, can be drawn by a comparison of the quantitative results per question between the five different international sets of answers, and across them that follow.

RsQ 20/F84-88 As a Parent, What Has Pleasantly Surprised You with the Way RL Was Imposed by the Teacher/s?

Figure 86. RsQ20 CR Pleasantly Surprised by the Way the RL was Approached

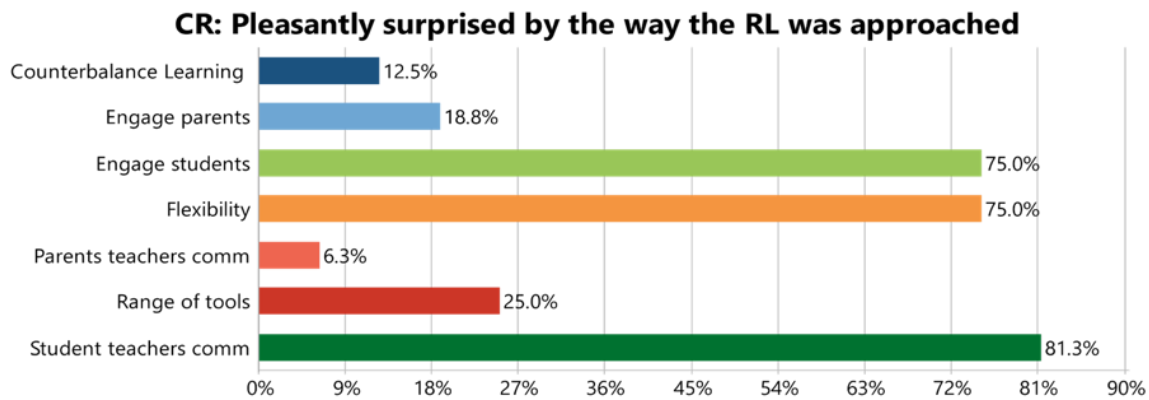


Figure 87. RsQ20 ESP Pleasantly Surprised by the Way the RL was Approached

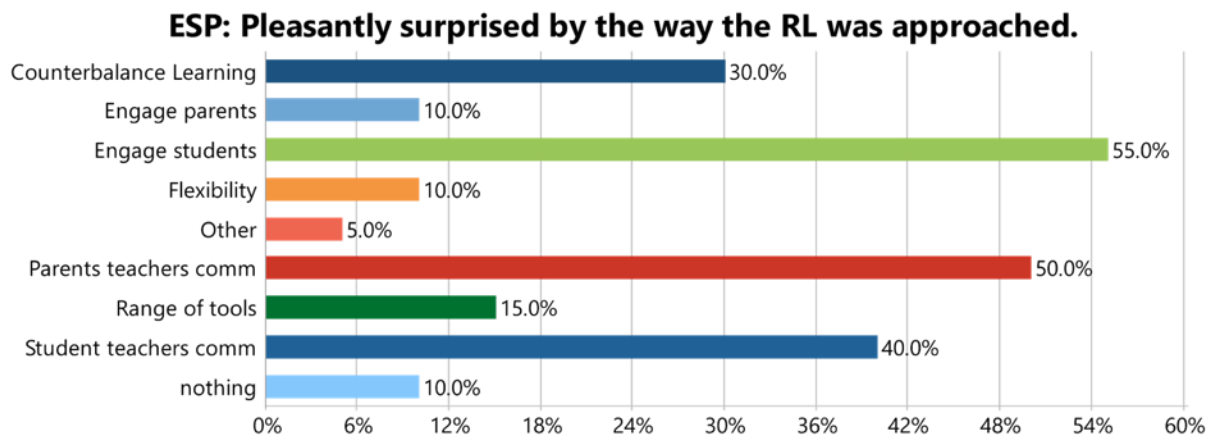


Figure 88. RsQ20 GR Pleasantly Surprised by the Way the RL was Approached

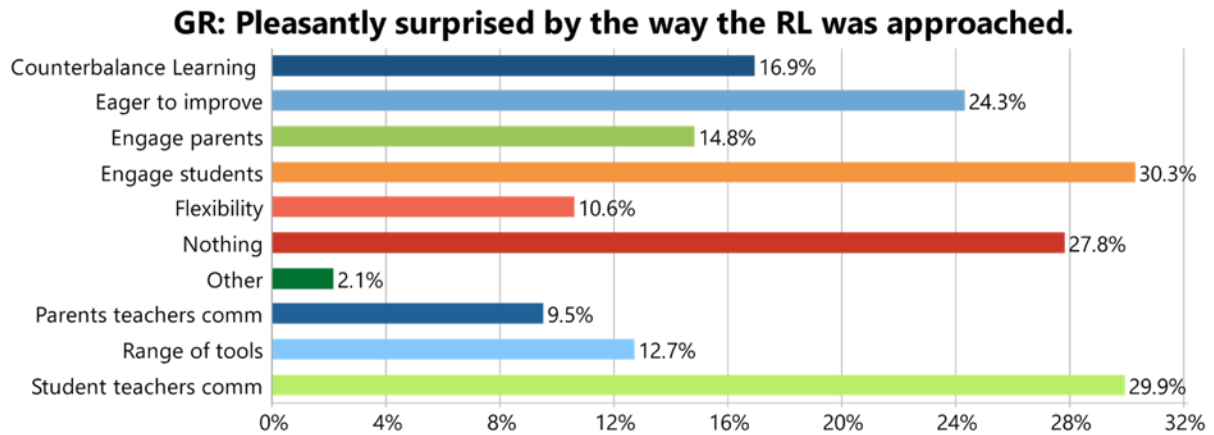


Figure 89. RsQ20 IT Pleasantly Surprised by the Way the RL was Approached

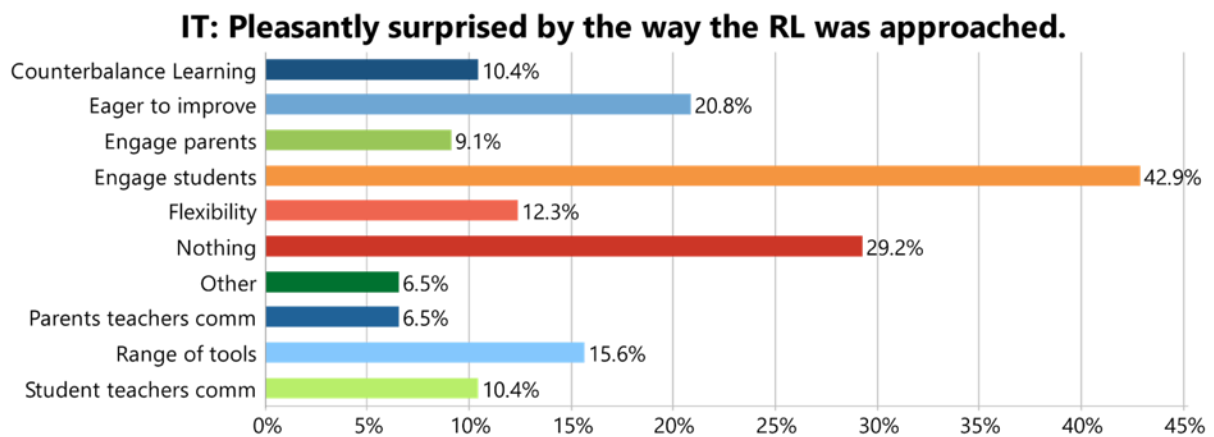


Figure 90. RsQ20 USA Pleasantly Surprised by the Way the RL was Approached

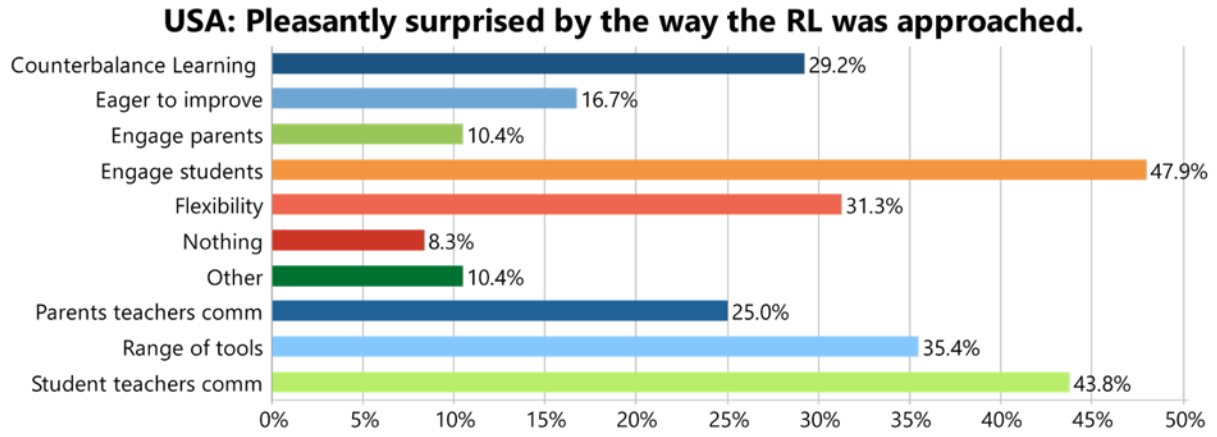


Table 15. Sub-Question 20: Summary Table

RQ3, 3rd Research question: How Did RL (Remote Learning) in the Pandemic Influence Parents' Relationship with the School? Q/20, Q21, Q31						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
20	As a parent, what has pleasantly surprised you with the way RL was imposed by the teacher/s? Eager to improve their relationship with their students, Flexibility in evaluating student's work, Effort to engage the students, Effort to engage parents, Ease of use a wide range of tools, platforms, etc., Teachers managed to counterbalance Learning for their students, Ease of accessibility of the students in communicating with their teachers Ease of accessibility of the parents in communicating with the teachers, Nothing, Other	CR / Fig 84 / N=16	ESP / Fig 85 / N=20	GR / Fig 86 / N=286	IT / Fig 87 / N=154	USA / Fig 88 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Counterbalance Learning	1.5	30	16.3	10.4	29.2
	Eager to improve			24.3	20.8	16.7
	Engage Parents	18.8	10.0	14.8	9.1	10.4
	Engage students	75	55.0	30.3	42.9	47.9
	Flexibility		10.0	10.6	12.3	31.3
	Parents teachers comm	6.3	50.0	9.5	6.5	25
	Range of tools Student teachers	25	15.0	9.5	15.6	35.4
	Student teachers comm	81.3	40.0	9.5	10.4	41.8
	Nothing		10.0	27.8	29.2	8.3
	Other		5.0	2.1	6.5	10.4

During the Pandemic, the majority of the families surveyed experienced remote learning for the first time and not as a choice but as an unavoidable condition. Both schools and families were not prepared for that new learning approach as it was not common during the school years before. Responses to the 20th question present activities, experiences and conditions that surprised parents. The effort that teachers made to engage students, accompanied by flexibility in their approach and maintaining communication channels with the students are the highlights. The Spanish group noticed an improvement to their communication with the teachers. On the other

hand, 30% of Greek and Italian respondents replied that nothing interesting happened; while the Americans appreciated new tools in the learning process even though they have been the most technologically advanced of all the participating countries.

RsQ21/F89-93 Have Parents’ Perceptions, Beliefs, Values Changed in any Way while Children Were in RL?

Figure 91. RsQ21 CR Changes Happened because of RL

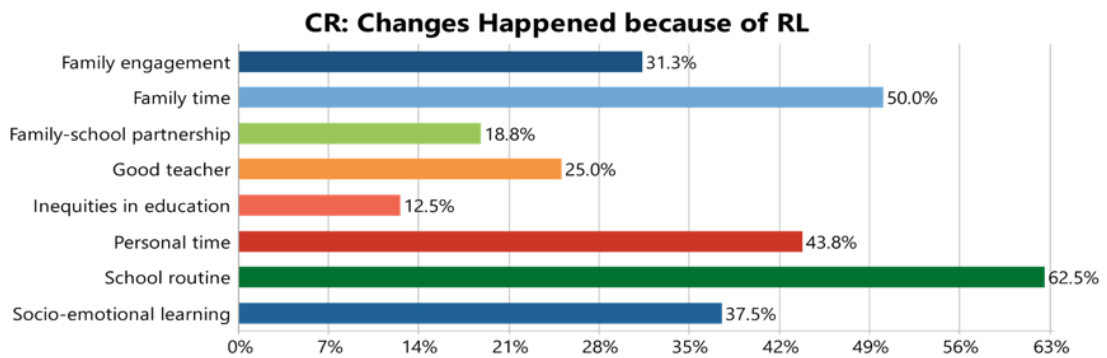


Figure 92. RsQ21 ESP Changes Happened Because of RL

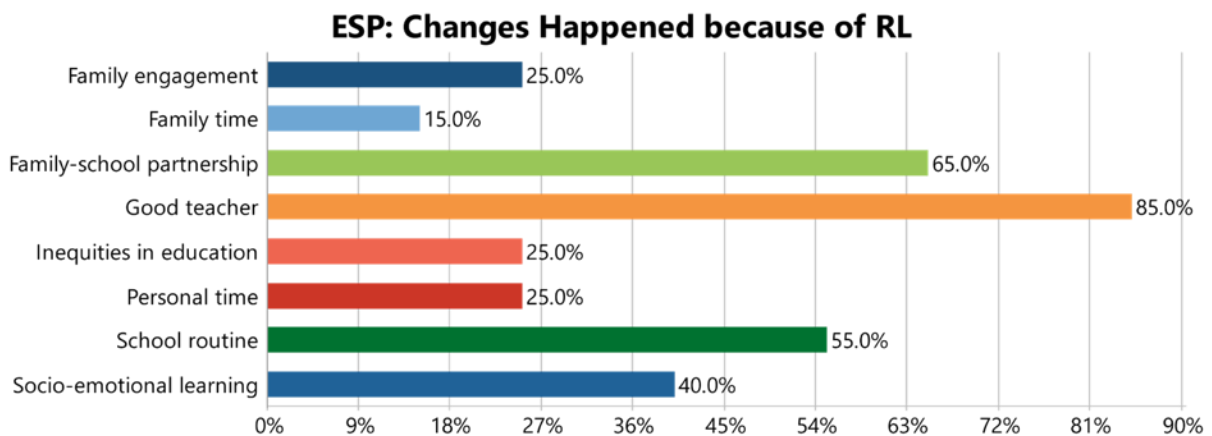


Figure 93. RsQ21 GR Changes Happened Because of RL

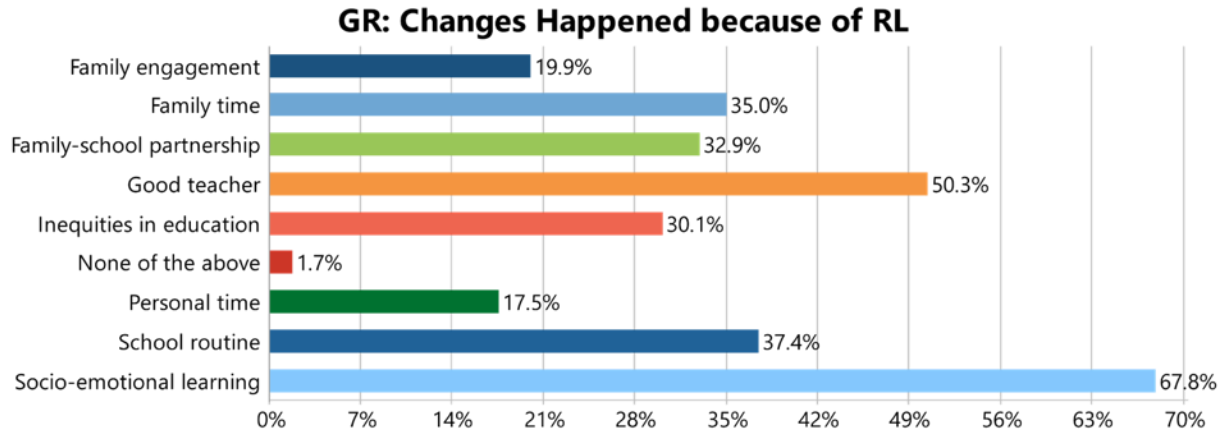


Figure 94. RsQ21 IT Changes Happened Because of RL

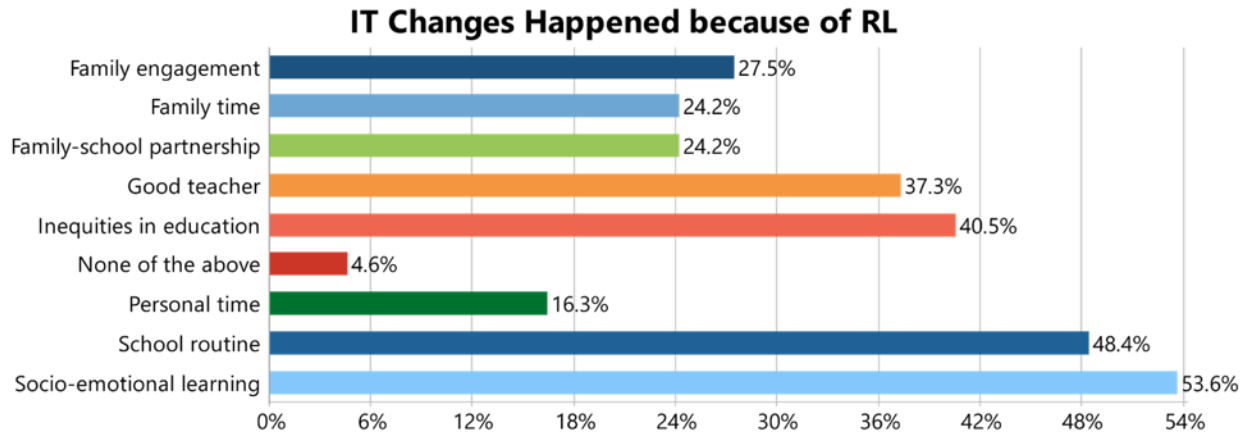


Figure 95. RsQ21 USA Changes Happened Because of RL

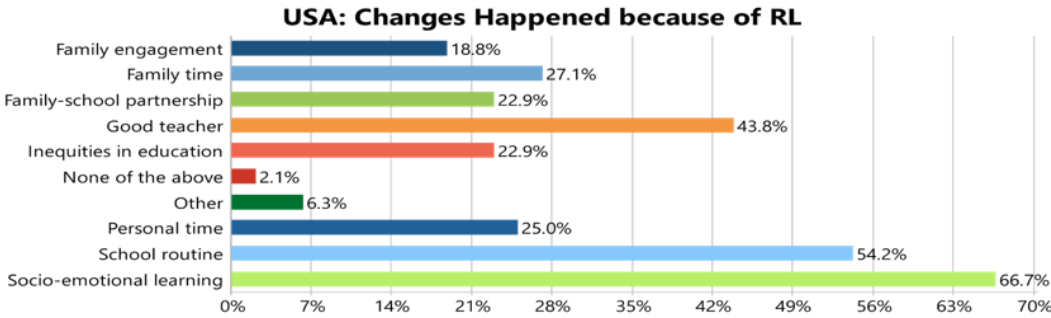


Table 16. Sub-Question 21: Summary Table

RQ3, 3rd Research question: How Did RL (Remote Learning) in the Pandemic Influence Parents' Relationship with the School? Q/20, Q21, Q31						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
21	Have your perceptions, beliefs, values as a parent changed in any way as listed below or in another way that you can think of while children in RL (Remote Learning)? *					
	Importance of school routine, Value of socio-emotional learning through school, Importance of a good teacher, Value of family time, Value of personal time, Evaluation of inequities in education that school closure exacerbates, Significance of family-school partnership, Value of family engagement, None of the above, Other	CR / Fig 89 / N=16	ESP / Fig 90 / N=20	GR / Fig 91 / N=286	IT / Fig 92 / N=154	USA / Fig 93 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Family engagement	31.3	25.0	19.9	27.5	18.8
	Family time	50	15.0	35.0	24.2	27.1
	Family-school partnership	18.8	65.0	32.9	24.2	22.9
	Good teacher	25	85.0	50.3	37.3	43.8
	Inequities in education	12.5	25.0	30.1	40.5	22.9
	Personal time	43.8	25.0	17.5	16.3	25.0
	School routine	62.5	55.0	37.4	48.4	54.2
	Socio-emotional learning	37.5	40.0	67.8	53.6	66.7
	None of the above			1.7		2.1

Question 21 continues the exploration regarding the changes that parents experienced in their perceptions about school, because of RL. Parents acknowledge the value of a good teacher and family's time as it had been reduced substantially. Furthermore, parents greatly appreciated the importance of school routine for the children, and families. It should be acknowledged that the Pandemic has affected the families' day routine enormously. Not surprisingly the high value

of socio-emotional learning through school was acknowledged while in lockdown as RL as an attractive alternative to isolation.

RsQ31/F94-98 Parents' Feelings about the Current School Year (2020-2021)

Figure 96. Q31 CR Emotions During RL

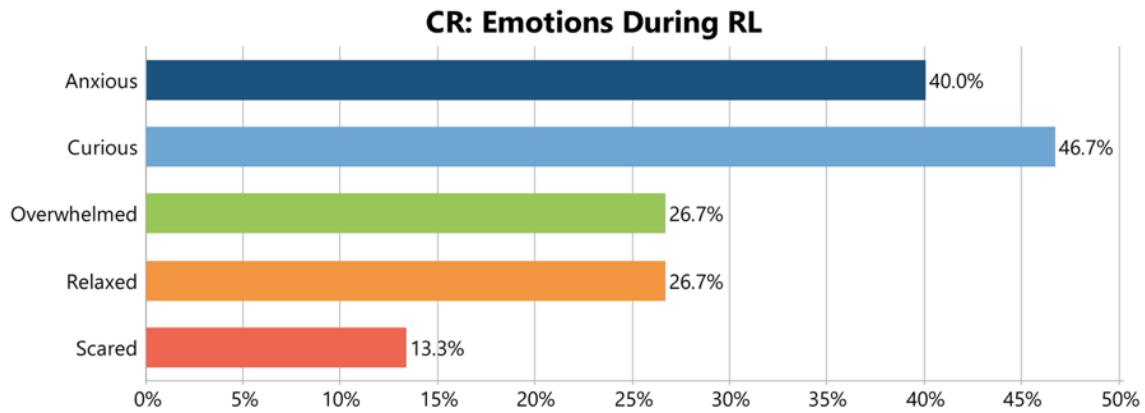


Figure 97. RsQ31 ESP Emotions During RL

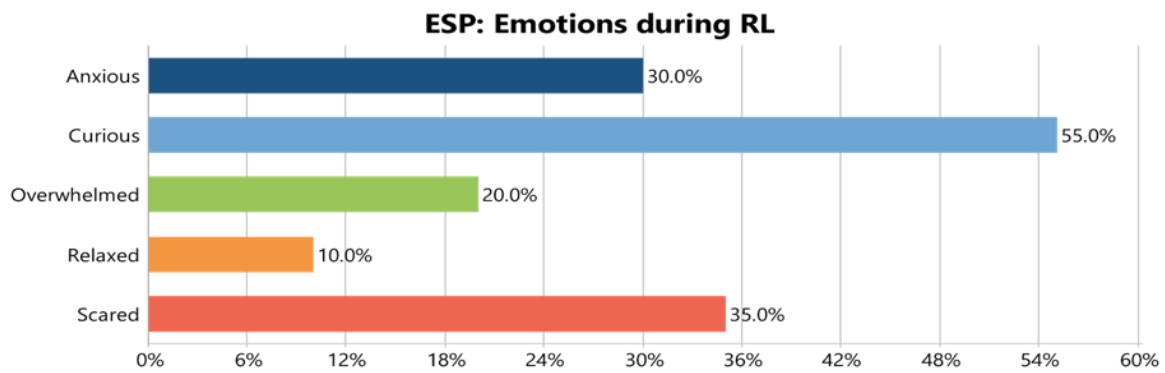


Figure 98. RsQ31 GR Emotions During RL

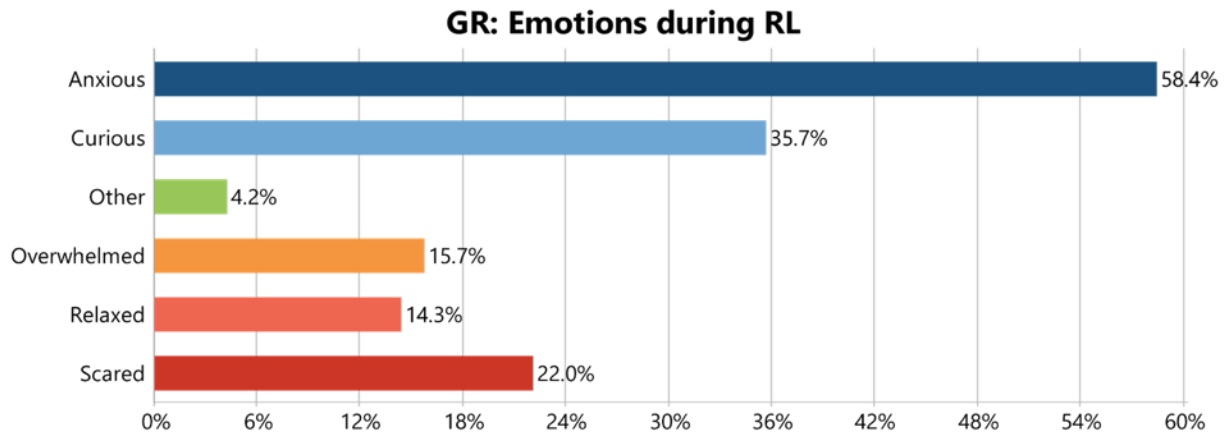


Figure 99. RsQ31 IT Emotions During RL

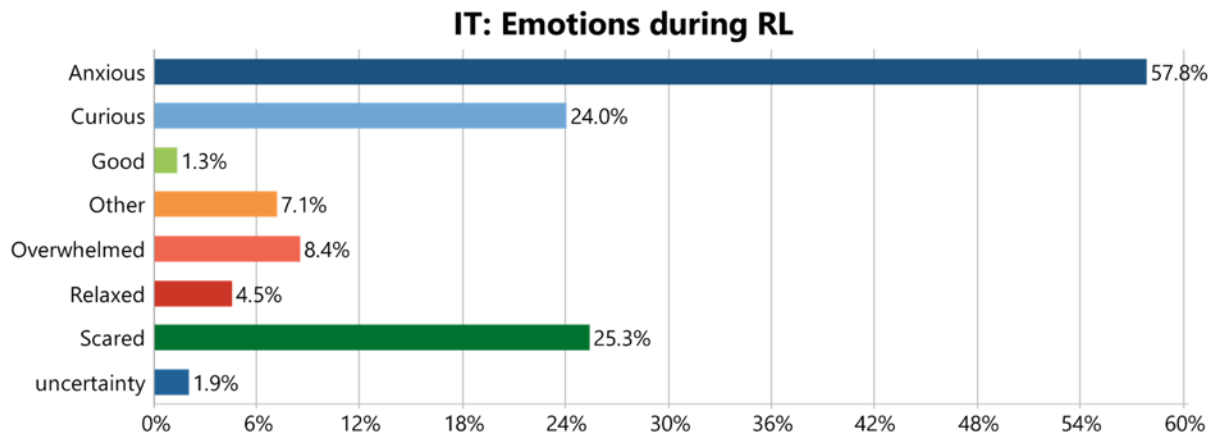


Figure 100. RsQ31 USA Emotions During RL

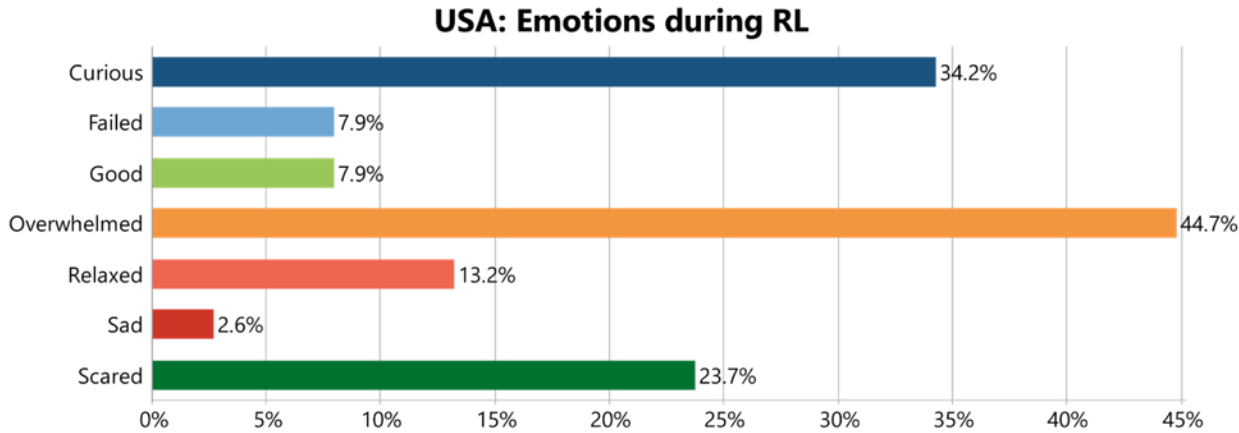


Table 17. Sub-Question 31: Summary Table

RQ3, 3rd Research question: How Did RL (Remote Learning) in the Pandemic Influence Parents' Relationship with the School? Q/20, Q21, Q31						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
31	How do you feel about the current school year (2020-2021)? * Check all that apply: Anxious, Relaxed, Overwhelmed, Scared, Curious, Other	CR / Fig 94 / N=16	ESP / Fig 95 / N=20	GR / Fig 96 / N=286	IT / Fig 97 / N=154	USA / Fig 98 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Anxious	40.0	30.0	58.4	57.8	34.2
	Curious	46.7	55.0	35.7	24.0	34.2
	Overwhelmed	26.7	20.0	15.7	8.4	44.7
	Relaxed	26.7	10.0	14.3	4.5	13.2
	Scared	13.3	35.0	22.0	25.3	23.7
	Other			4.2	7.1	
	Good				1.3	7.9
	Uncertainty				1.9	
	Failed					7.9
	Sad					2.6

These are the dominant emotions that parents experienced during RL. Parents felt anxious and scared about current conditions as they are not fully aware, they lack information and they have not yet found reliable alternatives. They are curious about the near future, a feeling which also refers to the continuously shifting circumstances.

