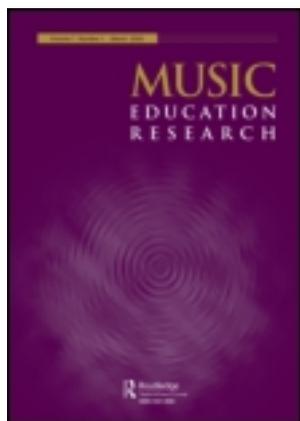


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Music and drama in primary schools in the Madeira Island – narratives of ownership and leadership

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A three-year-case study funded by the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) from the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education was designed to study a 30-year project of music and drama in primary schools in Madeira. This article reports on the narratives of the three main figures in the project as they elaborate on its construction according to the following themes: innovation, philosophies of music education and teacher education. Through the lens of a narrative inquiry, the discourses produced are analysed, taking into account the emerging concepts of ownership and leadership.

Keywords: music education; drama education; ownership; leadership

Context

On Madeira, which is part of Portugal, the regional government, through its *Coordination Office for Arts Education – Gabinete Coordenador de Educação Artística* (GCEA – <http://dre.madeira-edu.pt/gcea/>), has been running a project¹ for 30 years that provides music and drama education for all six- to nine-year-old children in all primary schools on the island. Until recently, no systematic evaluation had ever addressed this valuable project in terms of its potential for the development of arts education in mainland Portugal. The present case study (2007–2010) is the first systematic research concerning this project since we believe that reflexive and critical thinking about established projects in Arts Education are more valuable, as they contribute not only to the production of knowledge but also to a better understanding of how the future in these curriculum areas may be constructed. This is most significant as provision for arts education is forever at risk within the Portuguese educational system, with recurrent forward and backward legislation and an absence of systematic political decisions.

Madeira is the main island (740.7 km²) of the Portuguese archipelago of the same name. It is located in the Atlantic Ocean, west of the African Coast (Morocco) and 978 km south-west of Lisbon. Together with the islands Porto Santo, Desertas and Selvagens, it constitutes the autonomous region of Madeira with the main city being Funchal. It has approximately 245,000 inhabitants, mostly concentrated on the main island. While one of the main contributions to the economy comes from tourism,

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Madeira's vulnerability to poverty is quite considerable (54.4%) with 15.1% living in conditions of persistent poverty (Bruto da Costa et al. 2008).

The project began in 1980 by involving a small group of primary school teachers in two primary schools on the island, under the leadership of two main figures, a teacher from the music conservatoire and a primary school teacher specialising in drama education. Soon, the training programme was re-directed only to music students while still working with primary school and kindergarten teachers. The continuity of the project was guaranteed by the creation of the GCEA under the support of the autonomous regional government.

Today, all children in primary schools of Madeira have music and drama included in their weekly lessons, taught mainly by music specialists who also have had drama education as part of their degree in college. The GCEA project enters into primary schools at two levels: as a curriculum subject (one hour weekly of music and drama) and in terms of five options of extra-curricular activities (90 minutes weekly) – Orff instruments and recorder, traditional stringed instruments of Madeira, vocal, dance and theatre. According to the available specialist teacher skills, all of these options may or may not be offered. Children are assigned to the different groups at the beginning of the school year.

The GCEA issued four music textbooks to be followed in primary school, one for each school year both for the children and the teacher. Although it is not explicitly required, teachers are supposed to give priority to the textbook rather than use their own materials.

The GCEA's hierarchy includes one director (the initial mentor), three coordinators for the different divisions of intervention, the teacher coordinators, the music and drama specialists and the children. Between 1980 and 2009, 261 specialist teachers taught in Madeira primary schools. They were supported in many ways by the GCEA, with regular workshops, supervision and working meetings. Participation in institutional activities is strongly advised, especially in the vocal and instrumental groups. Each teacher coordinator is in charge of a specific number of specialist teachers, supervising their classes and planning collectively every fortnight. Each observed lesson leads to a written report which is agreed on by both parties and then sent to the board of the GCEA.

During the year, the GCEA promotes different presentations of project practices, culminating in a big television show event at the end of the school year, the *Musicaebs*.²

For the purposes of this paper, we will consider the unstructured interviews that were carried out in the first two years of the case study with the main figures in the GCEA (initial mentor and two coordinators), cross-referencing these with some data from our own observations in the field.

Towards a narrative approach

This study has been informed by a methodological framework, where interpretation and empathy were foregrounded over prediction and control. We assumed that the way discourses are constructed by persons within very specific socio-cultural contexts becomes a significant part of the framework of analysis and interpretation (Harré and Gillet 1994).

The creative function of speech in the construction of human experience began to be of interest to psychologists, in terms of a narrative approach, in the work of authors such as Sarbin (1986), Polkinghorne (1988) and Bruner (1990, 1996, 2002). This special interest seems to be built on the idea that only human beings are capable of organising their experiences in terms of language as a powerful means of constructing meanings for themselves and for others. As Jerome Bruner (1990) suggested two decades ago, a ‘culturally sensitive psychology’ ‘must be based not only upon what people actually *do*, but what they *say* they do and what they *say* caused them to do what they did’ (Bruner 1990, 16). Drawing our attention to the fact that narrative ‘deals with the stuff of human action and human intentionality’, Bruner considered that it has at least four crucial features: its sequentiality, its factual ‘indifference’, its unique way of managing departures from the canonical and its dramatic quality (Bruner 1990, 50).