Consequently, RL influenced a lot of families' lives and, of course, the parents' school relationship. First, they took a lot of the learning process support from the school. Their resources are less as during RL while they are acting as assistants, during the school hours and supervisors during the studying time. Additionally, in RL, they are the only present socio-emotional learning providers. Regarding family-school relationships, RL seems to cause its improvement, as teachers depend on and acknowledge parents' contribution. Some parents have

experience with the learning process difficulties, thus the level of common understanding between them and teachers is better than ever.

RQ4, 4th Research Question: How Important for Parents are the Parent’s Community

Discussion Groups? RsQ25, RsQ26, RsQ27

Questions RsQ25, RsQ26 and RsQ27 were consciously selected from the questionnaires for the analysis of the 4th research question. All the participants from the five ethnic groups answered the above mentioned three questions. For thinking about conclusions, a comparison of the quantitative results per question between the five different reservoirs of answers (per nation) and between them follows.

RsQ25/F99-103 Have you ever heard about the Parents’ Support Groups?

Figure 101. RsQ25 CR Have you Ever Heard about the Parents’ Support Groups?

CR: Have you ever heard about the Parents' support groups?

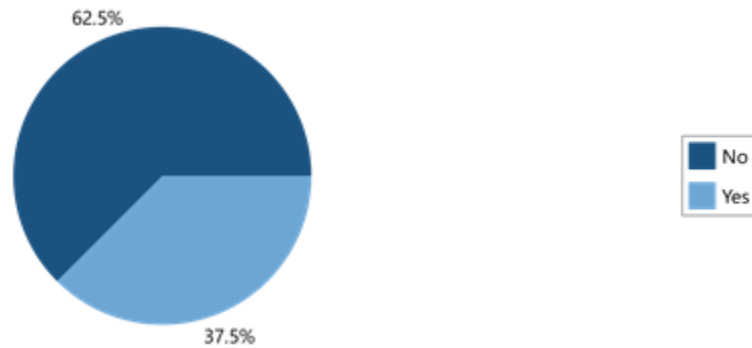


Figure 102. RsQ25 ESP Have you Ever Heard about the Parents' Support Groups?

ESP: Have you ever heard about the Parents' support groups?

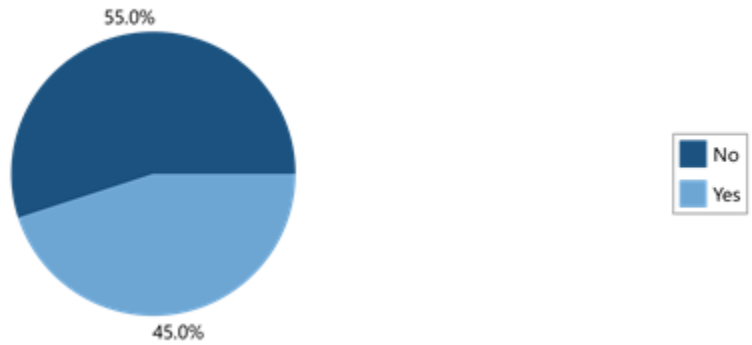


Figure 103. RsQ25 GR Have you Ever Heard about the Parents' Support Groups?

GR: Have you ever heard about the Parents' support groups?

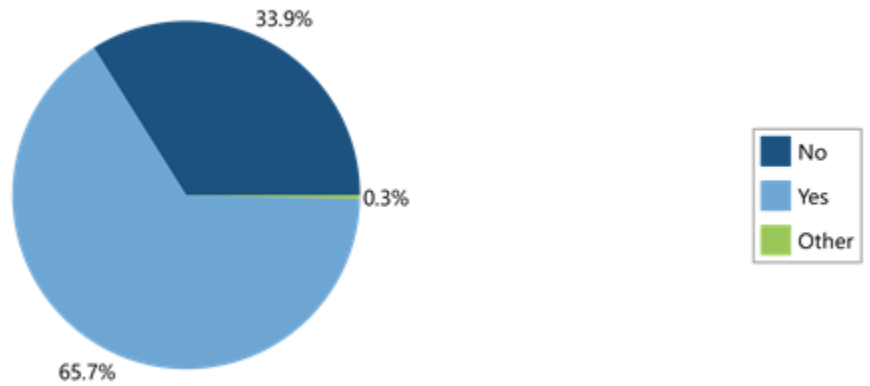


Figure 104. RsQ25 IT Have you Ever Heard about the Parents' Support Groups?

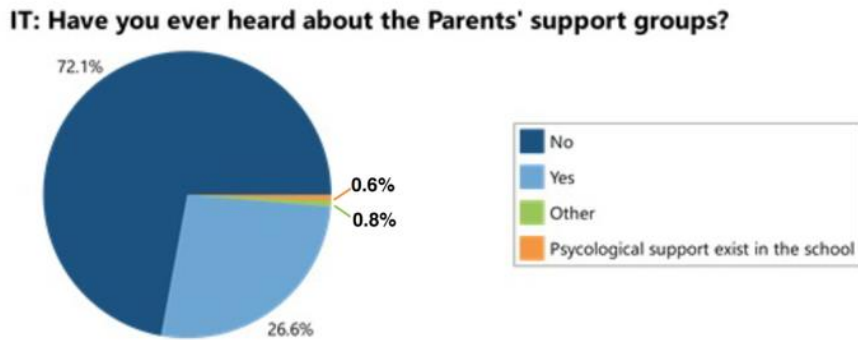


Figure 105. RsQ25 USA Have you Ever Heard about the Parents Support Groups?

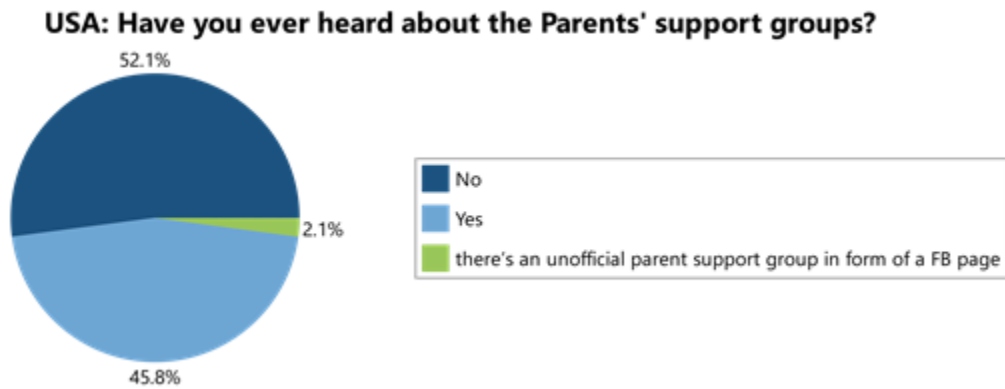


Table 18. Sub-Question 25: Summary Table

RQ4 RQ4, Fourth Research Question: Do the parents need to participate more fully within the school community? Q25, Q26, Q27 Have you ever heard about the parents' support groups?						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
25	Have you ever heard about the Parents' support groups? (Mark only one oval: Yes, No, Other)	CR / Fig 99 / N=16	ESP / Fig 100 / N=20	GR / Fig 101 / N=286	IT / Fig 102 / N=154	USA / Fig 103 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Yes	37.5	45.0	65.7	26.6	45.8
	No	62.5	55.0	33.9	72.1	52.1
	Other			0.3	0.8	
	Psychological support exists in the school.				0.6	
	There's an unofficial parent support group in the form of a Facebook page.					2.1

Analyzing the 4th research question about the importance of the “Parent’s Community discussion groups,” question 25 contributes by providing background knowledge. The results present parents’ awareness regarding “Parent’s Community discussion groups”. Analyzing them it seems that, excluding the Greek ethnic group, the majority of parents are not familiar with the term. That could mean that “Parent’s Community discussion groups” are not widespread in their countries, or parents’ communities have not had strong enough bonds to initiate activities such as group discussions yet. Of course, discussion groups are presented to all five states *assuming* the existence of such parents’ groups—making the meaning of responses less clear.

RsQ26/F104-108 Asking Parents, if They Have ever Attended such a Meeting, Session, Conference, Support for Parents (Parent's Community Discussion Groups)

Figure 106. RsQ26 CR Have you Ever Attended such a Meeting, Session, Conference, Support for Parents?

CR: Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents?

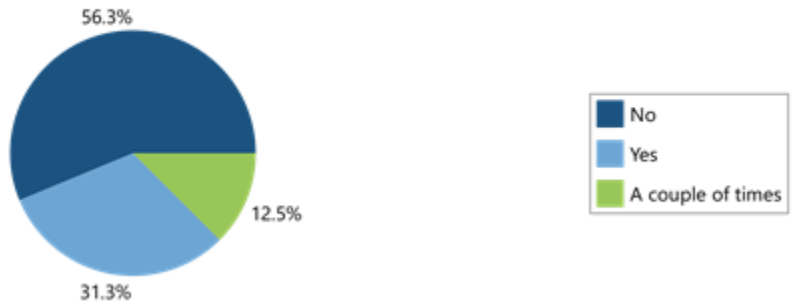


Figure 107. RsQ26 ESP Have you Ever Attended such a Meeting, Session, Conference, Support for Parents?

ESP: Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents?



Figure 108. RsQ26 GR Have you Ever Attended such a Meeting, Session, Conference, Support for Parents?

GR: Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents?

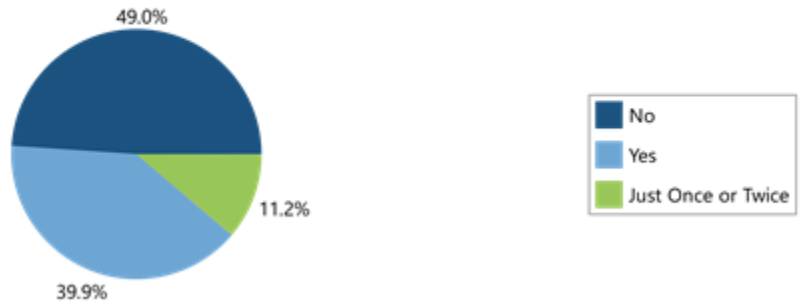


Figure 109. RsQ26 IT Have you Ever Attended such a Meeting, Session, Conference, Support for Parents?

IT: Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents?

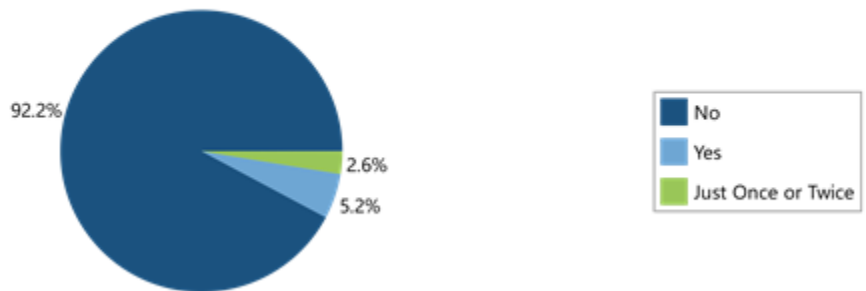


Figure 110. RsQ26 USA Have you Ever Attended such a Meeting, Session, Conference, Support for Parents?

USA: Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents?

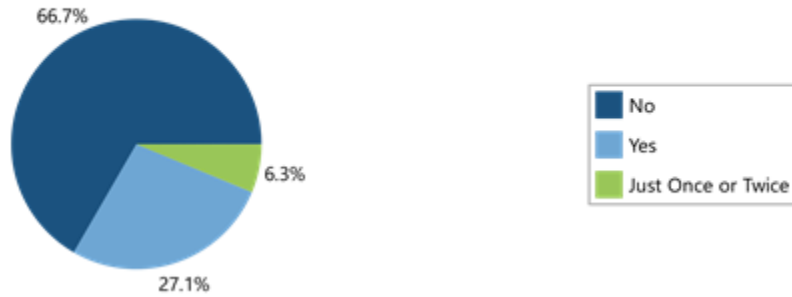


Table 19. Sub-Question 26: Summary Table

RQ4, Fourth Research Question: Have you ever attended such meeting, session, conference support for parents? Do the parents need to participate more fully within the school community? Q25, Q26, Q27						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
26	Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents? *	CR / Fig 104 / N=16	ESP / Fig 105 / N=20	GR / Fig 106 / N=286	IT / Fig 107 / N=154	USA / Fig 108 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	No	56.3	50.0	49.0	92.2	66.7
	Yes	31.3	50.0	39.9	5.2	27.1
	A couple of times / Just once or twice	12.5		11.2	2.6	6.3

Considering the responses from Q25, regarding awareness about existence of Parent’s Community discussion groups, this question is asking about attendance. The parents replied in ways consistent with their Q25 responses. Focusing on the positive portion of the pie charts it appears that, excluding the Italian group and to a smaller degree the Americans, for the rest of the three ethnic groups almost all parents said that they were aware of the discussion groups

(Q25) and have also personal experience with them. Interesting is the green part of the pies (Q26) representing those that attended once or twice. The explanation of their rare attendance could be either the frequency of the meeting is large, or the subjects discussed in the meetings are not attractive to them.

RsQ27/F109-113 Is Asking Parents, if They Would like to Attend one (, If this Option was Possible for You?

Figure 111. RsQ27 CR Would you Like to Attend One, if this Option was Possible for You?

CR: Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you?

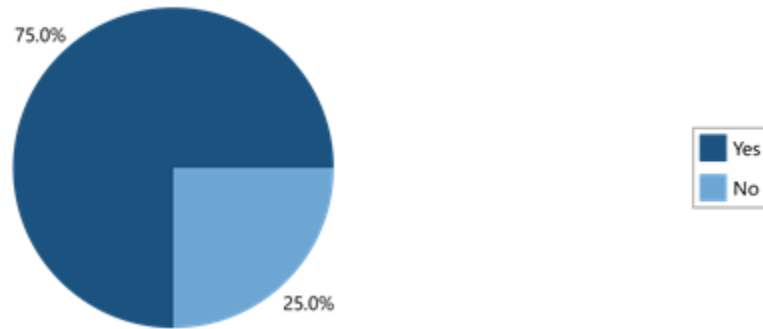


Figure 112. RsQ27 ESP Would you Like to Attend One, if this Option was Possible for You?

ESP: Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you?

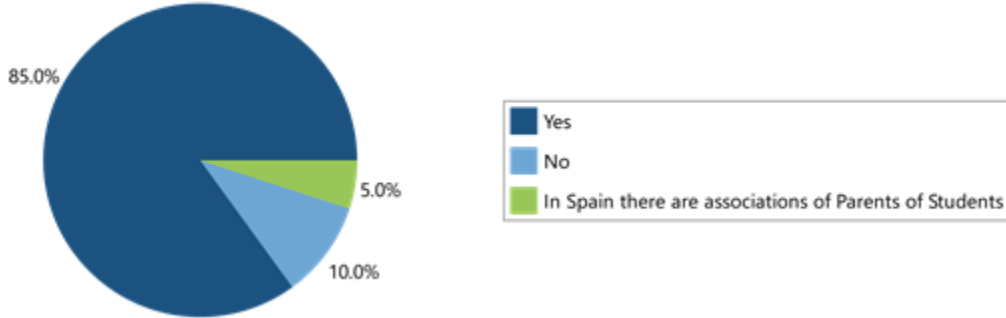


Figure 113. RsQ27 GR Would you Like to Attend One, if this Option was Possible for You?

GR: Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you?

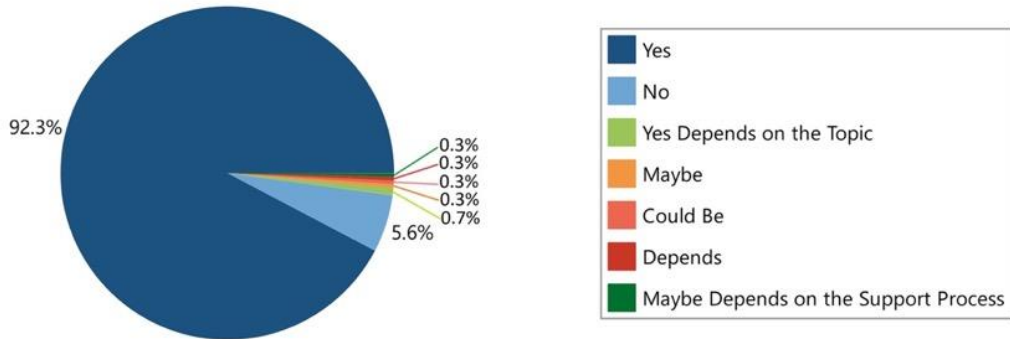


Figure 114. RsQ27 IT Would you Like to Attend One, if this Option was Possible for you

IT: Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you?

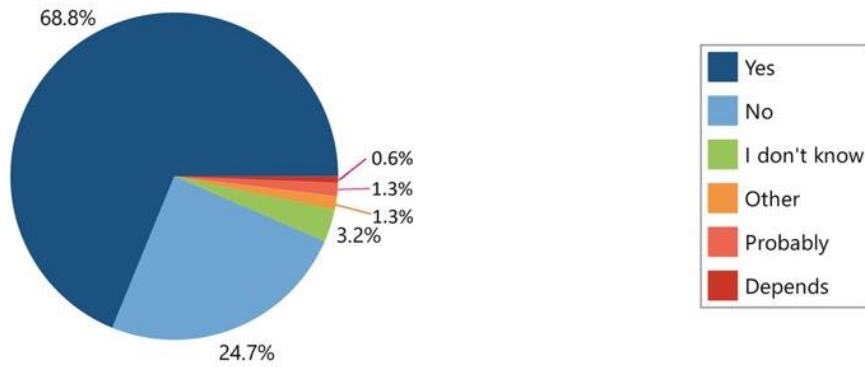


Figure 115. RsQ27 USA Would you Like to Attend One, if this Option was Possible for You?

USA: Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you?

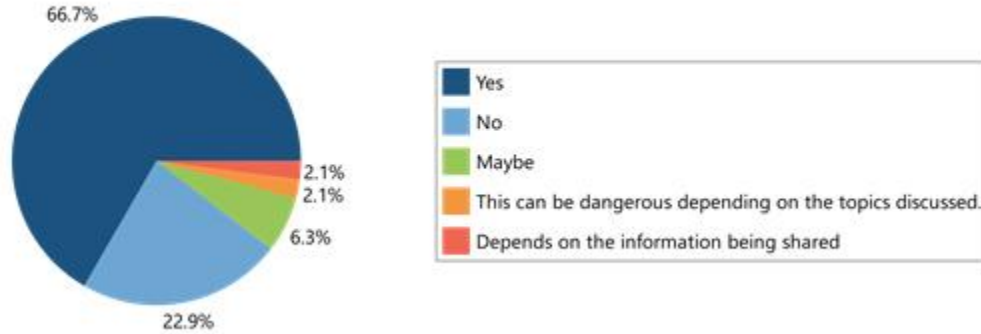


Table 20. Sub-Question 27: Summary Table

RQ4		RQ4, Fourth Research Question: Do the parents need to participate more fully within the school community? Q25, Q26, Q27				
		Would you like to attend a parents' support group if this option were this option were possible for you?				
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
27	Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you? *	CR / Fig 109 / N=16	ESP / Fig 110 / N=20	GR / Fig 111 / N=286	IT / Fig 112 / N=154	USA / Fig 113 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Yes	75.0	85.0	92.3	68.8	66.7
	No	25.0	10.0	5.6	24.7	22.9
	Other				1.3	
	In Spain, there are associations of parents and students		5.0			
	Yes, if the topic was interesting for discussion			0.7		
	Maybe			0.3		6.3
	Could be			0.3		
	Perhaps, it depends on the support process.					
	It depends			0.3	0.7	
	Perhaps, it depends on the information being shared.					2.1
	I don't know				3.2	
	Probably				1.3	
	This can be dangerous depending on the topic discussed.					2.1

The majority of parents responded positively to the possibility of attending Parent’s Community discussion groups. Their positive responses to the previous questions (Q25, Q26) also suggest that the greater the awareness, the greater will be the motivation for discussion group participation.

The answer to the 4th overarching survey research question regarding the importance of the Parent’s Community discussion groups, considered in the light of responses across all five ethnic groups, was definitely a positive one. Nonetheless, to continue to be justified, such enthusiasm would likely need to be stimulated to a great extent in the parent communities by

well-organized sessions, discussing subjects of identified group interest, and supported by reciprocal discussion by group members with subject matter experts in the field.

Summary, What I Learned from the Survey in More Detail

The ground truth of why I wanted to look further into the practicability of my model in a proliferating online school community, is that parents' reactions to the universally required online learning due to the intervention of Covid provided new insight into what situation had obtained earlier vis-à-vis the school where there was no natural community, as well as to what changes were brought about by the switch from children's schooling from face-to-face (F2F) to 100% online.

What the Survey was Constructed to Explore

In very broad overview, the survey was formulated to see whether conditions favorable to adoption of my P4P model might reasonably be expected to exist in the parent-teacher-school community if Covid-19 were to be eliminated or would subside to the point where then current *exclusively* online-learning were at some time to return enough to its pre-Covid state that periodic face-to-face communication between parents and teachers—necessary for model implementation—would again be possible. In light of the fact that it was highly unlikely that many—or even any—of the parents in my international sample would have experience with or knowledge of the reality of a community of philosophical inquiry I realized I would have to probe for surrogate indices of 1) favorable prior, substantial interest and participation in joint school-parent activities, 2) whether this inclination or activity was growing, and 3) whether they showed similar impetus around a perceived a high value of whole-family-school collaboration for their children's development and success now and in the future.

In slightly more detail, I hoped to gain insight, 4) into how much enthusiasm and participation parents in my sample had had for intense involvement with their children's school pre-Covid-19, 5) whether such interest and intention had been retained, augmented, or diminished by the difficulties, or the opportunities for connection revealed by the necessity for parents to somewhat become co-teacher-collaborators in their children's education, and 6) whether any perhaps previously unrecognized or previously unappreciated factors had been introduced into the parent-teacher-school relational mix.

Substituent Issues at Work

Because Covid-19 changed the conditions for and demands on the entire K-12 educational system the relationship/partnership between teachers, parents, schools, and children had to rapidly be revised. For such change to transition smoothly it was clear there would have to be a strong foundation—one that almost certainly would have relational characteristics that were different from those that had prevailed before.

For the construction and maintenance of such a revised foundation there were things that we hadn't earlier recognized as particularly important that turned out to be quite essential. New knowledge of their existence was of concern because, as noted earlier, the widespread burgeoning of online learning is to be expected because of an increasing dearth of funds worldwide and exponentially expanding technology, even in if there were absence of an environmental mortal threat.

When Covid-19 put people into widespread physical and interpersonal isolation, we already know from experience the change would create additional, only partially predictable needs. An absence of any heretofore real local school *community*—parent-teacher-school, or even intra-parent—came to the surface. In the absence of both psychologic as well as physical

Community in a situation now requiring close collaboration, people began to appreciate what the lack of such Community would entail—above all a deficit of relational trust—one essential to supporting secure bonding, honest positive relationships and relatively harmonious interaction amidst increasing surfacing of strong, polarizing, personal, developmental, cultural, and/implicit or obvious class differences.

Extending my P4C model to embrace such parents would necessitate building a coherent Community of Inquiry with an overarching influence strong enough that it could leverage disparate people out of concrete thinking, and/or affiliation-based mindsets. As developmental psychologist Robert Kegan often says about why developmental change occurs: . . . “*it’s the environment*” that mandates and then either supports or bars new ways of thinking and change. In this case, community must encompass a group of people—maybe initially disparate—to the point where there can be a sense of “*belonging*,” A sense of belonging that does not just “include,” but fully respects, values, and in some cases, eventually welcomes differences.

Cumulatively, the sample of parents in all five countries was relatively high in educational level, and consequently in SES, as that is known to track closely with educational level in social status and social, cultural, and educational choices. Only 3 of the 5 countries reported any parents at all—in the admittedly non-nationally-representative research sample—with less than college Bachelor’s degrees (Greece 15.4%; Italy with 10.2%; and USA, with most parents living in Europe, 35.4%)

In terms of response interpretation, we concluded that parents with a high-level engagement with their child/ren’s school might be identified by responses to the four Survey Research Questions (sRQs) and their substituent sub-Questions probing actual parental participation:

NOTE: The following list of all Research Questions (RQ)s and Research sub-Questions (RsQ)s is placed here for reader convenience in consideration. A complete listing of all of these, plus the numeric count of all responses, sorted by country appears after the Reference List as Appendix 2.

1. What are the main /principal elements/features that constitute a successful parent-school relationship/partnership
 - A. Please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that represent(s) your ideal “family-school relationship”: Communication (meetings, emails, etc.), Empathy, support or/and enhancing family-school partnership, Voluntary parents’ engagement in school, relationship, Other
 - B. Could you please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that enhances “family-school partnership”? Check all that apply. Dialogue, Frequent meetings, Parents’ engagement (e.g., PTA meetings) Seminars, Community building, Collaboration, Alliance, Other
 - C. Which of the following would you consider enhances the relationship with the school? Check all that apply. Regular meetings & information about the educational program, Spontaneous communication, Build-up a strong parent-teacher community, Build-up a strong parent community within the school, Voluntary participation of parents, Guidance/training of parents, Guidance/ support of children’s learning at home, Participation in decision-making within the school community, Cooperation with local community institutions aiming at the support of school programs, Other

- D. Do you think that your relationship with the school could improve? If “yes or maybe,” would you please suggest ways that could possibly empower this relationship?
- 2 What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children?
- A. Do you consider a good relationship with the school of great importance? Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all, and 5=Greatly)
- B. How important are relationships within the family for your child/ren’s future success in life? Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all important, and 5=Greatly important)
- C. What is the role of relationships within the family for your child/ren’s Academic Success? Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all important, and 5=Greatly important)
- 3 How did RL (Remote Learning) in the pandemic influence parents’ relationship with the school?
- A. As a parent, what has pleasantly surprised you with the way RL was imposed by the teacher/s? Eager to improve their relationship with their students, Flexibility in evaluating student’s work, Effort to engage the students, Effort to engage parents, Ease of use a wide range of tools, platforms, etc., Teachers managed to counterbalance Learning for their students, Ease of accessibility of the students in communicating with their teachers Ease of accessibility of the parents in communicating with the teachers, Nothing, Other

B. Have your perceptions, beliefs, values as a parent changed in any way as listed below or in another of a good teacher, Value of family time, Value of personal time, Evaluation of inequities in education that school closure exacerbates, Significance of family-school partnership, Value of family engagement, None of the above, Other

C How do you feel about the current school year (2020-2021)? *

Check all that apply:

Anxious, Relaxed, Overwhelmed, Scared, Curious, Other

4 Do the parents need to participate more actively within the school community?

A Have you ever heard about the Parents' support groups? (Mark only one oval: (Yes, No, Other)

B. Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents?
Mark only one oval: (Yes, No)

C. Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you? *

Mark only one oval. (Yes, No, Other)

Understanding that responses to these questions posed as closed-choice alternatives answered by self-reporting would be difficult to probe and interpret, I nonetheless tried, in some cases to gain insight into the following—sometimes by asking respondents for additional, self-chosen alternative entries within the “Other” category offered in some cases:

- Whether needs were exposed by the Covid outbreak and emergence of widespread education online that had *always* existed but were unrecognized.
- And, finally (hardest of all), to be able to intuit from the strength of parents' positive responses concerning their pre-Covid activities and attitudes in support of the school,

anything meaningful about whether parents might have an appetite for participating in a community of learners deeply enough to involve itself/themselves with their children's curriculum—and perhaps one likely different from their earlier experience—in being increasingly egalitarian, non-judgmental, and operationally devoid of a priori biases.

Summary Relevance of Survey Findings to my Intended Future Research Project

In overarching analysis, survey findings suggested that for people similar to those of relatively high SES and families high in academic tradition there would be interest and enthusiasm for engaging more fully in an intensive, face-to-face, relational partnership with their child/ren's teachers and school, quite possibly to the extent of interacting in some ways with the school curriculum. And, further, in expressed preferences for dialogic communication as well as collaboration, that they might be willing, or even eager to immerse themselves participating in a developing Community of Philosophic Inquiry that lies at the heart of my Philosophy for Parents (P4P) model.

P4P, Toward Model Implementation

In considering the theory that I've been discussing in light of the action research that was performed in the Greek kindergarten from 2014 to 2016 the Parent Learning dialogue groups were, in many ways, analogs of the children's P4C dialogues.

What we really can see is the commonality of Community and what the nature of that dialogue group needs to be. In both cases the process follows the principles that both Matthew Lipman's P4C and, in parents, also adult transformative learning principles of Jack Mezirow.

By implication, what comes to the fore is that, for the fullest implementation of P4P in an educational milieu also implementing P4C, what will be required is not just involvement of the *parents*, but, in fact, that of the whole Community.

So, how would an effective P4P model operate? There are some key manifestations one of which you will see articulated now in Chapter 7—*A Teachers' Handbook for Transformational Parenting*. Here, there is a set of operational guidelines followed by some educational stories for children as well as adults—including parents and teachers—that I have developed in order to structure philosophical dialogue that would meet the allied principles of Lipman and Sharp's P4C and my adult parallel P4P.

Chapter 7. Teacher's Handbook for Transformational Parenting

There is no intent for this Handbook/manual to be a formal curriculum or a rigid list of requirements. Herein is a set of stories with diverse but common concerns as subjects that should be of interest to all member groups in the Parent–Teacher–Children–School Community are included, that teachers can adapt and apply in different settings with the parents. This particular manual has the form of a flexible guide that primarily and purposefully promotes Lipman's "Philosophy for Children and Community" mindset as a state of mind for teachers'-parents' relationship's enhancement aiming to transform the learners and the relationship itself as well as the school's perspectives into a learning community (Watkins & Marsick, 1999). According to Mezirow (2012), activating Transformative Learning processes, through the agency of a disorienting dilemma—in this case posed by the stories as a trigger for parents' critical reflection—creating space to question assumptions (Taylor, 2000), re-think, and perform in new, alternative, different ways whilst actively participating in a Community of Philosophical Inquiry that could potentially lead to instant (epochal) or gradual (incremental) transformation (Mezirow, 2000). It must be understood that such participation does not by any means lead to an inevitable transformation, but it can certainly create a friendly, trusting community where reflective dialogue is more than welcomed!

This helpful guide is, nonetheless, a draft and will be gradually refined based on the feedback we receive from the teachers and/or P4C/P facilitators when it's used. The conversational framework that it is based on, is an invitation from the school to the parents to build new ways of fostering new social relations that enable people with diverse cultural, academic, and even language backgrounds to voice and share their needs and experiential knowledge. . . an invitation for everyone to open-up to the school community with ideas and tools with which they can prompt reason in a clear Democratic environment where every member has a right to reflect, dialogic reasoning, analysis, and questioning as well as try to unite their thinking into a potentially operational consensus for action. As Socrates once said: "I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think!"

In addition, I would like to invite you to review apply its contents within the privacy framework and guidelines that you will find within it. It would be a great pleasure to hear from you about what is helpful, practical or not when you work with the stories and facilitate reflective discussion within the P4C framework, in your meetings with the parents at your school.

Thank you,

Maria Papathanasiou

Introduction

This Handbook offers brief definitions of family engagement seen through the lens of researchers and practitioners as well Lipman's Philosophy for Children and Community (P4C). In it, you will also find a description of the handbook and how to use stories based on the P4C educational model. Foremost it stresses the use of stories and fairy tales; storytelling; art; and other kinds of triggers for initiation of critical reflection and dialogic discussion among the participants.

Through this innovative and promising practice, we urge our fellow teachers to strengthen their relationship with the parents of their students. We introduce a new, effective way of inviting parents into the school community—bringing their experiences and useful resources into the entire school community (Parents–Teachers–Children–Administration) for the benefit of the students.

Parents as Adult Learners

The key takeaway of this Handbook should be the procedure that needs to be followed by the facilitator in cooperation with the participants based on critical thinking, reflecting, and discussing ideas and thoughts about a matter of common concern which may either change actors' assumptions or build on others' new ones. This is a community-based, collective procedure, where emotions and relations are inevitably integrated into the learning experience. Assembling parents' communities through philosophical discussion within the school setting and mentored by a P4C trained schoolteacher who is aiming to pursue individual and social change for the actors and the school community as an organization is an innovative model that aims to enhance parent-school relationship and partnership. It acts at the intersection of the Adult Learning theory, Transformative Learning, with an educational methodology—Philosophy for Children (P4C) that has so far pertained to children, but in the new model introduced here aims also at their parents who can embrace the new skills and use them at home with their children, at school with the teachers and with other parents or, for that matter, anywhere else in their daily life.

P4C–Philosophy for Children and Community

The pedagogical framework of P4C constitutes a way that children can learn how to think, analyze, and argue—necessarily from an early age—because otherwise their inherent ability to think abstractly is lost. Abstract thinking brings them to Philosophy (in the dialogic sense not in the academic historical one), familiarizes them with discussion and critical thinking honing their "reasoning" skills as the increasingly engage in Socratic Dialogue (Lipman & Sharp, 1994). In addition, Lipman observes (2003), P4C is characterized by reflective, deliberative, communicative, and dialogic actions, which conclude in both reinforcing individual judgment and, at the same time, solidifying the community. Specifically, diverse individuals (e.g., in ideas,

beliefs, socio-economic backgrounds) are given the chance to voice their ideas in a democratic, empathic, and respectful manner and co-construct a community that promotes trust and well-being, while building a Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI) (Lipman, 2009).

The usual steps for a Lipman's session would be sequentially:

- Have all participants sit in a circle,
- Setting clear ground rules (i.e., respectful, non-judgmental, open-minded etc.)
- Sometimes start with a warm-up game or an exercise,
- Stimuli for Questions (story, poem, music, art etc.),
- Participants are given time to think and raise questions either individually or in small groups,
- All questions are noted on the board,
- Questions are divided into themes, concepts, or other common segments,
- Participants then vote to select the theme for discussion and inquiry,
- A Facilitator summarizes,
- An of the process and outcomes Assessment (discussion, theme exploration, community, facilitation) in a manner appropriate for the children's age group.

A P4C Facilitator

A well P4C trained teacher or philosopher who according to Lipman (2004, p.121), should empower students too attempt to discover the essence of things, the meanings of concepts, with the help of appropriate stimuli while combining the acquisition of knowledge with their own experiences in the context of the culture of the society in which they live." The main goal is to differentiate the P4C process from that of the traditional classroom in which the search for knowledge in it is often conducted in the context of degrading competition (Lipman, 2004, p.112). The method used by the facilitator should be grounded in dialogue which will be initiated by reading and/or other stimuli in an ethos wherein the teacher is no longer the expert but rather the co-learner and co-inquirer who seeks together with the students to discover their own philosophical paths (Mohr-Lone, 2012, p.20). The necessary tools that the teacher must cultivate during their training (See Chapter 7).

A P4C facilitator needs to encourage participation without pressure, listening, reflecting—always constructive and respectful, arguing and communicating, to either to clarify or, if needed, to ask for clarifications to summarize while never being judgmental or biased towards his/her own personal beliefs, and assumptions.

Community of Philosophical Inquiry

A philosophical community is a phenomenon that comes from antiquity but continues to flourish today and could be considered in the realm of community education. Socrates encouraged people to participate in a discussion. Moreover, he said we must listen carefully to others (because listening to others is, itself, thought), we must measure what we say (because speech is thought) and we must repeat in our minds what others have said. He construed participating in a dialogue as examining possibilities, discovering alternatives, recognizing the perspective of others, and

creating a community of inquiry (Lipman, *Teaching children philosophical thinking*, 1980, xiv-xv).

Conduct

All participants sit in a circle, a shape without beginning or end that symbolically defines an imaginary centre—the goal of the Inquiry—that is equally distant from all members. In it there is an open point which is usually occupied by the blackboard or flip chart where all members' ideas, questions, and main concepts are written and/or drawn as a diagram. The community has rules and common practices. The rules of the community of inquiry are usually associated with the concept of respect. More precisely, and according to Sharp (1991) the community builds on trust, and mutual respect, is willing to consider all plausible alternatives, is an active listener, and is ready to offer and request logical reasons for various beliefs and perspectives. The community self-regulates and adapts to the needs of its members and matures with them. There is no better example of the maturity of such a community than when an actor acknowledges that the point of view he/she expressed earlier has weaknesses and that thus eventually agrees and adheres to the point of view of another. The themes that are explored are adjusted to the ages and common interests of the group and therefore are aimed toward finding outcomes that will have a practical effect in participants' lives.

There is a variety of subject areas such (as suggested in <https://p4c.com/about-p4c/teachers-guide/>.)

- Literature: love, hate, peace, democracy, fairness, justice, goodness, power, anger.
- Humanities/social studies: justice, globalization, discrimination, racism, nation, history, truth, cause, evidence, interpretation.
- Arts: beauty, art, imagination, reproduction, real, copy, meaning.
- Religious education: belief, faith, truth, morality, tolerance, ethics.
- Design technology: purpose, economy/finance, environment, value, elegance, simplicity, effectiveness, originality.
- Information and communications technology knowledge, entertainment, game, reality, legality, morality.
- Citizenship: rights, duties, justice, fairness, freedom, welfare, community, enterprise.
- Science: science, experiment, evidence, knowledge, theory, medicine.

The Parents' Community of Philosophical Inquiry Model

The new model that is proposed in this Handbook embraces one major and two minor components. The major one is the discussion groups of the parents with a teacher as the facilitator/moderator of the discussion. The two minor components constitute the discussion groups of students and teachers with a facilitator respectively, from the school community. The most essential part for a parents'–school partnership, is that the discussion groups of students and teachers serve as the foundation of the parents' dialogue as well. Although the discussion groups

work in parallel, they are all interconnected by the P4C methodology with which all actors are gradually being equipped with the necessary cognitive, communication and leadership skills of an active democratic citizenry. All three groups may use Lipman's stories or others similarly contrived and structured in congruence with the ages and maturity of the students. The stories that are suggested in this Handbook can be used as complementary to the any others that meet the P4C standards (there is a plethora of online resources) according to Lipman's curriculum, and any can be reconstructed as a result a Community Inquiry and dialogue by parents. A Community of Inquiry, then, builds on a solid foundation of trust and positive emotions and is further enriched with a variety of thoughts, ideas, opinions, and experiences that interact, evolve and provoke thoughtful dialogue rather than criticism—thus, in a variety of ways, creating the right conditions for transformational learning.

With this Handbook we introduce “Philosophy for Children and Community” in both children, Parents, and teachers operate as colleagues in learning, thinking, reflecting, and reasoning. Accordingly, we invite parents to join us teachers and students in a dialogue to increasingly develop the skills which we all need to learn and adapt in our everyday life at work, home, and as citizens of the world!

STORY #1. School for Grownups!

I must admit, school is useful! Especially with the Pandemic, we have all appreciated it a lot, from the youngest to the oldest person probably in the world! You learn so much stuff, you get to meet your friends, you play. At least at my school, I have fun!

However, there is another thing that really bothers me and that is parents. Surprized? Why? I am not talking about the simple facts like when they tell us to eat healthy while they are grabbing every chance they can get, to eat fast-food. Or the fact that while we are not allowed to say bad words, they are cursing so much. Then you think . . . Come on, they are parents, and you forgive them. The other thing though, that is really annoying is whatever is connected with our schooling. It usually goes like this:

(parent)-Come on child, you need to read books independently. It will help you a lot with your writing and speaking, you know?

(child)-But dad, I would rather read something that I like and could have fun with!

(parent)-I understand what you mean, but how can those comics, for example, educate you? Can you enhance your vocabulary with them?

(child)-Fine! Then you tell me how many books you have read lately!

(parent)-But we are adults, we work... and we also read other things, like newspapers . . . magazines . . .

Do you get that? Do you think it is fair? Now listen to another example when my mom gave me once again additional math exercises to do!

(child)-But I have done all my homework that was assigned by my teacher, I said.

(parent)-Yes, I know, but you need to do more. Do you know how much time I spend to find this great work! Do you think school's HW will put you in the University?

At that moment, one of her colleagues is calling her from the office. You see my mom is a Real Estate agent and her colleague wanted to ask her something about a client.

(parent)-I am very busy now because I am helping my son with his HW, I will tell you tomorrow. She responded on the phone.

(child)-No, it is fine! Do your work with your colleague, your job is far more important, we can do the math tomorrow!

(parent)-Do not tell me what to do my boy, I am an adult, I know better.

You see? That is not fair either. Why do adults always think they know better? Why do they get a break in the afternoon, and we need to work double shifts?

Another time, my teacher for the Environmental Science, told my mom I am not that active with the school projects, and it seems like I am not that sensitive with the environmental issues. Then my parents got mad at me.

(parent)-Why aren't you interested? Why don't you care?

(child)-What could I say? That I did not care doing recycling because at home we put all the garbage in the same plastic bag? Who am I to say that we need to separate glass, plastic, and aluminum when you always say, "who are we to save the world?"

(parent)- You are having an attitude young man! You better go to your room . . .

Do you get that? A child's life is so unfair!

However, the greatest fight was at the finals of the World Championship in soccer. I was watching the game with dad. But the game was a tie, and it was given extra time. Unfortunately, no one was winning, and it ended up in penalties and all of a sudden . . . mom scored from the kitchen!

(mom)- Come on kid, you need to go to sleep now, it is too late!

(child)- But mom . . . the game is almost over; they are hitting the penalties.

(mom)- No!! It is time you go to bed. How will you wake up in the morning?

Of course, dad had already called his partner at work and told him he would be late.

(child)-I will go a couple of hours later at school, like dad. I told my mom nicely!

(mom)-Certainly not! Your dad is a grown up!

Did you hear that? Do you think it is fair? That was outrageous . . .

Next morning, I woke up in a very good mood though, because I had seen the craziest dream ever! I had seen, I *founded a school for grownups* and especially for parents. I wonder how no one had ever thought of that before!! The need is obvious!!! Parents need to learn a lot to cope with their hard role . . . nonetheless their knowledge and experience on this hardly reach the basic! Moreover, I have even dreamed of the first, compulsory subjects they need to attend...which *would be:*

- 1. Rights & obligations of All ages.*
- 2. Patience & limits for adults and children.*
- 3. Listen, Think & Discuss.*
- 4. Reasoning.*
- 5. I learn how to learn with the children.*

At this school, there would be NO breaks OR prepared meals except for healthy, homemade food!

As soon as I got to my school, I still had this magnificent dream in my mind, I went directly to the principal's office and asked him to call my parents because I had forgotten to tell them something important . . .

(principal)- It rings but there is no answer!

(child)- Please let it ring for a few more minutes . . . (I was certain that my mom was taking a nap by my dad, she never goes to her office before 10am)

(mom)-Hello? (a voice coming from asleep)

(principal)- Good morning, your son would like to tell you something!

(child)-Hello mommy, I needed to tell you about a dream I had that made me very happy . . . You know, I founded a school for grownups!

(mom)-That is nice honey! We can discuss this when you are back. Did I go to that school of yours?

(child)-Yes, and you Failed all classes!

(mom)- But why?

(child)- For a lot of reasons and mainly because you two are still sleeping while I am at school without even knowing who won last night!!!

The principal was watching me the whole time smiling . . .

(principal)-Do you think, my child, that the teachers should also go to your school?

(child) - Hmmm! Of course!! And become classmates and friends with the parents!! Why not even learn how to relate with each other and collaborate . . . sir!

Possible Questions:

- Are rights analogous to the age of a person?
- Is learning happening only in school?
- Can parents behave as they wish because they are grown-ups?
- Could parents learn at school or elsewhere?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Share examples that shows we have forgotten that we were once children ourselves.
- Parents as role models.
- School as a learning organization for the community.
- Importance of learning in all ages.
- Rules for everyone.

STORY #2. Philosophy for Parents!

(In a cafe, four moms are chatting about a Discussion Workshop that their school is organizing for the parents).

- (Katerina): Girls, it was really good to see you all today after the summer holidays, but I was wondering . . . Actually, my son wonders if I will attend the discussion Workshop for parents, at their school. Do you know anything about it?

- (Maria): What discussion? I know nothing. What would they teach us? Have they finished teaching our children, and now it is our turn?

- (Olga): Hahaha! Yes, I have heard of it. There will be a series of sessions for whoever wants to participate, and the aim is to get us familiar with inquiry and dialogue.

- (Dimitra): I don't have time for this . . . Absolutely not! I have so many things to do! Don't we talk here, at home, everywhere? Should someone teach us how to talk? Perhaps it would be better if the teachers learned to do it first!

- (Maria): Wait! Dimitra, I think they probably mean something else . . . not the conversation we make, as right now for example, during our coffee meetings . . .

- (Olga): What do you mean? We cannot discuss in a serious manner while drinking coffee with people we know? What defines the type of discussion . . . the place, the subject, the way, the people? What?

- (Katerina): Well, I think that the flyer they sent us, and to which I laid an eye on, refers to dialogue as a learning tool. What does it really mean to listen to others, to think, to reflect? I wonder if we could discuss philosophical issues like love, friendship, rules . . . with our kids? It's not supposed to be a lecture but an interaction in a community-based dialogue! Actually, aren't most teachers encouraging these dialogue groups with their students in classroom every day?

- (Dimitra): Mmm . . . Philosophy...! How do we do that? Who are we to philosophize? What can we discuss in this way? Do we even have time for that? Aren't we all have difficulties discussing basic issues, especially at home with our children or even with our husbands?

- (Olga): Perhaps this is what they mean in the flyer . . . How we can manage to discuss with our children, with teachers and with other people without anticipating that our word is the most precious or without aiming the solution? I think I will go to these sessions, and I will try to figure out if it can be of any use . . .

- (Katerina): I will go too . . . Besides, let us not forget that the school also seeks the best for our children . . . I think they start next week, and it will be every last Friday of each month!

- (Dimitra): I'm not going anywhere! I have no time to waste!!

Possible Questions:

- What is philosophy?
- Are there several kinds of discussions?
- Can non-philosophers philosophize?
- Can philosophy help us in any way in our everyday hurdles?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Kinds of discussion (conversation, talk, dialogue etc.)
- Our thoughts and experiences on dialogue at home.

STORY #3. I'll Go for a Walk!

Boy: I think I'll go for a walk to the mountains!

Sister: Do you want to play with the ball inside or outside the house?

Boy: I do not want to play! I have decided that I'm going for a walk to the mountain.

Brother: Eh little brother, would you like to draw something with me?

Boy: No, I want to go to the mountain. Do you want to come with me?

(No response)

Grandma: Sweetheart, what color would you like for the new sweater I am knitting for you?

Boy: Grandma, I do not know! I just want to go for a walk to the mountain!!!

Grandpa: *Boy,* do you think the Giants are winning tonight? The game starts in a few minutes...

Boy: Grandpa . . . but I want to go for a walk on the mountain!!!

(The boy goes by the kitchen where the mother is cooking)

Boy: Mom, today I am going for a walk to the mountain, I will follow the path behind our house, okay?

Mom: drink your fruit juice, before going to play, my love . . .

Boy: Dad, can I go for a walk to the mountain behind our house . . . ?

Dad: I promise boy to repair your bike right after fixing my car . . .

(*The boy* leaves the house through the woods, darkness falls, and very soon he is getting lost in the woods).

Boy: But where am I . . . ? (he starts screaming and calls his family one by one . . .).

Boy: Why isn't anyone here? Is anybody listening to me . . . ? (crying . . .)

(At home, the whole family has started to search for him everywhere, becoming more and more worried because the hours go by and they cannot find him. After about three hours, the family finally managed to find the little boy not too far behind their house!)

Family: My angel, why did not you tell us where you were going?

Possible Questions:

- Do we always listen to what our children are telling us?
- Why is paying attention to what others -especially our immediate family members- essential? Why do we need to listen to the others?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Are there ways we can improve our attention to the family words?
- Hearing v/s listening v/s attention.
- Communication skills.
- Share experiences with superficial communication.

STORY #4. My Home

Yesterday I read a post on the social network, of a primary school teacher, presenting a student essay on "my home". In this report, the pupil's home was the pupil's self. For the interior of the home, she referred to her mind (thoughts, dreams, knowledge) and her soul (virtues, emotions, behavior). While on the exterior of it, she mentioned her appearance and care for it. Not about clothing, jewelry, and make-up, but through hygiene and neatness, healthy eating and regular exercise.

To tell the truth . . . I was impressed!!! I was fascinated by the ideas and thoughts of the little girl!!

However, when I refer to "my home", I mean my family . . . perhaps because in ancient Greek the word family (oikogeneia = oikos + genos) refers to the composition of the words, "home" and "generation", that is, the generations that live in the same house.

Nevertheless, what happens when modern reality "forces" family members to live in different regions, countries, continents for various reasons (financial, work, study, etc.)?

Where would my home be if I had a similar situation? Where I live? Where my partner is? Or where my kids are (what if they're not in one place)?

Could this deep thinking of that student possibly describe the concept better in modern world?

Could each one of us have a different definition, argument, meaning?

Could it be that this notion, like other similar ones, changes, evolves over time?

I do not know . . .

I must think . . .

I feel like I need to discuss this though with others!!

Possible Questions:

- What is home?
- Can immediate family members live in different places and keep strong relationships? Is it the same with friendships?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Family & friends.
- Home (share examples and experiences).
- Relationships
- Drastic changes in modern era that affect occupation, residency etc.

STORY #5. "The Perfume of LOVE"

On Saturday morning, I woke up in a very bad mood.

It was obvious that in the last few days I had a lot of nerves . . .

I looked around the house. All my "favorites" were thrown here and there! Other crumpled, other dirty, and perhaps a little torn.

My Love for my family was thrown upside down over my children's Smiles. The Love for my books had been tangled with the Joy for our new car, clothed by thousands of dirty clothes that were thrown everywhere! Poor them . . . ! The sweet words for my husband were squeezed in a corner, filled with dust . . . you could hardly single them out. And my Good Manners were found hanging upside down from the spotlight on the ceiling, looking at me with a grievance. My Patience had fallen behind the couch and my Dedication to my friends writhing and dusty, was trying to stretch out while cramped inside the shoe-case. I wonder how it managed to get in there . . . ?

I did not like this picture at all!!

How did I become so indifferent?

I had to fix everything right away! Then a THOUGHT came into my mind, and I decided . . . I would try to "clean up"! Rinse all the carelessness and egoism of the last few months; make it all redundant and shiny! I got a bucket of water, I threw in a lot of the THINKING detergent, the one that makes a lot of foam, and it rinses the Guilt . . . It is the kind of detergent that anyone might need for "cleaning" the favorites. It is a detergent that everyone can use... it would be the first time for me!

Fortunately, almost everyone was away from home and so I was doing my job quietly. Only my little one was there, but she had just had breakfast and was playing quietly with her toys in her room. It was as if she knew I had to clean up the mess! As soon as I finished cleaning, I organized Everything . . . one by one my Favorites . . . and I even had time to sit down and play with my daughter. A few moments later, the door opened and my husband with my two other children coming back home from practice, shopping etc. I could not take hold of myself. I ran and hugged them and kissed them. They did not give me much attention and headed to their rooms. Then I called them . . .

(MOM)-You know something . . . I have been thinking really hard!!! I love you ALL, incredibly! I missed you, I am sorry I haven't told you how much I love you very often . . .

All of them looked at me surprised but decorated with smiles on their faces.

(CHILD 1)-Did you just realize it mom? We loved you all along, even when we don't say it . . .

(DAD)- How important is it to tell each other? Isn't it obvious?

(CHILD 2)- I love it when you tell me how much you love me . . . Don't we all?

(DAD)- I don't really care about words because I know I love you and you love me too!

(MOM)- I understand . . . but most of the times, that is not enough for me, or even more, for the children!!! Think about it . . . Love is not just a word, is it?

At that very moment, our little one came straight to our arms, and we made a big family HUG! Isn't that MAGIC?

Possible Questions:

- Do we change priorities and why?
- Does prioritising designate loving?
- Why do we (parents) feel guilty all the time?
- Are there ways to improve our skills as parents, partners, friends etc?
- How do people express their love?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Love with or/and without words.
- Priorities
- Parenthood (changes, skills, guilt)

STORY #6. How High Can I Fly?

Episode 1:

Once in a distant country, a little balloon was born that did not have the same shape as everyone else! From the very beginning, those who saw it wondered what shape it could take when it would grow up. The little balloon wondered around and looked at the other balloons, which, from the very first days of their life, had a definite shape. But to discover this, everyone advised it, to be filled, inflated, and therefore take a particular shape.

He went out into the neighborhoods and started looking around for various objects, hoping to find what suits her.

At first it swallowed anything it found on the streets: cans of refreshments, stones, cigarette butts and other rubbish dumped. However, it was disappointed. Its shape was strange, and its breath was as dirty as a rubbish can. So, it decided to empty as much as it could and try with something else.

-Well, I have heard nice things about nature, so I had better eat a few branches, leaves and a little tree! It opened its mouth and gulp it.

Unfortunately, it did not change as it was assuming. The tree and its branches created a number of bumps, and they were hurting it from inside. In addition, they anchored inside, and it could not pull them out.

- How can I fly like that? The little balloon began to worry, but it did not get disappointed however painful it had been with all that it had eaten meanwhile.

On its way, a bit further down, it found a bicycle and said it ate that too, to be able to speed up and fly high. As soon as it swallowed it, not only could it not go faster but even worse. A little later, it swallowed a big TV because it thought, everyone liked the TV and spent many hours daily enjoying its company. Moreover, it would never be alone! Nonetheless, although it had been a flat TV, from the latest models, it was heavy enough for the balloon to no longer move. In addition, the pain was getting worse . . .

Episode 2:

Luckily, a balloon doctor passed by at that time, who, when she saw the little balloon in difficulty, she said,

-A great balloon like yourself, cannot be afraid, do you want me to take you to the hospital and let us try to help you?

The balloon was crying out of pain, fear, and despair, but it thought maybe the doctor would seize the discomfort. Maybe there would be a good advice that could help.

Therefore, the doctor lifted it up with a tremendous difficulty and brought it to the hospital. There, she began to pull out of its belly everything the balloon had previously swallowed. In a few cases, it hurt greatly but the worst had been when while scraping the branches it still had the scratches inside. But the void that it felt when it was empty was the worst of all!! The situation troubled the little one that much that it broke into tears again. The doctor, who realized that the balloon's sadness was far greater than its pains, told him:

-The little balloons should not take up with anything they find here and there. You should load yourself with beautiful things that will help you "fly out of joy"! What I will give you will

probably comfort you. It will help you find your shape, your own shape that will not look like anybody else's! It will only be yours!

So, the doctor opened several little boxes and started filling the balloon. He first started with LOVE (he threw much of it), continued with JOY and LAUGHTER. From another box she put the KNOWLEDGE and COURAGE.

"These two go together," she explained. Because the more you know, the more courage you will have in your life.

Finally, she gave the DREAMS and AIMS and explained to it that each balloon, big or small, should have them to fly as high as it can. Not to reach others, but to fly wherever it wants and as much as it wants.

-Oh, yes, before you go, you need to get this syrup too. It will help all the pains go away. It's the sweet-sour syrup of FRIENDSHIP. If you get the right dose, you will get to make good friends.

The balloon smiled and drank a spoon immediately. The doctor gave it a pat on its head and opened the window . . . the balloon no longer needed to crawl, it had the gear aboard and it was time for it to fly!!!

Possible Questions:

- Why is it hard to keep it healthy?
- How much different can we let them be?
- How do we help them fly high or higher?
- How high can I fly as a mother/woman? what kind of children do we want? What kind of citizens do we want?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Raising happy children to happy adults.
- Knowledge & courage, dreams & aims.
- Friendship
- Strong roots & healthy wings.

STORY #7. What is Your Name?

On a beautiful island somewhere in the Aegean Sea, like every September, this year the schools were ready again to welcome the students. All of them were very happy to go back to school and see their classmates again. Everyone but a little girl who recently moved there from a distant place. This girl was very troubled about how she would make new friends. Not that she was afraid or ashamed to talk to her new classmates. On the contrary, she had always been very social and pleasant to her groups of friends. However, it was the first time she would change school and she was worried about the first impression her name would make to the other children. Her old friends knew her for years and never mocked her. However, this time could be different!! How would others deal with it once they would listen to her name? Is the name "Ellada" suitable for a person? Her parents loved it even though she hated it!

-Fine! Then how would you like us to call you? her little brother asked her one day.

- I do not know, Ellada replied. What I know is that I do not like this stupid name!

One day before she started school, she went with her mom to buy school supplies. In the shop a lady, asked her kindly:

-Hello beautiful, you are new in town, aren't you? What is your name?

Ellada pretended that she did not listen to her and did not respond. Her mother, however, replied loudly:

-Ellada, is her name, but she complains that she does not like it at all.

However, she had spoken so loudly that the entire shop turned and looked at the girl, who from her shame hid herself in the hood of her jacket. Even from there, she felt the others staring and waited to see or hear their teasing comments or even a laughter. What she saw was the sweet smile of a petty lady who opened her eyes wide and said,

-Oh, what a beautiful name! I wish I was named like that too!

-You may say it because you do not have it, Ellada replied, while uncovering her head out of the hood slightly. Do you think there is something nice with my name because I do not?

- First of all, it reminds me of a very special country which a whole world knows and admires for its history and beauty, said the lady.

-Yeah right! But whoever has never been there, or has not ever heard about this country, could think of my name as stupid or funny.

-I'm sorry to interrupt, a heavy voice of an elderly gentleman sounded.

- My name is Bufos. Funny name, isn't it? Yet this name, instead of becoming an obstacle to my life, it probably helped me to become relatively famous.

- And how did this happen? Ellada inquired curiously, lowering the hood completely.

-Because every time I met someone, they immediately dealt with my name and then remembered me directly. Even if they did not exactly remember my name, they knew I was the one with the odd name.

- Would you allow me to tell you something? A young man's voice was heard. Once I had met someone whose name has been . . . Salatas! When he was introduced to me, I kept with all my might not to burst out laughing. Nevertheless, the young man not only he was not hurt but he told me many funny stories, about his own, his father's, his grandfather's name. After so many years,

when I hear the word “salata” that young man comes to my mind! I can never forget his inventiveness and his humor.

Ellada felt unreasonably different from a while ago! She greeted nicely those who were there and dipped in her thoughts walked away. But no longer in distress!

Possible Questions:

- Does the name we get designate who we are?
- Can we change our name and when is a good age to decide? Do we change with it?
- What happens if we our child does not like its name or us?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Children’s complaints
- Name
- Changes

STORY #8. Is It All Over?

(Two 50 Euro notes are in a wallet and discuss . . .)

A: Did you hear yesterday what they intend to do with all of us?

B: I have no idea, perhaps I was not here yet.

A: I do not remember exactly when you came, but this is a serious matter! They intend to gather us all somewhere and replace us with new ones.

B: Just a minute . . . I do not think that concerns me, because I, look at me . . . I am still new; I do not have a single wrinkle. They probably want to replace banknotes like you: old, wrinkled, a bit torn.

A: That was a nice try my friend!!! First, they are talking about the banknotes that were issued until the year 2018, and please take a look at your release date!! Secondly, yes, I do not look as ideal as you do, but I have traveled in so many places and I have seen so many people that I really do not care about my looks at all. But I would certainly love to live more . . . to travel even more! I know I will never see it all, but I want to learn as much as possible!

B: Indeed, I have not gone anywhere! I think I just got out of a dark closet yesterday where I was locked, probably for several years. I felt like I finally got out of jail and that I can finally live free and go around visit different places. The rest of those who were with me, unfortunately, I have no idea where they are. They were my brothers for all this time, or they probably became my brothers because we experienced the dark years together.

A: So, you had the chance to get to know others, to get attached with them . . . I regret that I have never felt like that, because within a short time I changed many wallets. Of course, I learned many languages!! Because I traveled all over Europe, and you know almost every country speaks a different language have a different culture, a different history! Even the way they use us many times is different. There were people who made me feel very important. If you could see how much they were enjoying just putting me in their wallet . . . and how difficult it was to give me elsewhere, when of course they had exhausted all the little ones. Nonetheless, for a year I remember, I even found myself in the US! I think it was a young Italian lady who kept me in her purse, and I heard her saying, "I'll keep you with me this year to remind me how much I want to go back home next summer!"

B: Do you know how lucky you are? To be able to travel wherever you want!

A: Not really, wherever I wanted! Wherever they took me . . . I was fortunate to see a lot, but I did not choose where to go neither how long I would stay. Usually there were more changes when the weather was getting warmer, and people were on holidays. The important issue however is our future . . . I heard that by the end of the year all of us will go to a specific place . . . and that is where our lives will end! They will publish new fifties, which will have an embossed drawing on them to make copying more difficult.

B: I do not care that much about the reason we're going to end; I just want . . . to live more!!!

Possible Questions:

- Does getting older means losing worth?
- Do adults get or have more freedoms?

- Why does death come primarily for some? How do we explain death to children?
- Why is life-long learning important? Is it?
- What designates our worth?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Age and death
- Life-long learning
- Ageing with or without experiences
- Freedom to travel

STORY #9. Welcome to Louloulund

(Inspired by Emily Perl Kingsley’s story (1987), “Welcome to Holland!”)

When you are going to have a baby, it is as if you are planning your dream vacation. You are all excited! You get a whole bunch of guidebooks, you learn a few phrases so you can get around, and then it comes time to pack your bags and head for the airport.

Only when you land, the stewardess says, ‘WELCOME TO LOULOULAND.’

You look at one another in disbelief and shock, saying,

“WHERE AM I? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I DID NOT SIGN UP FOR HERE.”

Nevertheless, they explain that there has been a change of plan, that you have landed at this different country and there you must stay.

“BUT I DON’T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS LAND!” you say. ‘I DON’T WANT TO STAY! Why is this happening to me? Why is it me that I get to miss visiting Bestland?’

And then, someone else from the same flight whispers . . .

“Why don’t we go out and buy some new guidebooks, learn some new phrases, and meet people we never knew existed. I have been in Bestland before, and it is as wonderful as you might have heard! Nonetheless, I have never been in Louloulund and I also hope that it is not a bad place either. It is just different! You are simply in a different place than you had planned. It has another pace than Bestland, it’s probably less flashy than Bestland, but after you’ve been there a little while and you have a chance to catch your breath, you begin to discover that Louloulund has windmills. Louloulund has tulips. Louloulund has Rembrandts! You can always try another time to travel to Bestland.

However, everyone else you know is busy coming and going from Italy. They are all bragging about what a great time they had there, and for the rest of your life, you’ll say,

“YES, THAT’S WHERE I WANTED TO GO.”

But why did you want to go there in the first place? And how did you know that you would like it there? And I keep thinking . . . and wondering . . .

But why did you want to go there in the first place? And how did you know that you would like it there? “Why do we all have to go to the same place?”

Possible Questions:

- Why do we like planning ahead?
- What happens when plans change suddenly?
- Why is it important to make trips and learn through them? Is it important?
- Do we all need to go/be at the same places to be happy?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Changes & learning
- Happiness (share experiences, thoughts etc.)
- All children/people are different.

- Raising children is different in real life.

STORY #10. Ugh, I'm bored!

Episode 1: (Sisters 1 and 4 Years Old)

- I am bored!
- But why; I am very excited!
- I am tired of being locked in the house all the time...
- What do you mean; Where else can we go?
- Ahhh, you know, BEFORE we would go everywhere! We were mostly outside the house, for walks, with friends, at grandparents, with cousins, at school, on trips...
- What is all this; Can't we do all this from inside the house? I thought that everything that can make us happy is in here. Our parents are always around us and everything else is on the screen... I do not understand how and why all these walks could make you happy... I see everyone's faces, all terrified with OUTSIDE... whoever goes out is always hiding behind colorful masks!
- You do not understand, you are too young! You do not know what it was like before and that's why you enjoy the situation now.
- Just a minute! You, who says that before it has been much better and you whine, how much did you see mom and dad? As you have told me, they worked constantly, and you were either at school or at our grandparents.
- Yes, you are right about that! I really spent a lot more time with our parents, even though we have you now at home, who is still a baby and there is nothing you can do on your own. To tell you the truth, BEFORE I complained that I did not see them and cried a lot every time they left me at school or anywhere else. I was constantly missing them! But it is this big change that scares me, or maybe the uncertainty in their eyes that is to blame and really worries me... I do not know . . .
- Me neither . . .

Episode 2: (Brothers 8 and 13 Years Old)

- Ugh, I'm SOOO bored!!
- Why; I really like it this way!
- Well, don't you get bored without your school and your afternoon activities?
- What are you saying now; Do you know how tedious it was for so many years to come and go to school every day, activities, other classes, visits? Now I finally get to stay at home, we all spend time together cooking, playing, watching movies . . . Never before have we had time for all this! We were constantly running to go somewhere, to meet someone, to do something . . .
- So, you do not miss your friends either?
- If you mean all those who do not miss the opportunity to make fun of anyone because he or she is a good student or because they wear the baby socks that their grandmother gave them as a gift, then NO! I do not miss them at all. Besides, my best friend and I see each other on the weekends, and we play almost daily online games together.
- Hmm, nice games!! Either you sit on the floor and look at the screen when you are together, or you write messages about your moves in the game when you are online . . . No playground, no playing ball, no running, NOTHING!

"What can I tell you, my brother? I prefer it this way." It is much EASIER!!!

Episode 3: (Grandma and Grandpa)

- Ugh, I am bored!!
- Me too, but at least we are both fine! Do you see what is happening around the world?
- Yes, I do. But what can I do if I cannot go anywhere, neither to my friends, nor to the market . . . ?
- Do not be ungrateful! We have our health and each other! There are many others, more unfortunate than us who do not deal only with loneliness . . . We need to be patient and It will pass.
- You do not understand me! I have waited for so many years for my retirement, to have free time to do what I did not do for so long... to travel, to enjoy my grandchildren as I did not enjoy my children . . . Instead, now I am locked inside the house for so long, terrified by what is going on . . .
- I have been waiting with you for all this time and for everything you have mentioned... Loneliness withers me too . . . but think of our grandchildren . . . Please think of all those children who are being locked inside, as you say, in front of a screen for their school, for their entertainment, for their socialization... how much do they miss!!!
- You are right love. We must be patient and brave like them...

Episode 4: (Mom and Dad)

- I'm bored, I am telling you, I'm bored!!
- Wow, me on the other hand, I really enjoy it!
- What do you mean; Doesn't it bother you that you are caged? That you no longer go to work and must do almost everything from home?
- What are talking about? For so many years I woke up at 5:30 in the morning to be at work at 8am! Now I wake up at 7:30 am, I watch you waking up, we eat our breakfast together, I shave, I get dressed (partially!) and I sit in front of my computer.
- Well, of course! You are not with the children all day . . . I am about to go crazy!
- Just a minute my love... weren't you doing the same things BEFORE? Now at least I'm here if you need to go shopping (which you do not want . . .) or go for a walk (which again you are almost forced to do...). We spend a lot more time together, and with the kids we make a thousand things together, that we did not have the chance to do in the previous years!
- You're right! But BEFORE, the kids went to school and I had the time to do whatever I wanted during the morning... my every day's schedule is all messed up, I miss my habits . . .
- Yes, but you have got others, that you never had and might be better for you . . .
- But I cannot enjoy them. I am scared that EVERYTHING will remain as it is now, FOREVER!
- I am also terrified my love . . . that possibly EVERYTHING will be as it was BEFORE .
- ..

Episode 5: (Bachelor Couple)

- Hey, where are you going?

- Walk the dog . . . do you want to come?
- Ehh, no! We have scheduled a game with the boys. In 5 minutes, we will all be online . . .
- But aren't you bored yet?
- Why should I be bored? BEFORE we only played on the weekends and that was only during your shifts at work . . . Now we all have so much time at our disposal!
- Exactly like you said . . . we ALL have more time at our disposal!
- What are you whining about? Didn't I get you a dog?
- Yes, WE got a dog, to see if WE can take on an "alive" responsibility TOGETHER . . .
- Correctly! Don't we do well? The dog is happy because we spend time with him when each of us is at work and you have someone to take out your mother instinct . . .
- You are making a big mistake my friend, if you think that I wanted to have children so soon, and that the dog would fill such a gap for me! We have been moaning for so many years because we did not have time to do things together and now, we fill our extra time with electronic games and a cute dog.
- What else to do? Since we cannot go out in restaurants, or even to a bar, or somewhere with friends . . . It is boring!
- You are right, it is BORING!! But it is also an ideal opportunity to get to know each other better!!

Episode 6: (Monologue of Loneliness)

My dear Diary,

I know, I have not written anything for a long time, but I have been really busy. In the past few months, world-historical and unprecedented events have taken place and life as we knew it has changed completely! Most people now work from home remotely, while others have lost their jobs. I was lucky! I go to my office once a week and for the rest I work from home. Of course, in the office when I go, there is no one else because we rotate. Initially the silence was very convenient but now it has become annoying... I have reached the point where I greet the names of colleagues on their doors! I have not seen my parents in-person for months. They are very old, and I am afraid that I may transfer the virus to them from outside. Not that I meet anyone . . . Even on the streets we usually change the sidewalk so as not to criss cross each other. The supermarket has become the main place for socialization, but even there, only one person is allowed per alley. Imagine that I often look forward to going to the checkout to see the cashier from close, even if it is behind the window. But they are also so scared . . . and they are justified to feel like that . . .

I do have a lot of online meetings with so many people . . . But no, it has nothing to do with the meetings BEFORE. They just remind me how much we had and how much we have missed. A coffee, a drink, a meeting with friends or colleagues, we had it all! I know, it was my decision to be alone and see people whenever I wanted. But it took me this far to realize how hard it is to be ALONE . . . How much we need OTHERS . . . for a conversation, a touch, for TOGETHERNESS!!

Possible Questions:

- Is the easier way the better way?
- Why is it convenient to complain?
- Why is everybody upset with staying more time at home with their families?
- Do we miss something more when it is gone?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Trying to see things from the other side (exercise)
- Changes -what if they stay forever?
- Loneliness within the family.

STORY #11. Free Time . . .

(Three children are discussing in the yard of the primary school. One of them is using the wheelchair.)

Child 1: We have a lot of homework for tomorrow!

Child 2: Yes, I do not think we will have time to play in the afternoon. Really Zoe, what do you do in your spare time?

Zoe: Hmm, I usually finish studying early and if the weather is nice, I go for a walk with my parents. If not, I read my books and if we are all in a good mood, we play board games all together.

Ch2: Books? A walk with your parents? Board games; How boring would all these be!

Ch1: WOW! Aren't you bored of spending so much time with your parents? If you would like, you could join us to gaming. We can play together through the gaming platform.

Q2: Yes, great idea! That way you would not feel like being imprisoned!

Zoe: But who told you that I feel like a prisoner? I would rather say the opposite; I feel so free to travel through the stories from the books I read, to invent my own, to constantly discover new things and to explore the world around me in any way possible and naturally whatever my condition lets me.

Ch1: That is exactly what I am saying. No misunderstanding, because we are friends and I do not want to show disrespect, but don't you feel like a prisoner in your chair? I wanted to ask you for a long time now.

Zoe: Let me tell you . . . My situation imposes some restrictions on me. But this does not limit my imagination, my thoughts, and my dreams! Please, you do not need to worry . . . I do not misunderstand you. I find it very reasonable for someone to wonder. After all, we are children and we must wonder and always ask questions, as my mom keeps telling me. Especially when they come from my friends who love me as you do!

Ch1: So, you are not upset about your condition?

Zoe: No, I am not upset! Sometimes it makes me sad, but I never despair because my parents believe in me. They consider me as a gift from God and never forget reminding me every day.

Ch1: You are probably lucky to have your parents so close to you. My people work all day and are always tired in the afternoons. They usually come back home late, and they are constantly busy with various kinds of things.

Ch2: Hmm . . . my mom is a stay-home parent, and my dad works long hours at the office and sometimes at home as well. Even though, my mom supports me with my studying, feeding and these kinds of needs, unfortunately, we never talk, play, or go somewhere together. Not that I complain because she helps me a lot with the school and takes me to soccer and to my friends but she does not seem interested in my 'irrelevant to the school' questions, jokes or any kind of games that makes me think that she is tired of me especially when she tells me that we are both free to do what we like to relax as soon as we finish and she leaves. I suppose that our "collaboration" in studying that usually creates tensions, irritations, and other negative emotions, alienates us in a strange way . . .

Zoe: Well, my friends . . . Why don't you tell them what you need from them? They are parents, they do not know everything!!

Possible Questions:

- Do parents know everything?
- How can we open up to our children? And how much?
- What exactly do children need from the parents?
- Can parents be trusted?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Parents-children relationship
- Parents, work & free time.

STORY #12. The Change

(Two mothers are discussing about their worries, while drinking coffee after leaving their children at school.)

- I'm very worried about everything that is happening!

-What do you mean? The coronavirus?

-Not exactly! Well with that too, but what I was thinking was mostly the time the kids spend in front of a screen. Every day more and more . . . Until a year ago they had their schedule with school, extracurricular activities, reading, exchanging visits with friends and so much more. They are now closed all day at home, except for a walk.

-Yes indeed! I think the same thing happens in all homes. It's scary!

-Yes, it is scary if someone thinks that until a year ago there would have been a big fight with them, if they were on the screen for more than an hour every day. And now . . . the hours are countless! I now accept it as a fact, and I do not even argue with them. I may even feel sorry for them . . . As if I have become another human being! Every day I wonder how much I have changed through everything that is happening. I do not know if I am better or worse . . . but I certainly do not recognize myself!

-You're right! Now that you say that I feel the same way. In fact, I feel overwhelmed and feel chased every day by guilts that I have become a worse parent than before. Because that is how I personally see this change, which in fact seems to have come to stay with us. I feel that we will never be able to return to the previous state...

-I do not know what to say to you. I wonder if we want to go back to the past. Is it somehow convenient now or even possible? Or are we desperately looking forward to tomorrow? What I often think about now is how do our children feel about this change?

- Could we ask them?

Possible Questions:

- Do changes came to stay?
- Could we ever go back to the way things were?
- Is it all parents fault?

Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Screentime: how much is enough?
- Parents' worries and guilts.

Questions NEVER End . . .

Chapter 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

Discussing the Results

My personal zeal (pothos) to support and lead schools to become more effective learning environments for their students and strengthen the school community's (students, teachers, parents) bonds, has motivated me to study, discover, and work in various ways with colleagues, students, and parents to accomplish my goal. My Action Research project in Greece, just a few years ago, uncovered one of the possible approaches that could enhance this relationship in the school community. The successful paradigm has been the light at the end of the tunnel that guided me as a teacher and a rising leader, and later as a researcher to further develop a model that teachers can adopt and adjust to improve their relationship and empower their partnership with the caregivers—the families of their students.

The already challenging and demanding life of an educator is usually a major barrier to adopting new skills in a field other than “ordinary” good teaching; yet, on the other hand, this same complex arena requires teachers to constantly inquire, get involved, learn, and, engage themselves in deeper knowledge and practice of their professional skills and their effectiveness in promoting their students' academic success and well-being. Becoming and being a teacher is a priceless professional aim for future generations. It is a great responsibility—usually not acknowledged by the state and/or others but, at the same time, it can also be a tremendous source of happiness, self-fulfillment, and satisfaction when performed to its greatest potential.

The prevailing models of parent-teacher partnerships, far too often, disregard the need of all sides for a trusting relationship and communication. For several reasons, teachers avoid investing in a relational model of parents' engagement. One of the leading forces acting against it

is usually the absence of training in this subject—training that would empower them to help unravel the complexity of the roles that each constitutes in the overall school community.

The suggested model presumes a professional development with two main components in addition to collaboration in practice. The first of these concerns awareness of and reflection on parent-teacher partnership models and their effectiveness, as well as on incorporating insight from the latest research and innovations that have mainly been introduced, developed, and established in the U.S.—where most research in the field occurs worldwide). For those wishing to take part, I recommend that, first, their teacher training focus on mindfulness and understanding the benefits of those parent-teacher relational findings and innovations that have been confirmed by research. Second would be a workshop on the P4C and P4P frameworks with an enhanced instructional and learning process where adult learners can effectively reflect on distorted meanings and assumptions, as well as change practices and social assumptions that are challenged through their own critical discourse—while learning new strategies and finding new paths. In this way, a teacher’s comprehensive, understanding, and deep sense of community can be developed. Teachers must experience, firsthand, what they will need to apply and model in their own school communities with their colleague-teachers, students, and their parents. Professional development designed in this way will introduce teachers to collective inquiry, to a deeper understanding of mentoring other adults, and to consciously sharing experiences and practices with parents who come from a continuum of socio-economic, cultural, and other circumstances. Building community between parents and teachers invites them both to conversation in an open-ended partnership that can help form and strengthen a trusting relationship which, in turn, will be essential for filling the gap between teachers and parents that researchers have found is currently rife.

Alignment of Core Discourse in Lipman’s P4C and Mezirow’s Transformative Learning

One of the particularly gratifying findings of my intense recent study of the adult learning literature in search of potential theoretical grounding of my Philosophy for Parents (P4P) model, was a powerful—almost astonishing—similarity between the unfettered Socratic discourse at the heart of Lipman and Sharp’s P4C, and the rational discourse at the heart of Mezirow’s transformative learning. The following quotation from his seminal “Transformative Dimensions of Adult learning” (1991, p. 78) says it all:

Participation in rational discourse under these ideal conditions will help adults become critically reflective of the meaning perspectives and arrive at more developmentally advanced meaning perspectives. A developmentally advanced meaning perspective is one that is:

- more inclusive, discriminating, and integrative of experience,
- based upon full information,
- free from both internal and external coercion,
- open to other perspectives and points of view,
- accepting of others as equal participants in discourse,
- objective and rational in assessing contending arguments and evidence,
- critically reflective of presuppositions and their source and consequences, and able to accept an informed and rational consensus as the authority for judging conflicting validity claims.

Findings into Action

As Brookfield (1983) points out, adult learning aims to transform society by enhancing individual knowledge and skills. His view of the relationship between adult education and society, however, is somewhat instrumental and narrow. This study reinforces a view of adult education that is, instead, community based, and that aims at two interdependent goals: The first is that of personal knowledge and skill acquisition; the second is that of progress and community empowerment (Connolly, 2005). Adult learning within a community education system requires that individuals remain consciously intentional toward social change, while preconditioning readiness to renegotiate some of the traditional roles of the educational process.

A philosophical community is a phenomenon that comes from antiquity but continues to flourish today and could be considered *community* education. Looking back to the origins of philosophy in Greece in the fifth century BC Greece, the ancient Greek philosophers—particularly the Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics—clearly thought of philosophy as a form of therapy, that cured the toxic false beliefs that cause suffering (Kokkos et al. 2019). Similarly, Socrates suggested philosophy as a way of life, for better understanding, elaborating, and managing one’s emotions and self, while learning through dialogue. Philosophers in the ancient world lived in philosophical communities of shared values and shared practices where they learned how to examine their beliefs through dialogue (Kokkos et al. 2019) and conversation.

While modern professional development and training is often held in a classroom, community education can occur in many different venues that learners find familiar and non-intimidating. Those could be a library, an area of the municipality, a social center or, in this case, a school. An inviting location could be a key factor in achieving broader participation in parent education and in empowering the school’s community. Finally, unlike the situation in typical,

hierarchical classroom dynamics, the role of the adult education facilitator in community education is reciprocal—as an equal to the adult learner—where, in as much as possible, authority is transferred to the interlocutors while the educator him/herself becomes a collaborative learner. In sum, teachers and parents would work in cooperation and in solidarity with one another as co-learners, co-producers of academic empowerment and well-being for their children. Moreover, these communities can flourish through informal education, often outside the purview of the state, universities, and other formal adult education providers. By calling it “informal”, I mean that learning is not publicly funded and is often organized and self-run by volunteers—neither requiring (nor welcoming) top-down regulation structuring.

Dewey, in the early years of the 20th century, also insisted that philosophy should not be practiced within the “ivory tower” model of academic philosophy. He, instead, stressed the social and communal nature of learning (Dewey, 1910). Philosophy, he thought, should be a form of social practice that engaged with the social problems of the epoch. Additionally, he gave value to education that arises within social structures and contributes to them. His political ideal was of a “Great Society, in which neighbors would meet for face-to-face ethical and civic discussions—presenting a vision of grassroots ethical philosophy that would inspire later community philosophers like Matthew Lipman. Lipman’s concept of the “community of inquiry” seems likely influenced by American Pragmatist philosophers on one hand, and by Vygotsky’s development psychology theories on the other (Lipman, 1991). However, as Lipman suggested, communities of inquiry should follow Socrates advice to “*follow the argument wherever it leads in the dialogue*” (Lipman, 1988, p. 7). Another scholar asserts that, by acting thus, it is possible to trigger a conceptual transformation (Kennedy, 2004, p.757). Moreover, recent research in P4C

sought to evolve a version that combines a pragmatist with a virtue ethics approach (Lipman & Sharp, 1994, Sprod, 2001).

A significant feature of community-based education, as presented in this proposal, aims to establish an open, reason-based discussion, while exploring and analyzing needs and expectations within the educational community. With the support of the philosophical inquiry inspired by Lipman's P4C, and grounded on the 4Cs Framework (Critical, Caring, Creative, and Collaborative), the four pillars for an effective dialogue (presented in Chapter 4), the discussion is directly related to values, ideas, and issues the participants face in everyday life, rather than to conventional academic subjects. Moral and ethical issues and values of the adult learners are stimulated and probed by dialogue while the stories serve as prompt and starting point. In sum, exploration, philosophical inquiry, and discussion are the focus and modus operandi of the overall educational process.

Summary Relevance of the Teachers' Handbook for Transformational Parenting

The theoretical framework of this research has drawn upon adult learning theories and reports of their effectiveness in parent education that bear upon strengthening the parent-teacher-school relationship. As extensively noted in this thesis, it adapts the P4C Lipman-Sharp methodology, activating the power of discourse and critical reflection by adults with common goals and concerns such as those of children's academic success and well-being.

More specifically, the present study has examined and explored the feasibility of formation of a community of inquiry within the school by empowering parents as well as teachers, and thus expanding the embrace of the school community. To accomplish this goal, conclusions suggest different—but complementary—paths, for the teacher and the parent, who both have the same goal, improvement in the effectiveness of the child's education. The need for

differentiating their roles and paths arises in response to the separate, pedagogical role for each—parent and teacher—even though there is an urgent need for cooperation in the same direction. Establishing a parents’ community of inquiry lays the foundations for the search for, discovery, and demarcation of roles, while building a relationship of trust that acts as a lever to strengthen the educational process as an integrated system. In large, these recommendations propose expanding, strengthening, and aligning the parent-teacher-school community, with a central focus on shared responsibility for the child’s learning. It is hypothesized (in concert with qualitative findings of preliminary action research, that this expanded, aligned, interacting community will increase the likelihood of enhancing the academic performance of students, the effectiveness of teachers, and the support and continuation of important educational work at home by the family.

By extrapolation, I proposed extension of the Philosophy for Children methodology to the rest of the educational community—including an additional focus on parents. For the Teacher to become a facilitator, as previously mentioned there is a need for training/professional development. And the Teachers’ Handbook for Transformational Parenting—providing explanations, guidance, and cross-generational story prompts and questions—is introduced as a valuable resource for implementation of community-building.

Both the model and the Teachers’ Handbook have been “tuned” throughout my entire course by continuing contributions from literature research, my practice, and most recently, implications drawn from responses gleaned from the five-country survey of parents’ readiness for more intense participation in an overarching Parents–Teachers–School community.

In this work, the teacher of the classroom (or at least teachers coming from the same school), would facilitate the community of parents based on materials that reflect what the

children are currently studying. The stories that are included in the facilitators' Handbook are primarily addressed to parents of children in Primary education (K-6). But, the principles that underlie the Handbook could be extended to other grade levels and other kinds of educational material that children are studying.

At the same time, my proposed model incorporates and explores the potential transformative effect of thoughtful dialogue and critical thinking on adult participants—both parents and educators—through their active participation and collaboration in the philosophical educational community. In all this, of course, the predominant aim of the joint parent-teacher endeavor in P4P is to enhance students academically and their well-being while enhancing working parents' skills in critical and reflective dialogue and, overarchingly, their roles as pedagogues (guides of the child).

Epilogue

ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὄυτή

The way up and the way down are one and the same. (Fragments of Heraclitus: Epigraph, T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, I. *Burnt Norton*)

In my beginning is my end

(T.S. Eliot, First line of T. S. Eliot. *Four Quartets*, II. *East Coker*)

Evolution of a teacher-facilitated Community of Philosophical Inquiry, aspirationally, might be expected to eventuate in meaningful parent-teacher partnerships where all actors think deeply, exchange ideas, argue with respect to their own and others' voices and build relevant capacities to manage the complexity of modern pedagogy together as allies on a team.

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Appendix 1

Comparative Positive Effects Observed in the Active Parent Study Group across Two Years

Empowering parents to develop effective parenting strategies

After having philosophically discussed “parenthood” in a meeting, a great need for information and suggestions about parenting strategies had emerged. Scientific articles and suggestions were given to all the families in school, however those who actually applied the strategies and gave feedback were the ones from the experimental groups.

Cultivating group climate for the young and adult students

The parents from both Experimental groups soon established close ties among each other in both years. As a result, they presented great willingness to volunteer at school to do anything they were asked to. Additionally, out-of-school meetings occurred much more frequently for the experimental group. Their children also attached much faster and formulated a team, compared to previous years or to the other department.

Integrating parents into the educational process inside and outside the school

Parents were very often willing to take part in school activities and school trips, and often asked for advice on playful educational activities that could take place outside of the school setting. Their interest in the social and emotional maturity of their child grew significantly while they stopped wondering if their child would learn how to read and write by the end of the year.

Developing trust relationships in the Educational Triangle: School-Child-Parent

Discussion among parents and teachers increased significantly, and not just in regard to their children’s performance at school (as mentioned in the questionnaire by all parents).

After the second or third session, the majority of parents would bring up a variety of matters for critical and creative discussion. In addition, they would soon pursue further contact with the teachers or other parents to discuss their personal issues, sometimes looking for advice on issues that concerned their family and not just their children. In one case, a mother in the study shared information regarding problems with her husband (he had just lost his job). Another mother shared that she was continuously fighting with her mother, with whom she shared the same apartment, and was looking for an excuse to move elsewhere with her husband and children. Teachers were also eagerly discussing their concerns with the parents about their children, or were asking them for help, without hesitation. The children seemed to enjoy this relationship and often told their parents in the mornings, “leave now, this is my teacher”, and the parent responded with satisfaction, “but she is my teacher too, you know!”

Developing a positive ethos in school among all participants—as evidenced by the four points below

- Parents supported and accelerated the learning of their children academically after assimilating how to enhance and link learning in the family environment with learning at school

As documented in the short essays included with the evaluation forms, all of the participants asserted or mentioned a dramatic change in both, their own and their child’s way of discussing or reflecting on various issues. Many of them declared raising questions “like children” and discussing issues philosophically that were stimulated by current events or by a particular incident during their day. Most participants shared that the subjects discussed at home were now not just about

academic performance but mostly about friendship, peace, inclusion, being different, death, happiness etc.

- Parents responded with great enthusiasm to school requests whenever cooperation was sought

The parents were eager to help the teachers in every situation, by painting walls, cooking, accompanying students at out-door activities, making whatever needed for bazaars, etc.

- The relationships among parents that participated persisted in the following years

The parents from the Experimental groups set up a group in an application in order to be able to communicate daily. There was a case in which a father was seriously injured by a car and the rest of the team supported the mother and the children for at least four months (cooking, cleaning, baby- sitting). In another case, a mother had to go abroad for a serious surgery and the group, in addition to the psychological support they provided daily with their discussions raised money for the patient's expenses. Moreover, a mom from the group accompanied the patient to the country where the surgery took place because she knew the language. More recently, a mom said, "I cannot remember my life before you." and another stated that "while looking at my wedding pictures, a few days ago, I was trying to find you all because I feel like I've known you forever."

- The parents who participated were looking for cooperation and remained attached to the kindergarten during the next year, regardless of the grade level of their children in elementary school

They actually said: “We want to follow this community of parents next year too. if you cannot make a second group with us, we will hide behind the doors and windows to listen to the stories for your new group and participate” The parents from both Experimental groups still participate in raising funds for the school i.e., through organizing the Christmas and Easter Bazaars.

Appendix 2

Compendium of Data Tables from International Survey Study

- Demographics (DQ)
- Survey Research Question 1 (SRQ1)
- Survey Research Question 2 (SRQ2)
- Survey Research Question 3 (SRQ3)
- Survey Research Question 4 (SRQ4)

Appendix 2, Demographics

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
40	Parents Age Range	CR / Fig 9 / N=16	ESP / Fig 10 / N=20	GR / Fig 11 / N=286	IT / Fig 12 / N=154	USA / Fig 13 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	18-29			0.7		
	30-39	18.8	15.0	20.3	13.0	31.3
	40-49	50.0	85.0	64.7	58.4	50.0
	50-59	25.0		14.0	26.0	18.8
	60 and over	6.3		0.3	2.6	
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
41	Marital Status	CR / Fig 14 / N=16	ESP / Fig 15 / N=20	GR / Fig 16 / N=286	IT / Fig 17 / N=154	USA / Fig 18 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Married	93.8	90.0	92.0	79.9	89.6
	Divorced	6.3	10.0	3.5	7.1	6.3
	Single			2.8	2.6	4.2
	Widow/er			1.4	1.9	
	Cohabitant				8.4	
	Other			0.3		
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
42	Academic Level	CR / Fig 19 / N=16	ESP / Fig 20 / N=20	GR / Fig 21 / N=286	IT / Fig 22 / N=154	USA / Fig 23 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	High school			15.4	10.2	35.4
	BA	18.8	3.5	47.6	10.2	8.3
	MA	81.3	65.0	33.6	44.2	41.7
	PhD			1.0	32.7	14.6
	Post Doc			0.3		
	Institute			1.0		
	Other			1.8	2.7	
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
43	Number of children in the family	CR / Fig 24 / N=16	ESP / Fig 25 / N=20	GR / Fig 26 / N=286	IT / Fig 27 / N=154	USA / Fig 28 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	0		10.0	2.1		
	1	43.8	5.0	27.3	36.4	16.7
	2	43.8	40.0	55.6	53.2	52.1
	3	6.3	35.0	11.9	7.1	20.8
	4	6.3	10.0	3.1	3.2	4.2
	5+					6.3

DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE BY COUNTRY						
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
47	Parents' occupation before school closure due to Covid-19 pandemic	CR / Fig 39 / N=16	ESP / Fig 40 / N=20	GR / Fig 41 / N=286	IT / Fig 42 / N=154	USA / Fig 43 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Administration	37.5	25.0	21.1	12.4	12.5
	Consultant	25.0	5.0	3.6	3.3	14.6
	Education	25.0	15.0	17.6	48.4	35.4
	Employee	6.3	25.0	30.8	10.5	10.4
	Private employee				6.5	
	Public employee				3.3	
	Stay-at-home parent	6.3	30.0			
	Medical			5.7		2.1
	Military			3.6		4.2
	Stay-at-homeparent			13.6	11.1	12.5
	Technician			1.4	0.7	4.2
	Artist			0.7		
	Assistant				0.7	
	No occupation			3.2	0.7	4.2
	Other				10.5	
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
46	Kind of school attended while in remote learning (RL)	CR / Fig 34 / N=16	ESP / Fig 35 / N=20	GR / Fig 36 / N=286	IT / Fig 37 / N=154	USA / Fig 38 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Public	31.3	10.0	86.4	88.2	77.1
	Private	68.8	90.0	14.0	11.8	20.8
	Charter					2.1
	DoDEA (US Department of Defense—on military bases)					4.2
Q#	DEMOGRAPHICS	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
45	Relationship & Partnership with the school (by grade level)	CR / Fig 29 / N=16	ESP / Fig 30 / N=20	GR / Fig 31 / N=286	IT / Fig 32 / N=154	USA / Fig 33 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Pre-K & Kindergarten		5.0	16.8	5.2	20.8
	Elementary	43.8	50.0	62.2	46.1	31.3
	Middle school			35.7	25.3	33.3
	Middle-High school	56.3	45.0			
	High school			21.3	23.4	52.1

Appendix 2. Research Questions

SURVEY RESPONSES PERTINENT TO RESEARCH QUESTION #1 What are the main/principal elements/features that constitutes a successful parent-school relationship and partnership? Chosen for analysis: Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
1	Please check one (1) to three (3) words / phrases that represent(s) your ideal "family-school relationship". * Communication (meetings, emails, etc), Empathy, support or/and enhancing family-school partnership, Voluntary parents' engagement in school, relationship, Other// FIG 49-53	CR / Fig 49 / N=16	ESP / Fig 50 / N=20	GR / Fig 51 / N=286	IT / Fig 52 / N=154	USA / Fig 53 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Communication	87.5	90.0	82.5	75.3	93.8
	Empathy	50.0	70.0	41.8	34.4	37.5
	Partnership	62.5	70.0	37.5	64.3	70.8
	Relationship	18.8	5.0	12.6	29.2	20.8
	Voluntary	43.8	20.0		20.8	22.9
	Meetings			37.5		
	Other			12.6	0.6	2.1
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
2	Could you please check one (1) to three (3) words / phrases that enhances "family-school partnership"? * Check all that apply. Dialogue, Frequent meetings, Parents' engagement (eg., PTA meetings) Seminars, Community building, Collaboration, Alliance, Other	CR / Fig 54 / N=16	ESP / Fig 55 / N=20	GR / Fig 56 / N=286	IT / Fig 57 / N=154	USA / Fig 58 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Dialogue	93.8	100.0	72.4	73.9	20.8
	Frequent Meetings	6.3	40.0	79.0	18.3	18.8
	Parents' engagement	62.5	65.0	26.2	33.3	41.7
	Seminars	18.8		35.7	18.3	8.3
	Community building	18.8	20.0	18.2	41.9	33.3
	Collaboration	68.8	55.0	12.9	58.2	54.3
	Alliance	25.0	5.0		28.1	20.8
	Other				0.7	4.2

SURVEY RESPONSES PERTINENT TO RESEARCH QUESTION #1 What are the main/principal elements/features that constitutes a successful parent-school relationship and partnership? Chosen for analysis: Q1, Q2, Q7, Q18						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
7	Which of the following would you consider that enhances the relationship with the school? Check all that apply. Regular meetings & information about the educational program, Spontaneous communication, Build-up a strong parent-teacher community, Build-up a strong parent community within the school, Voluntary participation of parents, Guidance/training of parents, Guidance/ support of children's learning at home, Participation in decision-making within the school community, Cooperation with local community institutions aiming at the support of school programs Other	CR / Fig 59 / N=16	ESP / Fig 60 / N=20	GR / Fig 61 / N=286	IT / Fig 62 / N=154	USA / Fig 63 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Community institutions	37.5		23.4	41.2	16.7
	Decision making	31.3	20.0	18.2	20.3	39.6
	Educational program	25.0	50.0	69.9	54.2	64.6
	Guidance/training	75.0	10.0	40.9	31.4	31.3
	Learning at home	50.0	40.0	40.9	22.9	52.1
	Other	6.3		0.7	0.7	4.2
	Parent community	31.3	10.0	15.0	9.8	29.2
	Parent-teacher community	56.3	60	43.3	58.8	66.7
	Spontaneous communication	43.8	50	26.9	15.7	31.3
	Voluntary participation	43.8	5	28.3	7.2	35.4
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
18	Do you think that your relationship with the school could improve? * If "yes or maybe," would you please suggest ways that could possibly empower this relationship? (Followed by 5 blank lines)	CR / Fig 64 / N=16	ESP / Fig 65 / N=20	GR / Fig 66 / N=286	IT / Fig 67 / N=154	USA / Fig 68 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Collaboration	15.4	8.3	5.2	6.9	18.2
	Communication	38.5	50.0	53.4	28.4	54.5
	Dialogue	30.8	8.3	10.3	15.7	13.6
	Digital Support	7.7	33.3	8.6	2.0	22.7
	Involvement			10.3	16.7	13.6
	Meeting(s)	15.4		31.0	19.6	27.3
	Relationship	23.1	25.0	20.7	14.7	22.7
	Seminars			8.6		4.5
	Other				14.7	

RQ2 What is the role of relationships within the school community and the family itself for the academic success and well-being of children? Chosen for analysis: Q6 (p. 189), Q10 (p. 192), Q11 (p. 194)						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
6	Do you consider a good relationship with the school of great importance? * Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all, and 5=Greatly)	CR / Fig 69 / N=16	ESP / Fig 70 / N=20	GR / Fig 71 / N=286	IT / Fig 72 / N=154	USA / Fig 73 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Little				1.3	2.1
	Much			5.7	7.8	6.3
	Very much	12.5	5.0	8.6	15.6	14.6
	Greatly	87.5	95.0	85.7	75.3	77.1
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
10	How important are relationships within the family for your children's future success in life? * Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all important, and 5=Greatly important)	CR / Fig 74 / N=16	ESP / Fig 75 / N=20	GR / Fig 76 / N=286	IT / Fig 77 / N=154	USA / Fig 78 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Not at all			0.3		
	Little			1.0		
	Much			8.4	5.2	
	Very much	6.3	20.0	24.8	19.5	14.6
	Greatly	93.8	80.0	65.4	75.3	85.4
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
11	What is the role of relationships within the family for your child/ren's Academic Success? * Mark only one oval (5 ovals with 1=Not at all important, and 5=Greatly important)	CR / Fig 79 / N=16	ESP / Fig 80 / N=20	GR / Fig 81 / N=286	IT / Fig 82 / N=154	USA / Fig 83 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Not at all			1.4		
	Little			7.3		
	Much	9.1	25.0	33.9	9.1	12.5
	Very much	27.3	35.0	32.5	27.3	22.9
	Greatly	63.6	40.0	24.8	63.6	64.6

RQ3, 3rd Research question: How Did RL (Remote Learning) in the Pandemic Influence Parents' Relationship with the School? Q/20, Q21, Q31						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
20	As a parent, what has pleasantly surprised you with the way RL was imposed by the teacher/s? Eager to improve their relationship with their students, Flexibility in evaluating student's work, Effort to engage the students, Effort to engage parents, Ease of use a wide range of tools, platforms, etc., Teachers managed to counterbalance Learning for their students, Ease of accessibility of the students in communicating with their teachers Ease of accessibility of the parents in communicating with the teachers, Nothing, Other	CR / Fig 84 / N=16	ESP / Fig 85 / N=20	GR / Fig 86 / N=286	IT / Fig 87 / N=154	USA / Fig 88 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Counterbalance Learning	1.5	30	16.3	10.4	29.2
	Eager to improve			24.3	20.8	16.7
	Engage Parents	18.8	10.0	14.8	9.1	10.4
	Engage students	75	55.0	30.3	42.9	47.9
	Flexibility		10.0	10.6	12.3	31.3
	Parents teachers comm	6.3	50.0	9.5	6.5	25
	Range of tools Student teachers	25	15.0	9.5	15.6	35.4
	Student teachers comm	81.3	40.0	9.5	10.4	41.8
	Nothing		10.0	27.8	29.2	8.3
	Other		5.0	2.1	6.5	10.4
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
21	Have your perceptions, beliefs, values as a parent changed in any way as listed below or in another way that you can think of while children in RL (Remote Learning)? * Importance of school routine, Value of socio-emotional learning through school, Importance of a good teacher, Value of family time, Value of personal time, Evaluation of inequities in education that school closure exacerbates, Significance of family-school partnership, Value of family engagement, None of the above, Other	CR / Fig 89 / N=16	ESP / Fig 90 / N=20	GR / Fig 91 / N=286	IT / Fig 92 / N=154	USA / Fig 93 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Family engagement	31.3	25.0	19.9	27.5	18.8
	Family time	50	15.0	35.0	24.2	27.1
	Family-school partnership	18.8	65.0	32.9	24.2	22.9
	Good teacher	25	85.0	50.3	37.3	43.8
	Inequities in education	12.5	25.0	30.1	40.5	22.9
	Personal time	43.8	25.0	17.5	16.3	25.0
	School routine	62.5	55.0	37.4	48.4	54.2
	Socio-emotional learning	37.5	40.0	67.8	53.6	66.7
	None of the above			1.7		2.1

RQ3, 3rd Research question: How Did RL (Remote Learning) in the Pandemic Influence Parents' Relationship with the School? Q/20, Q21, Q31						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
31	How do you feel about the current school year (2020-2021)? * Check all that apply: Anxious, Relaxed, Overwhelmed, Scared, Curious, Other	CR / Fig 94 / N=16	ESP / Fig 95 / N=20	GR / Fig 96 / N=286	IT / Fig 97 / N=154	USA / Fig 98 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Anxious	40.0	30.0	58.4	57.8	
	Curious	46.7	55.0	35.7	24.0	34.2
	Overwhelmed	26.7	20.0	15.7	8.4	44.7
	Relaxed	26.7	10.0	14.3	4.5	13.2
	Scared	13.3	35.0	22.0	25.3	23.7
	Other			4.2	7.1	
	Good				1.3	7.9
	Uncertainty				1.9	
	Failed					7.9
	Sad					2.6

RQ4, Fourth Research Question: Do the parents need to participate more fully within the school community? Q25, Q26, Q27						
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
25	Have you ever heard about the Parents' support groups? (Mark only one oval: Yes, No, Other)	CR / Fig 99 / N=16	ESP / Fig 100 / N=20	GR / Fig 101 / N=286	IT / Fig 102 / N=154	USA / Fig 103 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Yes	37.5	45.0	65.7	26.6	45.8
	No	62.5	55.0	33.9	72.1	52.1
	Other			0.3	0.8	
	Psychological support exists in the school.				0.6	
	There's an unofficial parent support group in the form of a Facebook page.					2.1
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
26	Have you ever attended such a meeting, session, conference, support for parents? *	CR / Fig 104 / N=16	ESP / Fig 105 / N=20	GR / Fig 106 / N=286	IT / Fig 107 / N=154	USA / Fig 108 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	No	56.3	50.0	49.0	92.2	66.7
	Yes	31.3	50.0	39.9	5.2	27.1
	A couple of times / Just once or twice	12.5		11.2	2.6	6.3
SQ#	QUESTION TEXT	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=	ETH / FIG / N=
27	Would you like to attend one, if this option was possible for you? *	CR / Fig 109 / N=16	ESP / Fig 110 / N=20	GR / Fig 111 / N=286	IT / Fig 112 / N=154	USA / Fig 113 / N=50
		%	%	%	%	%
	Yes	75.0	85.0	92.3	68.8	66.7
	No	25.0	10.0	5.6	24.7	22.9
	Other				1.3	
	In Spain, there are associations of parents and students		5.0			
	Yes, if the topic was interesting for discussion			0.7		
	Maybe			0.3		6.3
	Could be			0.3		
	Perhaps, it depends on the support process.					
	It depends			0.3	0.7	
	Perhaps, it depends on the information being shared.					2.1
	I don't know				3.2	
	Probably				1.3	
	This can be dangerous depending on the topic discussed.					2.1

Appendix 3. My Empirical Action Research in Greece: Parents' Philosophical Community

“When Parents Go to School!” Overview of the Project Grounding My P4P Model

Results of research seem to be explicit and positive on children's benefit from parental participation in their schooling. All the ways in which parents can be involved, though, are not yet apparent. A variety of new ideas and initiatives are being tested globally in order to enhance schools' collaboration with families. Through Action Research (AR) by the researcher, the effect of an initiative—parental school engagement—has been explored in a kindergarten school in Athens during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years. The successful engagement of philosophical practices for the students in previous years exposed the need for adopting and adapting the specific tool of Philosophy for Children for the community of parents. Carefully selected stories were used as a stimulus for raising philosophical questions that were analyzed dialogically in depth by parents and teachers. The creation of a Philosophical Community of Inquiry among parents within the school revealed a new prospect of better communication and cooperation while also raising respect and trusting relationships among all participants. This research exhibited that when formulating communities of philosophical inquiry with children and adults alike, and within the same environment, meaningful dialogue can be initiated and reinforced among all parts of the school's community triangle (students, teachers, parents). As a result, an alternative educational approach that strengthens the school–family alliance has been unveiled.

More specifically, this AR suggests a new learning opportunity that, among other things, offered parents a variety of skills to deal with their children's education. It offered an innovative educational process and structure that provided parents the means to engage more deeply in their child's life, and to better self-investigate and possibly re-evaluate their own perspectives, ideas,

relationships, hopes, and dreams. Moreover, it appeared to strengthen the already burdened teachers, who, unfortunately, are required to meet the demands of the modern economic and political system every day rather than concentrate fully on the actual educational needs of their students. The specific pedagogical proposition includes, but is not limited to, diverse individuals (i.e., in ideas, beliefs, socio-economic backgrounds), in a multicultural environment, that are given the chance to voice their ideas in a democratic, empathic and respectful manner and to co-construct a community that promotes trust, relationships and well-being.

Through this differentiated model of collaboration with parents, both philosophical inquiry in an ‘accessible by all’ form, and therefore a meaningful dialogue was exploited as a means for shaping an appropriate family environment towards a positive impact on the social and emotional development of its children, whilst amplifying their academic performance. The main emphasis of such an engagement by the parents, is directed toward the development of thinking, reasoning, reflecting and philosophically inquiring—all in the direction of the revival of grassroots philosophy outside of Academia as advocated by Matthew Lipman (1991). This initiative was primarily inspired by Lipman’s educational model known and practiced as Philosophy for Children, P4C (2003). Similarly, to that model, very simple stories embedded with philosophical concepts were read to the parents, aiming at provoking philosophical inquiries from them, framed through the medium of Socratic dialogue as practiced with the children in P4C. Problematizing issues for parents and children in respective ways through storytelling, fairy tales, art has been the core experimental strategy used throughout the project to stimulate philosophical quests. The stories that were applied were children’s stories—that are nonetheless of interest to adults—had also been read previously in the classroom to the students as a means of prompting a philosophical discussion. These carefully selected stories were formulated to

stimulate the discussion on philosophical concepts such as Friendship, Love, Peace, Children's Rights, Truth, Justice, etc. They served as triggers for reflection and philosophical inquiry in both age groups (students and parents) almost likewise. As has been argued (Neile, 2009), "stories remind us that even if we do not know the answers . . . it is the questions that are paramount." The structure of the sessions with the parents, even though well organized and inspired by Lipman and Sharp's theory, were not exactly following the P4C pattern. However, stories worked as stimuli for philosophical questions that were further discussed dialogically within the sessions.

The specific project that is presented here, combined parts of Epstein's cooperation model whilst attempting to form a community of inquiry with parents. During the referenced school years (2014-2016), two groups (Experimental & Control) were determined for this Action Research. Epstein's cooperation model, which had been already adopted from the previous years at the school with positive outcomes, was implemented in both groups. However, the parents' philosophical community initiative was applied only to the Experimental Groups. The outcomes and conclusions of the project are presented below.

Methodology & Exploratory Questions and Goals

The research was organized to investigate the following questions:

- I. If effective, parental-school cooperation can improve the academic and socio-emotional performance of the pupil in the school as well as within the family environment.
- II. While strengthening the philosophical dialogue in the community of parents in school, do we strengthen a meaningful dialogue among all members of the school community (pupils, teachers, parents, community)?

III. If the simultaneous reinforcement of reflection, critical thinking, and dialogue through the creation of philosophical communities with adults (parents) of diverse backgrounds can contribute to community empowerment and enhance the substantive discussion of all parties involved.

IV. Which areas, if any, of the educational process with the children can facilitate an organised training program for parents?

The AR was conceived in a school environment as a collaborative effort between the researcher-facilitator (teacher-psychologist, as a source of professional and scientific assistance), and of colleagues—teachers and parents. It is characterized by spiraling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, interpreting, analyzing, and reflecting on a major theme (parents-school collaboration), data-driven action design and activation, documenting and collecting data on performance, and finally, evaluating and disseminating the results.

Sample & Context

The situations and potentialities that have been enhanced are presented in this section. The empowerment of family relationships within school through AR has been implemented at a public Kindergarten in Athens, Greece, for two consecutive school years, 2014-15 and 2015-16. It is important to mention that compulsory education in Greece started with one mandatory year (nowadays with 2) of pre-primary education.

The teachers of both departments were experienced in both teaching and parents' engagement which is not mandated, though encouraged by the State though. Collaboration between the teachers of the departments had always been successful in previous years, thus all students followed an enhanced curriculum in each consecutive school year that included joint

participation in projects from the University of Athens, the Ministry of Education and other National Educational authorities.

The activities were pre-planned in the context of creating a community of parents and teachers thinking interactively and discussing matters of mutual concern that emerged mainly from an exploratory questionnaire which was distributed either the first two weeks of the school year or during the students' registration in May. The areas of interest include: 1) child development, 2) feelings, 3) extracurricular activities and home study, 4) communication, 5) limits and rules, 6) social networking and globalization, 7) multiculturalism and pluralism of religions as a new reality, 8) diversity, 9) ecology, 10) human rights, and 11) sexual education.

For the participants there was also another questionnaire distributed at the end of the year that evaluated the project at that time. The teachers also held individual sessions for further communication with the families in the kindergarten, at a designated time, for the purpose of considering availability for group meetings in relation to parents' working hours. The regular informative group and individual meetings of teachers with the parents, took place at least four times during the school year, mostly during afternoon hours, discussing and planning parents' participation in school activities. During those meetings, teachers presented their child's progress to parents, and any concerns in all areas of learning, especially those social and emotional.

During this exploratory effort to engage parents in their children's educational framework (home and school), the researcher used carefully designed activities. Those have been a) morning or afternoon, individual and group meetings with parents, b) induction to and engagement of parents in the philosophical inquiry groups and, through short stories, to trigger philosophical questions and dialogue; c) distribution/posting of scientific articles (relevant to the session

subject-matters), d) presenting and discussing playful home-learning activities, d) Evaluation and Feedback.

Results

The research presented was motivated by a working hypothesis based on literature findings and on the observation of the potentialities emerging from the educational context in previous years. All the following results were based on continual evaluations by all parties involved. In particular, the outcomes from the Experimental Group were examined and considered to a considerably greater extent than those of the Control Groups. The appearance of certain attitudes was either not apparent before or with a very low progression compared to previous years.

An attempt was made as soon as possible to acquire information that would inform an accurate image of the student's family and its cultural environment in order to better facilitate the educational process. While discussing subjects such as religion, culture, education, rules and other issues, the facilitator collected additional personal information about each family in field notes. This information was used to personalize teaching directly, in congruence with individual and family background. One such example involved a student whose father had died during that year. Through the philosophical discussion about "death", the facilitator discovered that the specific child was raised mainly by the father because the mother initially had refused to have another child because, as she asserted, she had already single-handedly raised her own 16-year-old twin girls. The boy had a very strong bond with the father and his sisters but was only slightly attached to the mother and therefore required a more personalized approach in the classroom.

Empowerment to develop effective parenting strategies

After having philosophically discussed “parenthood” in a meeting, a great need for information and suggestions about parenting strategies emerged. Scientific articles and suggestions were given to all the families in school, however those who actually applied the strategies and gave feedback were the ones from the experimental groups.

- Cultivating group climate for the young & adult students. The parents from both Experimental groups soon established close ties among each other in both years. Out-of-school meetings (on parents’ own initiative) occurred much more frequently for the experimental group. Their children also bonded much faster and teamwork was increased, compared to previous years or to the other (Control) department.
- Develop trusting relationships in the Educational Triangle: School-Child-Parent. Discussion among parents and teachers increased significantly, and not just in regard to their children’s performance at school (as mentioned in the questionnaire by all parents). After the 2nd or 3rd session, most parents would bring up a variety of matters for critical and creative discussion. In addition, they would soon pursue further contact with the teachers or other parents to discuss their personal issues, sometimes looking for advice on issues that concerned themselves and not just their children. In one case, a participant shared information regarding problems with her husband (he had just lost his job) and another one shared that she was continuously fighting with her mother, with whom she shared the same apartment. Teachers also eagerly discussed their concerns for the children with their parents, or asked them for help, without hesitation. The children seemed to enjoy this relationship and often told their parents in the mornings, “you need to leave now, this is my teacher,” and the parent responded with satisfaction, “but she is

my teacher too, you know!" The discussion that concerned several issues evolved to a "caring" level compared to the previous "complaining" one.

- Parents promoted their children academically after assimilating how to enhance and link learning in the family environment with learning at school. As documented in short essays included with the evaluation forms, all the participants mentioned a dramatic change in both, their own and their child's way of discussing or reflecting on various matters. Many of them reported raising questions "like children" and discussing diverse subjects that were stimulated by their everyday life and daily news, or by a particular incident at school. Most participants shared that the subjects discussed at home were now no longer just about academic performance but mostly about friendship, peace, environment, inclusion, being different, death, and happiness, etc.
- Parents responded with great enthusiasm to requests from the school whenever their cooperation was sought, and remained attached to the kindergarten during the next year, regardless of having their children in elementary school . . . As a result, they demonstrated great willingness to volunteer at school to help in any possible way. They were eager to help the teachers in every situation, by painting walls, cooking, accompanying students to outdoor activities, and making whatever needed for school bazaars, etc. At the end of the first year they actually stated: "We want to follow this community of parents next year too . . . if you cannot make a 2nd group with us, we will hide behind the doors and windows to listen to the stories for your new group and participate regardless...". The parents from both Experimental groups kept raising funds or further volunteering for the school—for example by organizing the Christmas and Easter Bazaars.

- The relationships between the parents that participated persevered in the following years. A few remarkable illustrations of the powerful relationship that was built follow. Firstly, the parents from the Experimental groups set up their groups in App/s as a way to communicate daily with each other. At the end of their second year of existence as a group, there was a case in which a father was seriously injured, run over by a car and the rest of the group wholeheartedly supported the mother and the children for at least four months with cooking, cleaning, baby-sitting etc. In another case, a member of the group had to go abroad for a serious surgery and the rest, in addition to the psychological support they provided daily with their discussions, they also raised money for the patient's expenses. Moreover, another member of the group accompanied the patient to the foreign country where the surgery took place because she was able to speak the local language fluently. More recently, a mom said, "I cannot remember my life before you . . . " and another stated that "while looking at my wedding pictures, a few days ago, I was trying to find you all . . . because I feel like I've known you forever".

The last of the results, but certainly not the least important, has derived unexpectedly from the teachers at the school. That is, recognizing and highlighting the contribution of the family environment to the child's psychology, its relationship with that of their peer group, and the educational process itself. The teachers, except for the researcher-observer, constantly discussed and enjoyed active participation of parents as well as the development of an integrated community. Meanwhile, the pupils, teachers and parents worked together for the benefit of the children's and school's community. Additionally, there was one parent from the Control Group who requested to be included in the meetings of the Experimental Group (School for Parents, as it was called) because, as she explained to the teachers, I "could not resist the wonderful feeling

of community, that emerged from that particular group of parents inside and outside the school!!”

Most importantly perhaps of all, is that this relationship was built despite any SES, linguistic, religious, and academic background differences in the school community. The Experimental group parents’ relationship with the teachers is still very strong and continues to evolve . . . That is likely, due to the fact, that all participants had the opportunity to build trusting, personal, honest connections among one another.

Conclusions

It seems that in this case such an alliance was found successful in various ways, as mentioned in the results. The great need for effective school-family cooperation with the primary aim of maximizing the pupil’s benefit for its full-fledged development was disclosed, while, at the same time, parents come to understand the sincere concern of teachers for their students. In addition, it was recognized that both teachers and parents must build a relationship before they can work collectively as partners for the betterment of their children’s education and, that they needed to work together to identify the significant contribution of both sides as it relates to the development and success of the children. It has additionally been verified that effective family-school collaboration, based on mutual respect and trust, promotes parental empowerment through positive, meaningful, two-way communication between school and home. Moreover, while educators are seeking cooperation with parents, they need also to acknowledge them as the first teachers of their children and be flexible, adaptable, and innovative in their efforts to reach out to them in a diverse, modern society. In that regard, it has also been shown that cooperation should and could be open while ensuring that opportunities for participation for all the families are made available, regardless of the educational level of the parents, their linguistic background,

and/or their familiarity with the school processes. However, we also found that, to achieve such unanimity, it would likely be necessary to strengthen these collaboration skills among all three parts of this alliance (students, teachers, and parents), while more broadly augmenting life, cognitive and learning skills which are valuable when aiming to build a community of individuals who can effectively react, adapt, and enact change. Obviously, skills in critical thinking, reasoning, communication, and collaboration are crucial for the students; but how about nurturing them respectively for teachers and parents, who are those persons who mainly interact in the immediate environment of the students? If children could communicate, associate, and learn in complementary ways within the home and school environments, the beneficial impact would expectedly be comparably more intense. For optimization of a parents-teachers partnership, it's clear the partners—alone and together—would require a considerable amount of appropriate scientific support and training.

While only one case, this exploratory study, with a relatively small number of parents, has shown that with appropriate guidance a “newborn” philosophical community can have impressive effects, not only in communication, but also in forming trusting relationships of all members of the micro-system (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) thereby fostering advancement of the children.

In other words, this project emphasizes the potential value of a multifaceted locally tailored intervention, empowering the educational and learning process with innovative strategies for both teachers and parents. This chance for discussing matters of mutual concern was provided by establishment of a philosophical community. If this structure and practice were to persist, children and those involved in the pedagogical process might potentially be collecting short-, medium- and long-term benefits through enrichment of parent-child-teacher interaction

and communication skills. Beyond all the above, children and their families are given the ground to create solid foundations for their future social and academic success improved intra-family and perhaps interfamily relationships. Teachers, too, should be empowered to communicate and model highly effective learning to both adults and children within a society increasingly dominated by social, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

Appendix 4. Questionnaires in Translation—Internet Links

English Version Questionnaire (USA)

<https://forms.gle/mJHgmTChvW8Dd6LLA>

Italian Version Questionnaire (ITALY)

<https://forms.gle/oqqu4gW9KSY1yiHY8>

Greek Version Questionnaire (GREECE)

<https://forms.gle/QGFGYP1DreYFLKhz8>

Spanish Version Questionnaire (SPAIN & COSTA RICA)

<https://forms.gle/tMEwVnzmENFgvwg37>

Spanish Version Questionnaire (SPAIN & COSTA RICA)

<https://forms.gle/tMEwVnzmENFgvwg37>

Appendix 5. US Coding System

The following Codes (in Appendices 8+9) are inserted to form as examples. The codes are also available in the two other languages (Greek + Spanish) that the questionnaire has analyzed in the study.

US Code System

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Q1	Please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that represent your ideal "relationship".
Q2	Could you please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that enhances "partnership"?
Dialogue	dialogue
Frequent	frequent meetings
Engagement	parents' engagement (eg. PTA meetings)
Seminars	seminars
Community	community building,
Collaboration	collaboration
Alliance	alliance
Other	
Communication	communication (meetings, emails, etc)
Empathy,	empathy,
Partnership	support or/and enhancing family-school partnership,
Voluntary	voluntary parents' engagement in school,
Relationship	relationship

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Other	
Q5	What themes do you usually discuss with the teachers..
behaviour	child's behaviour
academic	child's academic level
personal	personal
problems	problems with the school (eg. a difficulty that your child or yourself have with attitude)
administration's	administration's issues
Other	
Special	Special Need
Irrelevant	
Covid	
Q7	Which of the following would you consider that enhances the relationship w
Educational program	regular meetings & information about the educational program
Spontaneous communication	spontaneous communication
Parent-teacher community	build-up a strong parent - teacher community
Parent community	build-up a strong parent community within the school
Voluntary participation	voluntary participation of parents
Guidance/training	guidance/training of parents
Learning at home	guidance/ support of children's learning at home
Decision-making	participation in decision-making within the school community
Community institutions	cooperation with local community institutions aiming at the support of scho

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Other	
Q14	What are the matters that you usually discuss with your child/ren?
School	School
Friends	Friends
Family	Family
Personal	Personal
Financial	financial matters
Other	
Politics	
Activities	
Q15	Where do you usually discuss with your child/ren?
Car	financial
Eating	Eating
Tv	while watching TV
Private	Private
Other	
Q16	How would you best describe your role as a parent regarding your child/ren?
Co-creator	Co-creator
Driver	chauffeur/driver
Counselor	Counselor

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Caregiver	Caregiver
Supporter	Supporter
Other	
Q18	If "yes or maybe", would you please suggest ways that could possibly empower the relationship?
Communication	Any kind of communication
Relationship	Parent-Teacher relationship
Meetings	Meetings
Seminars	
Digital support	
Involvement	
Dialogue	
Collaboration	
Q19	Thinking of your child/ren 's school, which statement best describes the school's attitude towards Remote Learning, (RL)?
Ease	The school in total has adapted with ease..
Few teachers	Only a few teachers from the school managed to keep up..
Did not switch	The school did not switch to Online Learning
Gradually extended	The teachers gradually extended the new way of teaching successfully!
None of the above	
Other	
Q20	As a parent, what has pleasantly surprised you with the way RL was implemented?
Eager to improve	eager to improve their relationship with their students,
Flexibility	flexibility in evaluating student's work,
Engage students	effort to engage the students,

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Engage parents	effort to engage parents,
Range of tools	ease of use a wide range of tools, platforms, etc,
Counterbalance Learning	teachers managed to counterbalance Learning for their students,
Student teachers comm	ease of accesibility of the students in communicating with their teachers
Parents teachers comm	ease of accesibility of the parents in communicating with the teachers
Nothing	
Other	
Q21	Have your perceptions, beliefs, values as a parent changed in any way as list another way that you can think of while children in RL?
School routine	importance of school routine,
Socio-emotional learning	value of socio-emotional learning through school,
Good teacher	importance of a good teacher,
Family time	value of family time,
Personal time	value of personal time,
Inequities in education	evaluation of inequities in education that school closure exacerbates,
Family-school partnership	significance of family-school partnership,
Family engagement	value of family engagement,
Other	
None of the above	
Q22	As a parent, what have been the main challenges for you in switching to RL? five most important options to you.
Access to technology	your access to technology (internet connection, computer use, platforms et

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Keep focused	keep my child/ren focused on studying online, away from other "online" dis
Time management	time management, control screen time,
Parents as partners	being acknowledged as partners by the teacher/s,
Support my child	support my child/ren when comprehension from the teacher has not been e
Support young age	support remote learning because of child/ren's very young age,
Work at home	combine remote learning with "work at home",
Comm with teacher	communicating with the teacher/s,
Support from school	little direction and/or support given from the school,
Workload & stress	Increased workload and/or stress for the child/ren,
No challenges	there have been no challenges,
Other	
Q23	What do you think that would help you more, to support your child/ren's RL
Clear guidance	clear guidance from the DoE of the district, county, State etc,
Experts in technology	easy access/contact with experts in technology,
Clear guidelines	clear guidelines and support from the teacher/s,
Enhanced communication	enhanced communication with the teacher,
Discussion communities	build discussion communities/forums facilitated by a teacher or other exper needed),
Organised schedule	a well organised schedule,
Other	
Nothing	
Q28	What areas of interest would you have, if you had decided to attend?

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Psychological development	Child's psychological development
Comms with children	Communication with my children
Comms with school	Communication with the school
Learning at home	Learning activities at home
Adolescence	Adolescence
Gender development	Gender & sexual development
Parents' engagement	Parents' engagement
Parents'-School	Parents'-School relationship
Q30	If "yes or maybe", how do you think it could help?
Sharing experience	
Learning from others	
Comms with child	
Communication	
Q35	What kind of support are you, as a parent, hoping or anticipating to receive in the future?
Better understanding	better understanding of individual circumstances,
Virtual meetings	virtual meetings On-demand,
Communicate changes	always communicate the upcoming changes,
Other	
Q36	If you responded "Other" in the previous question, could you please describe from the teachers in a few words?
Home schooling	

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Q37	What kind of support are you hoping to receive from the school administration?
Detailed plan	detailed plan,
Guidance on health	guidance on health issues,
Discussions	be invited for discussions and seminars (even online),
RL challenges	guidance on RL challenges,
Home instruction	provide resources for home instruction,
Other	
Q38	If you responded "Other" in the previous question, could you please state what you are hoping to receive from the school in a few words?
Q39	Home town.. (e.g. Montclair, NJ, or NYC in USA etc)
Q42	Academic level (mark the highest diploma earned..)
Q44	Ages of child /ren in the family.. (eg. 8 and 12)
Q45	My relationship & partnership with the school refers to:
Pre-K & Kindergarden,	pre-K & Kindergarden,
Elementary	elementary,
Middle school	middle school,
Highschool	highschool,
Q46	What kind of school your child/ren attended while in RL?
Public	Public

PERSONAL IDENTIFIER	PERSONAL IDENTIFIER
Private	Private
Dodea	
Charter	
Q47	Describe your occupation before the school closure due to the pandemia (e or nurse, or mechanic etc.)
Q48	While in lockdown, I...
Started Telework,	started working from home,
Always Telework	have always worked from home,
Continued S-A-H parent	continued being a stay-at-home parent.
Llost job perman.	lost my job permanently,
Became unemployed	became unemployed for the period of the lockdown,
Other	
Without Change	
Q49	My occupation for the running school year (2020-2021)..
Same	the same as before
Unemployed	unemployed
New job	new job
Other	

Appendix 6. Italian Coding System

IT Code System

Code System	Memo
Code System	
Interaction	
Cooperation	
Q1	<p>Per favore scegli da una (1) a tre (3) parole/ frasi che a vostro parere rappresentano la "relazione" scuola-famiglia "ideale".</p> <p>Please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that represents your ideal "family-school relationship".</p>
Communication	comunicazione (incontri, e mail, etc),
Empathy	empatia
Partnership	supporto/miglioramento della collaborazione scuola-famiglia
Voluntary	coinvolgimento volontario dei genitori
Relationship	relazione
Other	
Q2	<p>Per favore scegli tra una (1) e tre (3) parole/frasi che rappresentano il tuo ideale di "collaborazione" scuola-famiglia</p> <p>Could you please check one (1) to three (3) words/phrases that enhances "family-school partnership"?</p>
Dialogue	dialogo
Frequent	incontri frequenti
Engagement	coinvolgimento attivo dei genitori
Seminars	seminari
Community	costruzione di comunità
Collaboration	collaborazione
Alliance	alleanza
Other	
Q5	<p>Di quali argomenti discuti generalmente con gli insegnanti</p> <p>What themes do you usually discuss with the teachers..</p>
Behaviour	comportamento del bambino

Code System	Memo
Academic	risultati di apprendimento raggiunti
Personal	questioni personali
Problems	problemi con la scuola (ad esempio difficoltà che voi o vostro figlio incontrate in relazione all'atteggiamento di un insegnante)
Administration's	questioni amministrative
Other	
Q7	Quali delle cose seguenti ritieni possano migliorare la relazione scuola -famiglia? Which of the following would you consider that enhances the relationship with the school?
Educational program	incontri regolari ed informazioni relative al programma ed al progetto educativo
Spontaneous communication	comunicazioni spontanee
Parent-teacher community	costruzione di una solida comunità genitori-insegnanti
Parent community	costruire una solida comunità di genitori all'interno della scuola
Voluntary participation	partecipazione volontaria dei genitori
Guidance/training	supporto/formazione per i genitori
Learning at home	supporto all'apprendimento dei bambini a casa
Decision-making	partecipazione alla presa di decisioni da parte dei genitori
Community institutions	cooperazione con le istituzioni afferenti alla comunità locale a sostegno dei programmi scolastici
Other	
Q14	Quali sono le questioni di cui generalmente discuti con tua figlia/tua figlio? What are the matters that you usually discuss with your child/ren?
School	scuola
Friends	amici
Family	famiglia
Personal	questioni personali
Financial	
Other	
Q15	Dove discuti in genere con tua figlia/tuo figlio? Where do you usually discuss with your child/ren?
Car	in auto

Code System	Memo
Eating	a tavola
Tv	guardando la televisione
Private	in privato
Other	
Q16	<p>Come descriveresti il tuo ruolo di genitore in relazione all'esperienza scolastica di tua figlia/tuo figlio?</p> <p>How would you best describe your role as a parent regarding your child/ren's schooling?</p>
Co-creator	co-creatore
Driver	autista
Counselor	consigliere
Caregiver	colei/colui che si prende cura di lei/lui
Supporter	colei/colui che la/lo sostiene
Other	
Q17	Q17
Yes	Si
No	No
Maybe	Forse
Other	
Q18	<p>Se la tua risposta è "sì" o "forse" potresti suggerire modi in cui questa relazione potrebbe essere migliorata?</p> <p>If "yes or maybe", would you please suggest ways that could possibly empower this relationship?</p>
Involvement	
Dialogue	
Communication	
Relationship	
Digital Support	
Other	
Meeting	
Collaboration	

Code System	Memo
Q19	<p>Pensando all'esperienza scolastica di tua figlia/tuo figlio quale affermazione descrive meglio l'atteggiamento della scuola nei confronti dell'apprendimento e della didattica a distanza ?</p> <p>Thinking of your child/ren 's school, which statement best describes the school's attitude towards Remote Learning, (RL)?</p>
Ease	La scuola li ha adottati facilmente come soluzione diffusa.
Few teachers	Solo pochi insegnanti sono riusciti a gestire il processo
Did not switch	La scuola non è passata all'apprendimento e alla didattica a distanza e non ha fornito attività on line
Gradually extended	Gli insegnanti gradualmente hanno diffusamente utilizzato con successo il nuovo modo di insegnare
None of the above	Nessuna delle precedenti
Q20	<p>Come genitore, cosa ti ha positivamente sorpreso del modo in cui è stata utilizzata la Didattica a Distanza?</p> <p>As a parent, what has pleasantly surprised you with the way RL was imposed by the teacher/s?</p>
Eager to improve	impegno nel migliorare la relazione con gli studenti
Flexibility	flessibilità nella valutazione del lavoro degli studenti
Engage students	sforzo nel coinvolgimento degli studenti
Engage parents	sforzo nel coinvolgimento dei genitori
Range of tools	facilità nell'utilizzo di diverse tipologie di strumenti (piattaforme, materiali di apprendimento...)
Counterbalance Learning	la capacità degli insegnanti di controbilanciare i processi di apprendimento degli studenti
Parents teachers comm	maggior facilità di accesso alla comunicazione con gli insegnanti da parte dei genitori
Student teachers comm	maggior facilità di accesso alla comunicazione con gli insegnanti da parte degli studenti
Nothing	nulla
Other	
Q21	<p>Le tue percezioni in qualità di genitore sono in qualche modo cambiate dal momento in cui i tuoi figli sono stati impegnati nella didattica a distanza? Indica gli ambiti in cui hai percepito maggior cambiamento?</p> <p>Have your perceptions, beliefs, values as a parent changed in any way as listed below or in another way that you can think of while children in RL?</p>

Code System	Memo
School routine	importanza delle routine scolastiche
Socio-emotional learning	valore dell'apprendimento socio-emotivo realizzato a scuola
Good teacher	importanza della presenza di insegnanti di qualità
Family time	valore del tempo familiare
Personal time	valore del tempo personale
Inequities in education	disuguaglianze che la chiusura della scuola ha amplificato
Family-school partnership	importanza della relazione scuola-famiglia
Family engagement	valore dell'impegno della famiglia
None of the above	nessuna delle precedenti
Q22	<p>Nella tua qualità di genitore, quali sono state le maggiori sfide con cui ti sei confrontata/o nel passaggio alla didattica a distanza? Scegli le cinque opzioni che maggiormente riflettono la tua esperienza</p> <p>As a parent, what have been the main challenges for you in switching to RL? Please choose the five most important options to you.</p>
Access to technology	accesso alle tecnologie (connessione ad internet, uso del computer, uso delle piattaforme)
Keep focused	mantenere mia figlia/mio figlio focalizzato sullo studio on line, allontanandoli da altre distrazioni presenti in rete,
Time management	gestione del tempo, controllo del tempo di permanenza sullo schermo del pc
Parents as partners	essere coinvolti come partner dagli insegnanti
Support my child	aiutare mia figlia/mio figlio quando non ha compreso bene qualcosa spiegato dall'insegnante
Support young age	sostenere l'apprendimento a distanza in caso di bambini molto piccoli
Work at home	combinare l'apprendimento a distanza con il lavoro a casa
Comm with teacher	comunicare con gli insegnanti
No challenges	non vi sono state sfide
Support from school	poche indicazioni e scarso supporto forniti dalla scuola
Workload & stress	Aumento del carico di lavoro e dei livelli di stress per i figli
Other	
Q23	<p>Cosa pensi potrebbe facilitare l'apprendimento a distanza per tua figlia/tuo figlio?</p> <p>What do you think that would help you more, to support your child/ren's RL?</p>
Clear DoE guidelines	chiare linee guida da parte degli insegnanti

Code System	Memo
Clear guidance	chiare linee guida da parte del Ministero dell'Istruzione e dell'Ufficio Scolastico Regionale
Experts in technology	rapporto diretto con esperti di tecnologie
Enhanced communication	costruire comunità di discussione e forum facilitati da un insegnante o da un altro esperto (on line se necessario)
Organised schedule	un piano di lavoro bene organizzato
Discussion communities	maggior possibilità di discutere con gli insegnanti
Other	
Q28	Quali aree sarebbero di tuo interesse se decidessi di partecipare ad un gruppo di supporto? What areas of interest would you have, if you had decided to attend?
Psychological development	Lo sviluppo psicologico del bambino
Comms with children	Comunicazione con i bambini
Comms with school	Comunicazione con la scuola
Learning activities	Attività di apprendimento a casa
Adolescence	Adolescenza
Gender development	Sviluppo sessuale e di genere
Parents' engagement	Coinvolgimento dei genitori
Parents'-School	Relazioni scuola famiglia
Other	
Q30	Se hai risposto "sì" o "forse" in che modo pensi potrebbe essere di supporto? If "yes or maybe", how do you think it could help?
Q31	Quali sono i tuoi sentimenti nei confronti dell'anno scolastico che sta per iniziare/appena iniziato? How do you feel about the current school year (2020-2021)?
Anxious	provo ansia
Relaxed	mi sento rilassata/o
Overwhelmed	mi sento schiacciata/o
Scared	mi sento spaventata/o
Curious	sono curiosa/o
Other	

Code System	Memo
uncertainty	
Good	
Q32	Quali sono le tue aspettative riguardo la comunicazione scuola/famiglia? What do you expect from your child/ren's school regarding communication (in words or phrases)?
Q35	Che tipo di supporto speri di ricevere dagli insegnanti in futuro? What kind of support are you, as a parent, hoping or anticipating to receive from the teachers in the future?
Better understanding	migliore comprensione delle condizioni individuali
Virtual meetings	incontri (a scuola o virtuali) a richiesta
Communicate changes	comunichiamo già in relazione a novità e cambiamenti
None	nessuno
Other	
Q36	Se hai risposto "altro" potresti brevemente spiegare che cosa intendevi nello specifico? If you responded "Other" in the previous question, could you please state what else you expect from the school in a few words?
Q37	Che tipo di supporto speri di ricevere dalle scuole? What kind of support are you hoping to receive from the school administration?
Detailed plan	un dettagliato programma di lavoro
Guidance on health	indicazioni su questioni igienico-sanitarie
Discussions	essere invitata/o per discussioni e seminari (anche on line)
RL challenges	guida su questioni relative alla didattica a distanza
Home instruction	risorse per l'apprendimento a casa
Other	
Q38	Se hai risposto "altro" potresti brevemente spiegare che cosa intendevi nello specifico? If you responded "Other" in the previous question, could you please state what else you expect from the school in a few words?
Q42	Formazione Academic level (mark the highest diploma earned..)

Code System	Memo
Middle school	diploma di scuola media
High School	diploma di scuola superiore
BA	laurea triennale
MA	laurea magistrale
PhD	
Other	
Q44	Età dei bambini in famiglia Ages of child /ren in the family.. (eg. 8 and 12)
Q45	La mia relazione con la scuola si riferisce a My relationship & partnership with the school refers to:
Pre-K & Kindergarden	nido e scuola dell'infanzia
Elementary	scuola elementare
Middle school	scuola media
Highschool	scuola superiore
Q46	Che tipo di scuola frequentavano i tuoi figli durante il periodo della didattica a distanza? What kind of school your child/ren attended while in RL?
Public	pubblica
Private	privata
Q47	Descrivi la tua occupazione prima del lockdown Describe your occupation before the school closure due to the pandemia (e.g. No occupation, or nurse, or mechanic etc.)
Q48	Durante il lockdown While in lockdown, I...
Started Telework	ho incominciato a lavorare da casa
Always Telework	ho sempre lavorato da casa
Became unemployed	ho perso il lavoro temporaneamente
Continued S-A-H parent	ho continuato ad essere esclusivamente un genitore che stava a casa
Without Change	
Other	

Code System	Memo
Q49	La mia occupazione nel prossimo anno scolastico (2020-2021) My occupation for the running school year (2020-2021)..
The Same	la stessa di prima
Unkown	non lo so
Unemployed	disoccupata/o
New job	nuovo lavoro
Other	

Teacher's Handbook for Transformational Parenting

There is no intend for this Handbook/manual to be a formal curriculum or a rigid list of requirements. Herein a set of stories with diverse but common concern's subjects are included, that teachers can adapt and apply in different settings with the parents. This particular manual has the form of a flexible guide that primarily and purposefully promotes Lipman's "Philosophy for Children and Community" mindset as a state of mind for teachers-parents relationship's enhancement aiming to transform the learners and the relationship itself as well as the school's perspectives as a learning community (Watkins & Marsick, 1999). According to Mezirow (2012), activating Transformative Learning processes, through a *disorienting dilemma*, which in this case are the stories as a trigger for parents' critical reflection, creating space to question assumptions (Taylor, 2000), re-think, and perform in new, alternative, different ways whilst actively participating could potentially result to instant (*epochal*) or gradual (*incremental*) transformation (Mezirow, 2000). However, participating does not always lead to an inevitable transformation but it can certainly create a friendly, trusting community where reflective dialogue is more than welcomed!

This helpful guide is nonetheless, a draft and will be gradually refined based on the feedback we will receive when it's used from the teachers and/or P4C facilitators. The conversational framework that it is based on, is an invitation from the school to the parents to build new ways of fostering new social relations that enable people with diverse cultural, academic, and even language backgrounds to voice and share their needs and experiential knowledge. An invitation for everyone to open-up to the school community with ideas and tools which they can reason in a clear Democratic environment where every member has a right to reflect, analyze, and question as well as to unite their thinking into speech. As Socrates once said: "I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think!"

In addition, I would like to invite you to review its applied contents within the privacy framework and guidelines that you will find within it. It would be a great pleasure to hear from you about what is helpful, practical or not when you apply the stories and facilitate a reflective discussion within P4C framework, in your meetings with the parents at your school.

thank you,

Maria Papathanasiou

Introduction

This Handbook offers brief definitions of family engagement seen through the lens of researchers and practitioners as well Lipman's Philosophy for children and Community. You will also find a description of the handbook and how to use stories based on p4c educational model. Foremost it stresses the idea of how to use fairy tales, storytelling, art, and other kinds of triggers to critical reflection and dialogic discussion among the participants.

Through this innovative and promising practice, we urge our fellow teachers to strengthen their relationship with the parents of their students. We give an effective example of a new way of inviting parents into the school community and bring their experiences and useful resources into the surface for the benefit of the students.

Parents as Adult Learners

The key takeaway of this Handbook should be the procedure that needs to be followed by the facilitator in cooperation with the participants based on critical thinking, reflecting, and discussing ideas and thoughts about a matter of common concern which may either change actors' assumptions or build on others' new ones. This is a collective procedure, community based where emotions and relations are inevitably integrated into the learning experience. Assembling parents' communities through philosophical discussion within the school setting and mentored by a P4C trained schoolteacher who is aiming to pursue individual and social change for the actors and the school community as an organization is an innovative model that aims to enhance parent-school relationship and partnership. It is acting as an intersection of an Adult Learning theory, that is Transformative Learning, with an educational methodology -P4C- that has so far referred to the children, but the idea is to aim parents who can embrace the new skills

at home with their children, at school with the teachers and other parents or anywhere else in their daily life.

P4C – Philosophy for Children & Community

The pedagogical framework of P4C points out a way, children can learn how to think, analyze, and argue from an early age, because otherwise their inherent ability to think abstractly is lost. Their abstract thinking brings them to Philosophy, familiarizes them with discussion, critical thinking and their "reasoning" skills brings them closer to the Socrates Dialogue (Lipman & Sharp, 1994). In addition, as it has been pointed out by Lipman himself (2003), P4C is characterized by reflective, deliberative, communicative, and dialogic actions, which conclude in both reinforcing individual judgment and meanwhile solidifying the community. Namely, diverse individuals (eg. in ideas, beliefs, socio-economic backgrounds) are given the chance to voice their ideas in a democratic, empathic, and respectful manner and co-construct a community that promotes trust and well-being, while building a Community of Philosophical Inquiry -CPI (Lipman, 2009).

The usual steps for a Lipman's session would be indicatively:

- Have all participants sit in circle,
- Setting clear ground rules (i.e. respectful, non-judgmental, open-minded etc.)
- Sometimes start with a warm-up game or an exercise,
- Stimuli for Questions (story, poem, music, art etc.),
- Participants are given time to think and raise questions either individually or in small groups,
- All questions are noted on the board,
- Questions are divided in themes, concepts or other common segments,

- Participants are voting for the theme and /or question,
- Facilitator summarizes,
- Assessment (discussion, theme exploration, community, facilitation) with a variety of ways depending on the age group.

A P4C Facilitator

A well P4C trained teacher or philosopher who according to Lipman (2004, p.121), “should empower students in trying to discover the essence of things, the meanings of concepts, with the help of appropriate stimuli and combining the acquisition of knowledge with the experiences of children and the particular characteristics of the society which they inhabit”. The main goal is to differentiate the classroom and the way in which the search for knowledge in it is accomplished, abstaining from the traditional way of teaching towards cultivating cooperation, solidarity, and degrading competition (Lipman, 2004, p.112). Therefore, the method used by the facilitator should be grounded on the dialogue which will start with the reading-stimuli where the teacher is no longer the expert but rather the co-learner, the co-inquirer who seeks together with the students to discover the philosophical paths (Mohr-Lone, 2012, p.20). The necessary tools that the teacher must cultivate during their journey with their younger or older students are argumentation, critique, thinking, searching for meanings, and paths within logic to develop constructive dialogue. In every session the facilitator needs to encourage participation without pressure, listening, reflecting, constructive and respectful arguing and communicating, to clarify if needed or ask for clarifications, to summarize and never be judgmental or in favor or discuss its personal beliefs, and assumptions.

Community of Philosophical Inquiry

A philosophical community is a phenomenon that comes from antiquity but continues to flourish today and could be respectively considered as community education. Socrates encouraged people to participate in a discussion. Moreover, he said we must listen carefully to others (because listening to others is thought), we must measure what we say (because speech is thought) and we must repeat in our minds what others have said. Therefore, he signified that participating in a dialogue is examining possibilities, discovering alternatives, recognizing the perspective of others, and creating a community of inquiry (Lipman, *Teaching children philosophical thinking*, 1980, xiv-xv).

All participants sit in a cyclical shape. Circle is a shape without beginning or ending which means that it symbolically defines an imaginary centre—the goal of the Inquiry—that is equally distant from all members. In it there is an open point which is usually occupied by the board where all members' ideas, questions, and main concepts are written and/or drawn as a diagram. The community has rules and common practices. The rules of the community of inquiry are usually associated with the concept of respect. More precisely, and according to Sharp (1991) the community builds on trust, and mutual respect, is willing to consider all plausible alternatives, is an active listener, and is ready to offer and request logical reasons for various beliefs and perspectives. The community self-regulates and adapts to the needs of its members, matures with them. There is no better example of the maturity of such a community than when an actor acknowledges that the point of view it expressed earlier has weaknesses and that it eventually agrees and adheres to the point of view of the other. The themes that are explored are adjusted to the ages and common interests of the group and therefore are aiming to outcomes with a practical effect in their lives. There is a variety of subject areas such as:

1. Literature: love, hate, peace, democracy, fairness, justice, goodness, power, anger.
2. Humanities/social studies: justice, globalization, discrimination, racism, nation, history, truth, cause, evidence, interpretation.
3. Arts: beauty, art, imagination, reproduction, real, copy, meaning.
4. Religious education: belief, faith, truth, morality, tolerance, ethics.
5. Design technology: purpose, economy/finance, environment, value, elegance, simplicity, effectiveness, originality.
6. ICT: knowledge, entertainment, game, reality, legality, morality.
7. Citizenship: rights, duties, justice, fairness, freedom, welfare, community, enterprise.
8. Science: science, experiment, evidence, knowledge, theory, medicine.

The Parents' Community of Philosophical Inquiry Model

This model that is suggested in this Handbook embraces one major and two minor components. The major one is the discussion groups of the parents with a teacher as the facilitator/ moderator of the discussion. The two minor components constitute the discussion groups of students and teachers with a facilitator respectively, from the school community. The most essential part for parents'- school partnership, follows nevertheless those discussion groups of students and teachers which are the foundation of that of the parents. All three groups, even though work in parallel, they are all interconnected with the P4C methodology with which all

actors are gradually being equipped with the necessary cognitive, communication and leadership skills of an active democratic citizen. All three groups may use Lipman's stories according to the ages of the students while the stories that are being suggested in this Handbook can be used complementary or uniquely from the teachers with the parents' groups. Each facilitator has the freedom to select the stimuli that meet the P4C standards (there are plenty online resources) according to Lipman's curriculum and build as a result a Community of Inquiry with parents. A community that is built on a solid foundation of trust and emotions and further embraced with a variety of thoughts, ideas, opinions and experiences that interact, evolve and provoke thoughtful dialogue rather than criticism, thus, in many cases, creating the right conditions for transformational learning.

By this way we introduce "Philosophy for Children and Community" in both children, parents, and teachers/colleagues as a way of learning, thinking, reflecting, reasoning. Accordingly, we invite parents to join us teachers and students to a dialogue, the skills of which we all need to learn and adapt in our everyday life at work, home, and life as citizens of the world.

STORY #1 School for Grownups!

I must admit, school is useful! Especially with the Pandemic, we have all appreciated it a lot, from the youngest to the oldest person probably in the world! You learn so much stuff, you get to meet your friends, you play. At least at my school, I have fun!

However, there is another thing that really bothers me and that is parents. Surprized? Why? I am not talking about the simple facts like when they tell us to eat healthy while they are grabbing every chance they can get, to eat fast-food. Or the fact that while we are not allowed to say bad words, they are cursing so much. Then you think... -Come on, they are parents, and you forgive them. The other thing though, that is really annoying is whatever is connected with our schooling. It usually goes like this:

(parent)-Come on child, you need to read books independently. It will help you a lot with your writing and speaking, you know?

(child)-But dad, I would rather read something that I like and could have fun with!

(parent)-I understand what you mean, but how can those comics, for example, educate you? Can you enhance your vocabulary with them?

(child)-Fine! Then you tell me how many books you have read lately!

(parent)-But we are adults, we work... and we also read other things, like newspapers... magazines...

Do you get that? Do you think it is fair? Now listen to another example when my mom gave me once again additional math exercises to do!

(child)-But I have done all my homework that was assigned by my teacher, I said.

(parent)-Yes, I know, but you need to do more. Do you know how much time I spend to find this great work! Do you think school's HW will put you in the University?

At that moment, one of her colleagues is calling her from the office. You see my mom is a Real Estate agent and her colleague wanted to ask her something about a client.

(parent)-I am very busy now because I am helping my son with his HW, I will tell you tomorrow. She responded on the phone.

(child)-No, it is fine! Do your work with your colleague, your job is far more important, we can do the math tomorrow!

(parent)-Do not tell me what to do my boy, I am an adult, I know better.

You see? That is not fair either. Why do adults always think they know better? Why do they get a break in the afternoon, and we need to work double shifts?

Another time, my teacher for the Environmental Science, told my mom I am not that active with the school projects, and it seems like I am not that sensitive with the environmental issues. Then my parents got mad at me.

(parent)-Why aren't you interested? Why don't you care?

(child)-What could I say? That I did not care doing recycling because at home we put all the garbage in the same plastic bag? Who am I to say that we need to separate glass, plastic, aluminium when you always say, "who are we to save the world?"

(parent)- You are having an attitude young man! You better go to your room...

Do you get that? A child's life is so unfair!

However, the greatest fight was at the finals of the World Championship in soccer. I was watching the game with dad. But the game was a tie, and it was given extra time. Unfortunately, no one was winning, and it ended up in penalties and all of a sudden... mom scored from the kitchen!

(mom)- Come on kid, you need to go to sleep now, it is too late!

(child)- But mom... the game is almost over; they are hitting the penalties.

(mom)- No!! It is time you go to bed. How will you wake up in the morning?

Of course, dad had already called his partner at work and told him he would be late.

(child)-I will go a couple of hours later at school, like dad. I told my mom nicely!

(mom)-Certainly not! Your dad is a grown up!

Did you hear that? Do you think it is fair? That was outrageous...

Next morning, I woke up in a very good mood though, because I had seen the craziest dream ever! I had seen, I founded a school for grownups and especially for parents. I wonder how no one had ever thought of that before!! The need is obvious!!! Parents need to learn a lot to cope with their hard role ... nonetheless their knowledge and experience on this hardly reach the basic! Moreover, I have even dreamed of the first, compulsory subjects they need to attend...which would be:

1. Rights & obligations of All ages.
2. Patience & limits for adults and children.
3. Listen, Think & Discuss.
4. Reasoning.
5. I learn how to learn with the children.

At this school, there would be NO breaks OR prepared meals except for healthy, homemade food!

As soon as I got to my school, I still had this magnificent dream in my mind, I went directly to the principal's office and asked him to call my parents because I had forgotten to tell them something important ...

(principal)- It rings but there is no answer!

(child)- Please let it ring for a few more minutes... (I was certain that my mom was taking a nap by my dad, she never goes to her office before 10am)

(mom)-Hello? (a voice coming from asleep)

(principal)- Good morning, your son would like to tell you something!

(child)-Hello mommy, I needed to tell you about a dream I had that made me very happy... You know, I founded a school for grownups!

(mom)-That is nice honey! We can discuss this when you are back. Did I go to that school of yours?

(child)-Yes, and you Failed all classes!

(mom)- But why?

(child)- For a lot of reasons and mainly because you two are still sleeping while I am at school without even knowing who won last night!!!

The principal was watching me the whole time smiling...

(principal)-Do you think, my child, that the teachers should also go to your school?

(child) - Hmmm! Of course!! And become classmates and friends with the parents!! Why not even learn how to relate with each other and collaborate...sir!

Story 1. Possible Questions:

- Are rights analogous to the age of a person?
- Is learning happening only in school?
- Can parents behave as they wish because they are grown-ups?
- Could parents learn at school or elsewhere?

Story 1. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Share examples that shows we have forgotten that we were once children ourselves.
- Parents as role models.
- School as a learning organizatio for the community.
- Importance of learning in all ages.
- Rules for everyone.

STORY #2

Philosophy for Parents!

(In a cafe, four moms are chatting about a Discussion Workshop that their school is organizing for the parents).

- (Katerina): Girls, it was really good to see you all today after the summer holidays, but I was wondering... Actually, my son wonders if I will attend the discussion Workshop for parents, at their school. Do you know anything about it?

- (Maria): What discussion? I know nothing. What would they teach us? Have they finished teaching our children, and now it is our turn?

- (Olga): Hahaha! Yes, I have heard of it. There will be a series of sessions for whoever wants to participate, and the aim is to get us familiar with inquiry and dialogue.

- (Dimitra): I don't have time for this ... Absolutely not! I have so many things to do! Don't we talk here, at home, everywhere? Should someone teach us how to talk? Perhaps it would be better if the teachers learned to do it first!

- (Maria): Wait! Dimitra, I think they probably mean something else ... not the conversation we make, as right now for example, during our coffee meetings...

- (Olga): What do you mean? We cannot discuss in a serious manner while drinking coffee with people we know? What defines the type of discussion ... the place, the subject, the way, the people? What?

- (Katerina): Well, I think that the flyer they sent us, and to which I laid an eye on, refers to dialogue as a learning tool. What does it really mean to listen to others, to think, to reflect? I wonder if we could discuss philosophical issues like love, friendship, rules ... with our kids? It's not supposed to be a lecture but an interaction in a community-based dialogue! Actually, aren't most teachers encouraging these dialogue groups with their students in classroom every day?

- (Dimitra): Mmm ... Philosophy...! How do we do that? Who are we to philosophize? What can we discuss in this way? Do we even have time for that? Aren't we all have difficulties discussing basic issues, especially at home with our children or even with our husbands?

- (Olga): Perhaps this is what they mean in the flyer ... How we can manage to discuss with our children, with teachers and with other people without anticipating that our word is the most precious or without aiming the solution? I think I will go to these sessions, and I will try to figure out if it can be of any use ...

- (Katerina): I will go too ... Besides, let us not forget that the school also seeks the best for our children... I think they start next week, and it will be every last Friday of each month!

- (Dimitra): I'm not going anywhere! I have no time to waste!!

Story 2. Possible Questions:

- What is philosophy?
- Are there several kinds of discussions?
- Can non-philosophers philosophize?
- Can philosophy help us in any way in our everyday hurdles?

Story 2. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Kinds of discussion (conversation, talk, dialogue etc.)
- Our thoughts and experiences on dialogue at home.

STORY #3
I'll go for a walk!

Boy: I think I'll go for a walk to the mountains!
Sister: Do you want to play with the ball inside or outside the house?
Boy: I do not want to play! I have decided that I'm going for a walk to the mountain.
Brother: Eh little brother, would you like to draw something with me?
Boy: No, I want to go to the mountain. Do you want to come with me?
(No response)
Grandma: Sweetheart, what color would you like for the new sweater I am knitting for you?
Boy: Grandma, I do not know! I just want to go for a walk to the mountain!!!
Grandpa: Boy, do you think the Giants are winning tonight? The game starts in a few minutes...
Boy: Grandpa ... but I want to go for a walk on the mountain!!!
(The boy goes by the kitchen where the mother is cooking)
Boy: Mom, today I am going for a walk to the mountain, I will follow the path behind our house, okay?
Mom: drink your fruit juice, before going to play, my love...
Boy: Dad, can I go for a walk to the mountain behind our house...?
Dad: I promise boy to repair your bike right after fixing my car...
(The boy leaves the house through the woods, darkness falls, and very soon he is getting lost in the woods).
Boy: But where am I...? (he starts screaming and calls his family one by one...).
Boy: Why isn't anyone here? Is anybody listening to me ...? (crying...)
(At home, the whole family has started to search for him everywhere, becoming more and more worried because the hours go by and they cannot find him. After about three hours, the family finally managed to find the little boy not too far behind their house!)
Family: My angel, why did not you tell us where you were going?

Story 3. Possible Questions:

- Do we always listen to what our children are telling us?
- Why is paying attention to what others -especially our immediate family members- essential? Why do we need to listen to the others?

Story 4. Subjects/Themes for discussion & discussion exercises:

- Are there ways we can improve our attention to the family words?
- Hearing v/s listening v/s attention.
- Communication skills.
- Share experiences with superficial communication.

STORY #4 My Home

My home

Yesterday I read a post on the social network, of a primary school teacher, presenting a student essay on "my home". In this report, the pupil's home was the pupil's self. For the interior of the home, she referred to her mind (thoughts, dreams, knowledge) and her soul (virtues, emotions, behavior). While on the exterior of it, she mentioned her appearance and care for it. Not about clothing, jewelry, and make-up, but through hygiene and neatness, healthy eating and regular exercise.

To tell the truth ... I was impressed!!! I was fascinated by the ideas and thoughts of the little girl!!

However, when I refer to "my home", I mean my family... perhaps because in ancient Greek the word family (oikogeneia = oikos + genos) refers to the composition of the words "home" and "generation", that is, the generations that live in the same house.

Nevertheless, what happens when modern reality "forces" family members to live in different regions, countries, continents for various reasons (financial, work, study, etc.)?

Where would my home be if I had a similar situation? Where I live? Where my partner is? Or where my kids are (what if they're not in one place)?

Could this deep thinking of that student possibly describe the concept better in modern world?

Could each one of us have a different definition, argument, meaning?

Could it be that this notion, like other similar ones, changes, evolves over time?

I do not know...

I must think ...

I feel like I need to discuss this though with others!!

Story 4. Possible Questions:

- What is home?
- Can immediate family members live in different places and keep strong relationships? Is it the same with friendships?

Story 4. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Family & friends.
- Home (share examples and experiences).
- Relationships
- Drastic changes in modern era that affect occupation, residency etc.

STORY #5
"The perfume of LOVE"

"The perfume of LOVE"

On Saturday morning, I woke up in a very bad mood.

It was obvious that in the last few days I had a lot of nerves...

I looked around the house. All my "favorites" were thrown here and there! Other crumpled, other dirty, and perhaps a little torn.

My Love for my family was thrown upside down over my children's Smiles. The Love for my books had been tangled with the Joy for our new car, clothed by thousands of dirty clothes that were thrown everywhere! Poor them...! The sweet words for my husband were squeezed in a corner, filled with dust ... you could hardly single them out. And my Good Manners were found hanging upside down from the spotlight on the ceiling, looking at me with a grievance. My Patience had fallen behind the couch and my Dedication to my friends writhing and dusty, was trying to stretch out while cramped inside the shoe-case. I wonder how it managed to get in there...?

I did not like this picture at all!!

How did I become so indifferent?

I had to fix everything right away! Then a THOUGHT came into my mind, and I decided ... I would try to "clean up"! Rinse all the carelessness and egoism of the last few months; make it all redundant and shiny! I got a bucket of water, I threw in a lot of the THINKING detergent, the one that makes a lot of foam, and it rinses the Guilt...It is the kind of detergent that anyone might need for "cleaning" the favorites. It is a detergent that everyone can use... it would be the first time for me!

Fortunately, almost everyone was away from home and so I was doing my job quietly. Only my little one was there, but she had just had breakfast and was playing quietly with her toys in her room. It was as if she knew I had to clean up the mess! As soon as I finished cleaning, I organized Everything... one by one my Favorites ... and I even had time to sit down and play with my daughter. A few moments later, the door opened and my husband with my two other children coming back home from practice, shopping etc. I could not take hold of myself. I ran and hugged them and kissed them. They did not give me much attention and headed to their rooms. Then I called them...

(MOM)-You know something... I have been thinking really hard!!! I love you ALL, incredibly! I missed you, I am sorry I haven't told you how much I love you very often...

All of them looked at me surprised but decorated with smiles on their faces.

(CHILD 1)-Did you just realize it mom? We loved you all along, even when we don't say it...

(DAD)- How important is it to tell each other? Isn't it obvious?

(CHILD 2)- I love it when you tell me how much you love me... Don't we all?

(DAD)- I don't really care about words because I know I love you and you love me too!

(MOM)- I understand... but most of the times, that is not enough for me, or even more, for the children!!! Think about it...Love is not just a word, is it?

At that very moment, our little one came straight to our arms, and we made a big family HUG! Isn't that MAGIC?

Story 5. Possible Questions:

- Do we change priorities and why?
- Does prioritising designate loving?
- Why do we (parents) feel guilty all the time?
- Are there ways to improve our skills as parents, partners, friends etc?
- How do people express their love?

Story 5. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Love with or/and without words.
- Priorities
- Parenthood (changes, skills, guilt)

STORY #6
How high can I fly?

How high can I fly? (Episode 1 & Episode 2)

Episode 1:

Once in a distant country, a little balloon was born that did not have the same shape as everyone else! From the very beginning, those who saw it wondered what shape it could take when it would grow up. The little balloon wondered around and looked at the other balloons, which, from the very first days of their life, had a definite shape. But to discover this, everyone advised it, to be filled, inflated, and therefore take a particular shape.

He went out into the neighborhoods and started looking around for various objects, hoping to find what suits her.

At first it swallowed anything it found on the streets: cans of refreshments, stones, cigarette butts and other rubbish dumped. However, it was disappointed. Its shape was strange, and its breath was as dirty as a rubbish can. So, it decided to empty as much as it could and try with something else.

-Well, I have heard nice things about nature, so I had better eat a few branches, leaves and a little tree! It opened its mouth and gulp it.

Unfortunately, it did not change as it was assuming. The tree and its branches created a number of bumps, and they were hurting it from inside. In addition, they anchored inside, and it could not pull them out.

- How can I fly like that? The little balloon began to worry, but it did not get disappointed however painful it had been with all that it had eaten meanwhile.

On its way, a bit further down, it found a bicycle and said it ate that too, to be able to speed up and fly high. As soon as it swallowed it, not only could it not go faster but even worse. A little later, it swallowed a big TV because it thought, everyone liked the TV and spent many hours daily enjoying its company. Moreover, it would never be alone! Nonetheless, although it had been a flat TV, from the latest models, it was heavy enough for the balloon to no longer move. In addition, the pain was getting worse...

Episode 2:

Luckily, a balloon doctor passed by at that time, who, when she saw the little balloon in difficulty, she said,

-A great balloon like yourself, cannot be afraid, do you want me to take you to the hospital and let us try to help you?

The balloon was crying out of pain, fear, and despair, but it thought maybe the doctor would seize the discomfort. Maybe there would be a good advice that could help.

Therefore, the doctor lifted it up with a tremendous difficulty and brought it to the hospital. There, she began to pull out of its belly everything the balloon had previously swallowed. In a few cases, it hurt greatly but the worst had been when while scraping the branches it still had the scratches inside. But the void that it felt when it was empty was the worst of all!! The situation troubled the little one that much that it broke into tears again. The doctor, who realized that the balloon's sadness was far greater than its pains, told him:

-The little balloons should not take up with anything they find here and there. You should load yourself with beautiful things that will help you "fly out of joy"! What I will give you will

probably comfort you. It will help you find your shape, your own shape that will not look like anybody else's! It will only be yours!

So, the doctor opened several little boxes and started filling the balloon. He first started with LOVE (he threw much of it), continued with JOY and LAYGOTHER. From another box she put the KNOWLEDGE and COURAGE.

"These two go together," she explained. Because the more you know, the more courage you will have in your life.

Finally, she gave the DREAMS and AIMS and explained to it that each balloon, big or small, should have them to fly as high as it can. Not to reach others, but to fly wherever it wants and as much as it wants.

-Oh, yes, before you go, you need to get this syrup too. It will help all the pains go away. It's the sweet-sour syrup of FRIENDSHIP. If you get the right dose, you will get to make good friends.

The balloon smiled and drank a spoon immediately. The doctor gave it a pat on its head and opened the window ... the balloon no longer needed to crawl, it had the gear aboard and it was time for it to fly!!!

Story 6. Possible Questions:

- Why is it hard to keep it healthy?
- How much different can we let them be?
- How do we help them fly high or higher?
- How high can i fly as a mother/woman? what kind of children do we want? What kind of citizens do we want?

Story 6. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Raising happy children to happy adults.
- Knowledge & courage, dreams & aims.
- Friendship
- Strong roots & healthy wings.

STORY #7
What is your name?

What is your name?

On a beautiful island somewhere in the Aegean Sea, like every September, this year the schools were ready again to welcome the students. All of them were very happy to go back to school and see their classmates again. Everyone but a little girl who recently moved there from a distant place. This girl was very troubled about how she would make new friends. Not that she was afraid or ashamed to talk to her new classmates. On the contrary, she had always been very social and pleasant to her groups of friends. However, it was the first time she would change school and she was worried about the first impression her name would make to the other children. Her old friends knew her for years and never mocked her. However, this time could be different!! How would others deal with it once they would listen to her name? Is the name "Ellada" suitable for a person? Her parents loved it even though she hated it!

-Fine! Then how would you like us to call you? her little brother asked her one day.

- I do not know, Ellada replied. What I know is that I do not like this stupid name!

One day before she started school, she went with her mom to buy school supplies. In the shop a lady, asked her kindly:

-Hello beautiful, you are new in town, aren't you? What is your name?

Ellada pretended that she did not listen to her and did not respond. Her mother, however, replied loudly:

-Ellada, is her name, but she complains that she does not like it at all.

However, she had spoken so loudly that the entire shop turned and looked at the girl, who from her shame hid herself in the hood of her jacket. Even from there, she felt the others staring and waited to see or hear their teasing comments or even a laughter. What she saw was the sweet smile of a petty lady who opened her eyes wide and said,

-Oh, what a beautiful name! I wish I was named like that too!

-You may say it because you do not have it, Ellada replied, while uncovering her head out of the hood slightly. Do you think there is something nice with my name because I do not?

- First of all, it reminds me of a very special country which a whole world knows and admires for its history and beauty, said the lady.

-Yeah right! But whoever has never been there, or has not ever heard about this country, could think of my name as stupid or funny.

-I'm sorry to interrupt, a heavy voice of an elderly gentleman sounded.

- My name is Bufos. Funny name, isn't it? Yet this name, instead of becoming an obstacle to my life, it probably helped me to become relatively famous.

- And how did this happen? Ellada inquired curiously, lowering the hood completely.

-Because every time I met someone, they immediately dealt with my name and then remembered me directly. Even if they did not exactly remember my name, they knew I was the one with the odd name.

- Would you allow me to tell you something? A young man's voice was heard. Once I had met someone whose name has been... Salatas! When he was introduced to me, I kept with all my might not to burst out laughing. Nevertheless, the young man not only he was not hurt but he told me many funny stories, about his own, his father's, his grandfather's name. After so many years,

when I hear the word "salata" that young man comes to my mind! I can never forget his inventiveness and his humor.

Ellada felt unreasonably different from a while ago! She greeted nicely those who were there and dipped in her thoughts walked away. But no longer in distress!

Story 7. Possible Questions:

- Does the name we get designates who we are?
- Can we change our name and when is a good age to decide? Do we change with it?
- What happens if we our child does not like its name or us?

Story 7. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion Exercises:

- Children's complaints
- Name
- Changes

STORY #8
Is it all over?

Is it all over?

(Two 50 Euro notes are in a wallet and discuss ...)

A: Did you hear yesterday what they intend to do with all of us?

B: I have no idea, perhaps I was not here yet.

A: I do not remember exactly when you came, but this is a serious matter! They intend to gather us all somewhere and replace us with new ones.

B: Just a minute ... I do not think that concerns me, because I, look at me... I am still new; I do not have a single wrinkle. They probably want to replace banknotes like you: old, wrinkled, a bit torn.

A: That was a nice try my friend!!! First, they are talking about the banknotes that were issued until the year 2018, and please take a look at your release date!! Secondly, yes, I do not look as ideal as you do, but I have traveled in so many places and I have seen so many people that I really do not care about my looks at all. But I would certainly love to live more ... to travel even more! I know I will never see it all, but I want to learn as much as possible!

B: Indeed, I have not gone anywhere! I think I just got out of a dark closet yesterday where I was locked, probably for several years. I felt like I finally got out of jail and that I can finally live free and go around visit different places. The rest of those who were with me, unfortunately, I have no idea where they are. They were my brothers for all this time, or they probably became my brothers because we experienced the dark years together.

A: So, you had the chance to get to know others, to get attached with them ... I regret that I have never felt like that, because within a short time I changed many wallets. Of course, I learned many languages!! Because I traveled all over Europe, and you know almost every country speaks a different language have a different culture, a different history! Even the way they use us many times is different. There were people who made me feel very important. If you could see how much they were enjoying just putting me in their wallet ... and how difficult it was to give me elsewhere, when of course they had exhausted all the little ones. Nonetheless, for a year I remember, I even found myself in the US! I think it was a young Italian lady who kept me in her purse, and I heard her saying, "I'll keep you with me this year to remind me how much I want to go back home next summer!"

B: Do you know how lucky you are? To be able to travel wherever you want!

A: Not really, wherever I wanted! Wherever they took me ... I was fortunate to see a lot, but I did not choose where to go neither how long I would stay. Usually there were more changes when the weather was getting warmer, and people were on holidays. The important issue however is our future ... I heard that by the end of the year all of us will go to a specific place ... and that is where our lives will end! They will publish new fifties, which will have an embossed drawing on them to make copying more difficult.

B: I do not care that much about the reason we're going to end; I just want ... to live more!!!

Story 8. Possible Questions:

- Does getting older means losing worth?

- Do adults get or have more freedoms?
- Why does death come primarily for some? How do we explain death to children?
- Why is life-long learning important? Is it?
- What designates our worth?

Story 8. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and discussion exercises:

- Age & death
- Life-long learning
- Ageing with or without experiences
- Freedom to travel

STORY #9

Welcome to Holland! Inspired by Emily Perl Kingsley's story (1987)

Welcome to Loulouland!

(Inspired by Emily Perl Kingsley's story, 1987)

When you are going to have a baby, it is as if you are planning your dream vacation. You are all excited! You get a whole bunch of guidebooks, you learn a few phrases so you can get around, and then it comes time to pack your bags and head for the airport.

Only when you land, the stewardess says, 'WELCOME TO LOULOULAND.'

You look at one another in disbelief and shock, saying,

"WHERE AM I? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I DID NOT SIGN UP FOR HERE."

Nevertheless, they explain that there has been a change of plan, that you have landed at this different country and there you must stay.

"BUT I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS LAND!" you say. 'I DON'T WANT TO STAY! Why is this happening to me? Why is it me that I get to miss visiting Bestland?'"

And then, someone else from the same flight whispers...

"Why don't we go out and buy some new guidebooks, learn some new phrases, and meet people we never knew existed. I have been in Bestland before and it is as wonderful as you might have heard! Nonetheless, I have never been in Loulouland and I also hope that it is not a bad place either. It is just different! You are simply in a different place than you had planned. It has another pace than Bestland, it's probably less flashy than Bestland, but after you've been there a little while and you have a chance to catch your breath, you begin to discover that Loulouland has windmills. Loulouland has tulips. Loulouland has Rembrandts! You can always try another time to travel to Bestland.

However, everyone else you know is busy coming and going from Italy. They are all bragging about what a great time they had there, and for the rest of your life, you'll say,

"YES, THAT'S WHERE I WANTED TO GO."

But why did you want to go there in the first place? And how did you know that you would like it there? And I keep thinking... and wondering...

But why did you want to go there in the first place? And how did you know that you would like it there? "Why do we all have to go to the same place?"

Story 9. Possible Questions:

- Why do we like planning ahead?
- What happens when plans change suddenly?
- Why is it important to make trips and learn through them? Is it important?
- Do we all need to go/be at the same places to be happy?
-

Story 9. Subjects/Themes for Discussion and Discussion exercises:

- Changes & learning

- Happiness (share experiences, thoughts etc).
- All children/people are different.
- Raising children is different in real life.

STORY #10
Ugh, I'm bored!

Ugh, I am bored!

Episode 1 (sisters 1 & 4 years old)

- I am bored!

- But why; I am very excited!

- I am tired of being locked in the house all the time...

- What do you mean; Where else can we go?

- Ahhh, you know, BEFORE we would went everywhere! We were mostly outside the house, for walks, with friends, at grandparents, with cousins, at school, on trips...

- What is all this; Can't we do all this from inside the house? I thought that everything that can make us happy is in here. Our parents are always around us and everything else is on the screen... I do not understand how and why all these walks could make you happy... I see everyone's faces, all terrified with OUTSIDE... whoever goes out is always hiding behind colorful masks!

- You do not understand, you are too young! You do not know what it was like before and that's why you enjoy the situation now.

- Just a minute! You, who says that before it has been much better and you whine, how much did you see mom and dad? As you have told me, they worked constantly, and you were either at school or at our grandparents.

- Yes, you are right about that! I really spent a lot more time with our parents, even though we have you now at home, who is still a baby and there is nothing you can do on your own. To tell you the truth, BEFORE I complained that I did not see them and cried a lot every time they left me at school or anywhere else. I was constantly missing them! But it is this big change that scares me, or maybe the uncertainty in their eyes that is to blame and really worries me... I do not know...

- Me neither...

Episode 2 (brothers 8 & 13 years old)

- Ugh, I'm SOOO bored!!

- Why; I really like it this way!

- Well, don't you get bored without your school and your afternoon activities?

- What are you saying now; Do you know how tedious it was for so many years to come and go to school every day, activities, other classes, visits? Now I finally get to stay at home, we all spend time together cooking, playing, watching movies... Never before have we had time for all this! We were constantly running to go somewhere, to meet someone, to do something...

- So, you do not miss your friends either?

- If you mean all those who do not miss the opportunity to make fun of anyone because he or she is a good student or because they wear the baby socks that their grandmother gave them as a gift, then NO! I do not miss them at all. Besides, my best friend and I see each other on the weekends, and we play almost daily online games together.

- Hmm, nice games!! Either you sit on the floor and look at the screen when you are together, or you write messages about your moves in the game when you are online... No playground, no playing ball, no running, NOTHING!

"What can I tell you, my brother? I prefer it this way." It is much EASIER!!!

Episode 3 (Grandma & Grandpa)

- Ugh, I am bored!!
- Me too, but at least we are both fine! Do you see what is happening around the world?
- Yes, I do. But what can I do if I cannot go anywhere, neither to my friends, nor to the market...?
- Do not be ungrateful! We have our health and each other! There are many others, more unfortunate than us who do not deal only with loneliness... We need to be patient and It will pass.
- You do not understand me! I have waited for so many years for my retirement, to have free time to do what I did not do for so long... to travel, to enjoy my grandchildren as I did not enjoy my children... Instead, now I am locked inside the house for so long, terrified by what is going on...
- I have been waiting with you for all this time and for everything you have mentioned... Loneliness withers me too... but think of our grandchildren... Please think of all those children who are being locked inside, as you say, in front of a screen for their school, for their entertainment, for their socialization... how much do they miss!!!
- You are right love. We must be patient and brave like them...

Episode 4 (Mom & Dad)

- I'm bored, I am telling you, I'm bored!!
- Wow, me on the other hand, I really enjoy it!
- What do you mean; Doesn't it bother you that you are caged? That you no longer go to work and must do almost everything from home?
- What are talking about? For so many years I woke up at 5:30 in the morning to be at work at 8am! Now I wake up at 7:30 am, I watch you waking up, we eat our breakfast together, I shave, I get dressed (partially!) and I sit in front of my computer.
- Well, of course! You are not with the children all day... I am about to go crazy!
- Just a minute my love... weren't you doing the same things BEFORE? Now at least I'm here if you need to go shopping (which you do not want...) or go for a walk (which again you are almost forced to do...). We spend a lot more time together, and with the kids we make a thousand things together, that we did not have the chance to do in the previous years!
- You're right! But BEFORE, the kids went to school and I had the time to do whatever I wanted during the morning... my every day's schedule is all messed up, I miss my habits...
- Yes, but you have got others, that you never had and might be better for you...
- But I cannot enjoy them. I am scared that EVERYTHING will remain as it is now, FOREVER!
- I am also terrified my love... that possibly EVERYTHING will be as it was BEFORE...

Episode 5 (bachelor couple)

- Hey, where are you going?
- Walk the dog... do you want to come?
- Ehh, no! We have scheduled a game with the boys. In 5 minutes, we will all be online...
- But aren't you bored yet?
- Why should I be bored? BEFORE we only played on the weekends and that was only during your shifts at work... Now we all have so much time at our disposal!
- Exactly like you said ... we ALL have more time at our disposal!

- What are you whining about? Didn't I get you a dog?
- Yes, WE got a dog, to see if WE can take on an "alive" responsibility TOGETHER ...
- Correctly! Don't we do well? The dog is happy because we spend time with him when each of us is at work and you have someone to take out your mother instinct...
- You are making a big mistake my friend, if you think that I wanted to have children so soon, and that the dog would fill such a gap for me! We have been moaning for so many years because we did not have time to do things together and now, we fill our extra time with electronic games and a cute dog.
- What else to do? Since we cannot go out in restaurants, or even to a bar, or somewhere with friends... It is boring!
- You are right, it is BORING!! But it is also an ideal opportunity to get to know each other better!!

Episode 6 (Monologue of Loneliness)

My dear Diary,

I know, I have not written anything for a long time, but I have been really busy. In the past few months, world-historical and unprecedented events have taken place and life as we knew it has changed completely! Most people now work from home remotely, while others have lost their jobs. I was lucky! I go to my office once a week and for the rest I work from home. Of course, in the office when I go, there is no one else because we rotate. Initially the silence was very convenient but now it has become annoying... I have reached the point where I greet the names of colleagues on their doors! I have not seen my parents in-person for months. They are very old, and I am afraid that I may transfer the virus to them from outside. Not that I meet anyone ... Even on the streets we usually change the sidewalk so as not to criss cross each other. The supermarket has become the main place for socialization, but even there, only one person is allowed per alley. Imagine that I often look forward to going to the checkout to see the cashier from close, even if it is behind the window. But they are also so scared... and they are justified to feel like that...

I do have a lot of online meetings with so many people... But no, it has nothing to do with the meetings BEFORE. They just remind me how much we had and how much we have missed. A coffee, a drink, a meeting with friends or colleagues, we had it all! I know, it was my decision to be alone and see people whenever I wanted. But it took me this far to realize how hard it is to be ALONE... How much we need OTHERS ... for a conversation, a touch, for TOGETHERness!!

Story 10. Possible Questions:

- Is the easier way the better way?
- Why is it convenient to complain?
- Why is everybody upset with staying more time at home with their families?
- Do we miss something more when it is gone?

Story 10. Subjects/Themes for discussion & discussion exercises:

- Trying to see things from the other side (exercise)

- Changes -what if they stay forever?
- Loneliness within the family.

STORY #11
Free Time...

Free time

(Three children are discussing in the yard of the primary school. One of them is using the wheelchair.)

Child 1: We have a lot of homework for tomorrow!

Child 2: Yes, I do not think we will have time to play in the afternoon. Really Zoe, what do you do in your spare time?

Zoe: Hmm, I usually finish studying early and if the weather is nice, I go for a walk with my parents. If not, I read my books and if we are all in a good mood, we play board games all together.

Ch2: Books? A walk with your parents? Board games; How boring would all these be!

Ch1: WOW! Aren't you bored of spending so much time with your parents? If you would like, you could join us to gaming. We can play together through the gaming platform.

Q2: Yes, great idea! That way you would not feel like being imprisoned!

Zoe: But who told you that I feel like a prisoner? I would rather say the opposite; I feel so free to travel through the stories from the books I read, to invent my own, to constantly discover new things and to explore the world around me in any way possible and naturally whatever my condition lets me.

Ch1: That is exactly what I am saying. No misunderstanding, because we are friends and I do not want to show disrespect, but don't you feel like a prisoner in your chair? I wanted to ask you for a long time now.

Zoe: Let me tell you... My situation imposes some restrictions on me. But this does not limit my imagination, my thoughts, and my dreams! Please, you do not need to worry... I do not misunderstand you. I find it very reasonable for someone to wonder. After all, we are children and we must wonder and always ask questions, as my mom keeps telling me. Especially when they come from my friends who love me as you do!

Ch1: So, you are not upset about your condition?

Zoe: No, I am not upset! Sometimes it makes me sad, but I never despair because my parents believe in me. They consider me as a gift from God and never forget reminding me every day.

Ch1: You are probably lucky to have your parents so close to you. My people work all day and are always tired in the afternoons. They usually come back home late, and they are constantly busy with various kinds of things.

Ch2: Hmm ... my mom is a stay-home parent, and my dad works long hours at the office and sometimes at home as well. Even though, my mom supports me with my studying, feeding and these kinds of needs, unfortunately, we never talk, play, or go somewhere together. Not that I complain because she helps me a lot with the school and takes me to soccer and to my friends but she does not seem interested in my 'irrelevant to the school' questions, jokes or any kind of games that makes me think that she is tired of me especially when she tells me that we are both free to do what we like to relax as soon as we finish and. .. she leaves. I suppose that our "collaboration" in studying that usually creates tensions, irritations and other negative emotions, alienates us in a strange way...

Zoe: Well, my friends . . . Why don't you tell them what you need from them? They are parents, they do not know everything!!

Possible Questions:

- Do parents know everything?
- How can we open up to our children? And how much?
- What exactly do children need from the parents?
- Can parents be trusted?

Subjects/Themes for discussion & discussion exercises:

- Parents-children relationship
- Parents, work & free time.

Tempo libero

(Tre bambini stanno discutendo nel cortile della scuola elementare. Una di loro è su una sedia a ruote.)

Bambino 1: abbiamo molti compiti per domani!

Bambino 2: Sì, non credo che avremo tempo per giocare nel pomeriggio. Zoe, cosa fai nel tuo tempo libero?

Zoe: Hmm, di solito finisco di studiare presto e se il tempo è bello vado a fare una passeggiata con i miei genitori. Altrimenti leggo i miei libri e se siamo di buon umore giochiamo tutti insieme ai giochi da tavolo.

Bambino2: Libri? Una passeggiata con i tuoi genitori? Giochi da tavolo? Che noia!

Bambino1: WOW! Non ti scocci di passare così tanto tempo con i tuoi genitori? Se ti fa piacere, puoi giocare con noi online. Possiamo giocare insieme sulla la piattaforma.

Q2: Sì, ottima idea! In questo modo non ti sentiresti imprigionata!

Zoe: Ma chi ti ha detto che mi sento prigioniera? Anzi, al contrario; Mi sento così libera di viaggiare attraverso le storie dei libri che leggo, di inventarne di mie, di scoprire costantemente cose nuove ed esplorare il mondo che mi circonda in ogni modo possibile e, naturalmente, per quanto lo permetta la mia condizione.

Bambino1: Questo è esattamente quello che sto dicendo. Non mi fraintendere, perché siamo amici e non ti voglio mancare di rispetto, ma non ti senti prigioniera sulla tua sedia? Volevo chiedertelo già da molto tempo.

Zoe: Lascia che te lo dica . . . La mia situazione mi impone alcune restrizioni. Ma questo non limita la mia immaginazione, i miei pensieri e i miei sogni! Per favore, non devi preoccuparti . . . non ti fraintendo. Trovo molto ragionevole che qualcuno se lo chieda. Dopotutto, siamo bambini e dobbiamo chiederci e fare sempre domande, come continua a dirmi mia madre. Soprattutto quando vengono dagli amici che mi vogliono bene come te!

Bambino1: Quindi non sei arrabbiata per la tua condizione?

Zoe: No, non sono arrabbiata! A volte mi rattrista ma non mi dispero mai perché i miei genitori credono in me. Mi considerano un dono di Dio e non dimenticano mai di ricordarmelo ogni giorno.

Bambino1: Probabilmente sei fortunata ad avere dei genitori così vicini a te. I miei lavorano tutto il giorno e il pomeriggio sono sempre stanchi. Di solito quando tornano a casa sono sempre impegnati con varie cose.

Bambino2: Hmm . . . mia madre è una casalinga e mio padre lavora molte ore in ufficio e a volte anche a casa. Anche se mia madre mi aiuta con lo studio, mi fa da mangiare e cose del genere, sfortunatamente non parliamo, giochiamo o andiamo da qualche parte insieme. Non che mi lamenti perché mi aiuta molto con la scuola e mi porta a calcio e dai miei amici ma non sembra

interessata alle mie domande che non hanno a che fare con la scuola, alle battute o a qualsiasi tipo di gioco. Questo mi fa pensare che sia stanca di me, soprattutto quando mi dice che siamo entrambi liberi di fare ciò che ci piace per rilassarci non appena finiamo e . . . lei se ne va. Suppongo che la nostra "collaborazione" nello studio che di solito crea tensioni, irritazioni e altre emozioni negative, ci fa allontanare in modo strano . . .

Zoe: Beh, amici miei . . . Perché non dite loro di cosa avete bisogno? Sono genitori, non sanno tutto!!

Ελεύθερος χρόνος

(Τρία παιδιά συζητούν στην αυλή του δημοτικού σχολείου. το ένα από αυτά η ζωή βρίσκεται σε αναπηρικό καροτσάκι.)

Παιδί 1: Έχουμε πολύ διάβασμα για αύριο!

Παιδί 2: Ναι, δεν νομίζω ότι θα έχουμε χρόνο το απόγευμα για παιχνίδι. Αλήθεια Ζωή, εσύ τι κάνεις στον ελεύθερό σου χρόνο;

Ζωή: Συνήθως τελειώνω νωρίς τα μαθήματά μου και αν έχει καλό καιρό βγαίνω με τους γονείς μου μία βόλτα. Αν όχι διαβάζω περισσότερη ώρα το βιβλίο μου και αν έχουμε όλοι διάθεση παίζουμε όλοι μαζί επιτραπέζια παιχνίδια.

Π2: Βιβλίο; Βόλτα με τους γονείς σου; Επιτραπέζια παιχνίδια; Μεγάλη βαρεμάρα!

Π1: Ναι! Δεν βαριέσαι να περνάς τόσο χρόνο με τους γονείς σου; Αν θες θα μπορούσαμε να συνδεόμαστε και να παίζεις μαζί μας ηλεκτρονικά παιχνίδια.

Π2: Ναι έτσι δεν θα νιώθει σαν φυλακισμένη!

Ζωή: Μα, ποιος σας είπε ότι νιώθω σαν φυλακισμένη; Μάλλον το αντίθετο θα έλεγα... νιώθω τόσο ελεύθερη να ταξιδεύω στις ιστορίες των βιβλίων που διαβάζω, να επινοώ δικές μου, να μαθαίνω συνεχώς καινούρια πράγματα και να περιεργάζομαι τον κόσμο γύρω μου με όποιο τρόπο μπορώ και η κατάστασή μου βέβαια μου το επιτρέπει.

Π1: Αυτό ακριβώς λέω και εγώ. χωρίς παρεξήγηση επειδή είμαστε και φίλοι αλλά δεν νιώθεις σαν φυλακισμένη στην καρέκλα σου; Ήθελα καιρό τώρα να σε ρωτήσω.

Ζωή: Να σου πω.. Η κατάστασή μου επιβάλλει κάποιους περιορισμούς. Αυτό όμως δεν περιορίζει τη φαντασία μου, τις σκέψεις μου, τα όνειρά μου! και μην ανησυχείς... Δεν σας παρεξηγώ. Το βρίσκω πολύ λογικό να έχετε απορίες. Είμαστε παιδιά άλλωστε και πρέπει να έχουμε συνέχεια απορίες, όπως μου λέει και η μαμά μου. Ειδικά όταν αυτές στις λένε οι φίλοι που αγαπάς και σε αγαπούν, δεν πληγώνουν.

Π1: Δεν στεναχωριέσαι δηλαδή για την κατάστασή σου;

Ζωή: Ναι! κάποιες φορές στεναχωριέμαι αλλά ποτέ δεν απελπίζομαι επειδή οι γονείς μου πιστεύουν σε μένα. με θεωρούν δώρο Θεού και φροντίζουν να μου το θυμίζουν καθημερινά.

Π1: Μάλλον είσαι τυχερή τελικά που έχεις τους γονείς σου τόσο κοντά σου. Εμένα οι δικοί μου δουλεύουν όλη μέρα και πάντα είναι κουρασμένοι τα απογεύματα. Γυρίζουν αργά και τρέχουν συνέχεια για διάφορες δουλειές.

Π2: Χμ... εμένα δεν δουλεύει η μαμά μου, αλλά ασχολείται μαζί μου μόνο για τα διαβάσματα. Δεν λέω με βοηθάει αλλά είναι τόσες φορές που θέλω να τη ρωτήσω κάτι άσχετο ή να παίξουμε μαζί αλλά νομίζω ότι την κουράζω τόσο πολύ με τα μαθήματα που μόλις

τελειώνουμε μου λέει ότι είμαστε και οι δύο ελεύθεροι να κάνουμε ότι μας αρέσει για να χαλαρώσουμε και... φεύγει. Άσε που η “συνεργασία” μας στο διάβασμα μας δημιουργεί εντάσεις και εκνευρισμούς και αυτό μας δημιουργεί αρνητικά συναισθήματα, εμένα δηλαδή, δεν ξέρω πως νιώθει εκείνη..

Ζωή: Μα βρε παιδιά.. Γιατί δεν τους λέτε αυτό που χρειάζεστε από εκείνους; Γονείς είναι, δεν τα ξέρουν όλα!!

STORY #12
The Change
STORIA #12
Il Cambiamento
ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ #12
Η Αλλαγή

The Change

(Two mothers are discussing about their worries, while drinking coffee after leaving their children at school.)

- I'm very worried about everything that is happening!

-What do you mean? The coronavirus?

-Not exactly! Well with that too, but what I was thinking was mostly the time the kids spend in front of a screen. Every day more and more ... Until a year ago they had their schedule with school, extracurricular activities, reading, exchanging visits with friends and so much more. They are now closed all day at home, except for a walk.

-Yes indeed! I think the same thing happens in all homes. It's scary!

-Yes, it is scary if someone thinks that until a year ago there would have been a big fight with them, if they were on the screen for more than an hour every day. And now... the hours are countless! I now accept it as a fact, and I do not even argue with them. I may even feel sorry for them ... As if I have become another human being! Every day I wonder how much I have changed through everything that is happening. I do not know if I am better or worse... but I certainly do not recognize myself!

- You're right! Now that you say that I feel the same way. In fact, I feel overwhelmed and feel chased every day by guilts that I have become a worse parent than before. Because that is how I personally see this change, which in fact seems to have come to stay with us. I feel that we will never be able to return to the previous state...

-I do not know what to say to you. I wonder if we want to go back to the past. Is it somehow convenient now or even possible? Or are we desperately looking forward to tomorrow? What I often think about now is how do our children feel about this change?

- Could we ask them?

Possible Questions:

- Do changes came to stay?
- Could we ever go back to the way things were?
- Is it all parents fault?

Subjects/Themes for discussion & discussion exercises:

- Screentime -how much is enough?
- Parents' worries and guilts.

Il Cambiamento

(Due madri discutono delle loro preoccupazioni mentre bevono il caffè dopo aver lasciato i figli a scuola.)

- Sono molto preoccupata per tutto quello che sta succedendo

-Cosa intendi? Il coronavirus?

-Non esattamente! Beh, anche quello, ma ciò che pensavo era soprattutto il tempo che i ragazzi trascorrono davanti a uno schermo. Ogni giorno sempre di più ... Fino a un anno fa erano impegnati con la scuola, le attività extrascolastiche, la lettura, lo scambio di visite con gli amici e molto altro ancora. Ora sono chiusi tutto il giorno a casa, tranne che per una passeggiata.

-Sì, Certamente! Penso che la stessa cosa accada in tutte le case. È spaventoso!

-Sì, fa paura se qualcuno pensa che fino a un anno fa avremmo litigato con loro, se fossero stati online per più di un'ora al giorno. E ora ... le ore non si contano! Ora lo accetto come un fatto e non discuto nemmeno con loro. Potrei persino dispiacermi per loro ... Come se fossi diventata un'altra! Ogni giorno mi chiedo quanto sono cambiata per tutto ciò che sta accadendo. Non so se sto meglio o peggio... ma di certo non mi riconosco!

- Hai ragione! Ora che lo dici, mi sento allo stesso modo. In effetti, ogni giorno mi sento sopraffatta dai rimpianti per essere diventata una madre peggiore di prima. Perché è così che vedo questo cambiamento, da cui non sembra si potrà tornare indietro. Sento che non saremo mai in grado di tornare come prima ...

-Non so cosa dirti. Mi chiedo se vogliamo tornare al passato. Ci conviene adesso? O non vediamo l'ora che arrivi il domani? Quello a cui penso molto spesso ora è: come si sentono i nostri figli riguardo a questo cambiamento?

- Potremmo chiederglielo?

Η Αλλαγή

(Δύο μητέρες συζητούν και προβληματίζονται, πίνοντας καφέ αφού έχουν αφήσει τα παιδιά τους στο σχολείο.)

- Ανησυχώ πάρα πολύ με όλο αυτό που συμβαίνει

- Τι εννοείς; Τον κορονοϊό;

- Όχι ακριβώς! καλά και με αυτό, αλλά αυτό που σκεφτόμουν είναι κυρίως ο χρόνος που περνούν τα παιδιά μπροστά από μια οθόνη. Κάθε μέρα όλο και περισσότερο ... Μέχρι πριν από ένα χρόνο είχαν το πρόγραμμά τους με το σχολείο, τις εξωσχολικές δραστηριότητες, το διάβασμα, την ανταλλαγή επισκέψεων με φίλους και τόσα άλλα. Τώρα είναι κλεισμένα όλη την ημέρα στο σπίτι, εκτός από κάποια βόλτα για περπάτημα.

- Ναι πράγματι! Νομίζω ότι το ίδιο συμβαίνει σε όλα τα σπίτια. Είναι τρομακτικό!

- Ναι, είναι τρομακτικό αν κάποιος πιστεύει ότι μέχρι πριν από ένα χρόνο θα γινόταν μεγάλος καυγάς μαζί τους, αν ήταν για πάνω από μία ώρα καθημερινά στην οθόνη. Και τώρα πια... οι ώρες είναι αμέτρητες! Το αποδέχομαι πλέον ως γεγονός και δεν τα μαλώνω καν. Μπορεί και να τα λυπάμαι κιόλας... Λες κι έχω γίνει ένας άλλος άνθρωπος! Κάθε μέρα αναρωτιέμαι πόσο έχω αλλάξει μέσα από όλα όσα συμβαίνουν. Δεν ξέρω αν είμαι καλύτερη ή χειρότερη... αλλά σίγουρα δεν με αναγνωρίζω!

- Έχεις δίκιο! Τώρα που το λες, κι εγώ νιώθω το ίδιο. Στην πραγματικότητα νιώθω καθημερινά να με τρώνε οι τύψεις... που έχω γίνει χειρότερος γονέας από πριν. Διότι εγώ προσωπικά έτσι την βλέπω αυτή την αλλαγή, η οποία μάλιστα φαίνεται ότι ήρθε για να μείνει μαζί μας. Νιώθω ότι δεν θα μπορέσουμε ποτέ να επιστρέψουμε στην προηγούμενη κατάσταση...

- Δεν ξέρω τι να σου πω. Αναρωτιέμαι αν θέλουμε να επιστρέψουμε στο παρελθόν... Μήπως είναι κατά κάποιο τρόπο βολικό το τώρα; Ή μήπως ανυπομονούμε απεγνωσμένα για το αύριο; Αυτό που πραγματικά σκέφτομαι συχνά πλέον, είναι πώς νιώθουν τα παιδιά μας για αυτήν την αλλαγή μας;

- Μήπως να τα ρωτούσαμε;

Questions NEVER end....