Narrative inquiry therefore became the lens through which we envisioned a possibility of analysing and giving an account of the discourses produced in this research. From the very beginning, we sensed that ‘the story of one’s own life is, of course, a privileged but troubled narrative in the sense that it is reflexive: the narrator and the central figure in the narrative are the same. This reflexivity creates dilemmas’ (Bruner 2006, 130). It was the very nature of reflexive thinking that interested us most as a way of giving voice to a project that has been in the field for more than 30 years and claims to have changed the outlook of arts education on the island. Given its very nature – music and drama in primary schools – we took into account Wayne Bowman’s suggestion that, on the one hand, narrative ‘offers profound insights into the ways actual people build and drape their lives around musical engagements,’ and on the other hand, narrative may have ‘considerable promise as a way of recovering the complexity, multiplicity, and polyphony of musical meanings, and music’s deep implication in the construction and maintenance of identities, both personal and collective’ (Bowman 2006, 14).

In this paper, and as an account of human experience, we also draw on John Dewey’s criteria of experience, namely, interaction and continuity, as well as the notion of situation (Dewey 1938). These criteria were expanded and developed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and by Clandinin (2006) using the metaphor of a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space: the personal and social (interaction); past, present and future (continuity) and place (situation). Based on these same authors, Barrett and Stauffer (2009) have recently contributed to establishing a firm terrain for narrative inquiry in music education while acknowledging that ‘narrative is not a panacea, but rather one way to make audible the voices, experiences, and meanings of individuals and communities engaged in music and to raise those questions that are often left unasked’ (Barrett and Stauffer 2009, 19). Our use of narrative inquiry represents the will to consider the multiplicity of engagements and meanings that are present in the development of the Madeira project by giving voice to those who have primarily been in charge of its development.

Ownership and leadership

In this paper, by using the lens of narrative inquiry, the concepts of ownership and leadership are introduced as presented in the literature, in the expectation that they

will clearly appear on the analysis of the data and, therefore, contribute to an informed final discussion.

The concept of ownership has been explored in the literature on natural resource planning, taking into account problems encountered with the distribution of political power and the uncertainty seen whenever values and goals might be conflicting and competing in situations characterised as problematic (Lachapelle and McCool 2005). Ownership has also been described as an emerging concept in terms of a shared definition of a problem while seeking solutions and forms of addressing its configuration: 'Many of these authors note that when both citizens and agencies are intimately engaged in planning processes, a sense of ownership in the plan is created, leading to greater chances for political support and implementation' (Lachapelle and McCool 2005, 280). In developing an understanding of the concept, an expansion is proposed to clarify the definition of ownership according to three characteristics. Firstly 'ownership involves the processes by which voices are heard and considered legitimate and valid' (Lachapelle and McCool 2005, 281). This involves an assumption that certain ideas, forms of knowledge and definition of the problems are privileged over others, and that they influence the interactions between individuals and, ultimately, the choices they make to address particular situations.

Secondly, 'ownership involves not only the definition of the problem, but a voice in the outcome' (Lachapelle and McCool 2005). This means a redistribution of power in the outcome and, in this sense, how this will ultimately be controlled.

Finally, the third characteristic of ownership is concerned with 'its distribution across diverse social, political and ecological scales' (Lachapelle and McCool 2005, 282), and it involves the way plans and decisions reach those who will be directly affected by them. This refers to the way they come 'to own' these actions and it takes both horizontal and vertical channels of distribution.

Concerning the concept of leadership, we refer to an assessment of the works of James MacGregor Burns, Bernard M. Bass, Bruce J. Avolio and Kenneth Leithwood conducted by Jan Stewart (2006) to introduce the complexity of the concept through the description of two models. These models are instructional leadership and transformational leadership. Instructional leadership is primarily focused on school goals, curriculum instruction and the school environment, while transformational leadership deals with the restructuring of the school by improving school conditions (Stewart 2006).

Going a little further, it appears that instructional leadership is connected to a strong prescriptivism and the reliance on a top-down process of management. The emergence in the literature of such terms as shared leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership and, ultimately, transformational leadership seem to indicate 'a broader dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model, which many believe focused too much on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority' (Hallinger 2003, 330, quoted in Stewart 2006, 7).

Collecting the data – the interview process

The data was collected during two years of research, from November 2007 to September 2009, and the final report was submitted in December 2010. During this period, members of the research team, composed of ten researchers and two research fellows, including four specialists in music education, two drama specialists, three

psychologists, one sociologist, one higher education specialist, and one primary school teacher, travelled seven times to Madeira in order to cover different times of the school year. The research team was created when the application to the funding institution was being prepared. It brought together researchers from two institutions and two research centres: one from the College of Education of the Polytechnic Institute and one from the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto. Given the expectation that the GCEA project would involve a broad spectrum of epistemological points of analysis, it was believed that a multidisciplinary research team would be in a better position to address the expected challenges.

Methods of data collection were numerous: the GCEA documentation; unstructured interviews with key figures/mentors of the project and other coordination members; semi-structured interviews with music teachers; observations of several music and drama classes; attendance of public presentations; attendance of coordinating teacher meetings, children's focus group interviews, and researchers' field notes, as well as questionnaires that were sent to classroom teachers, specialist teachers and parents.

In this paper, we will consider the interviews carried out with John and Nora (January 2008, December 2008, February 2009) and Manuela (January 2008).³ The interviews were conducted by the two authors plus another member of the research team, and they were recorded in their entirety for later transcription. Subsequently, during other trips to Madeira, John and Nora were re-interviewed on two other occasions by other members of the research team while we had several informal conversations with Manuela, which contributed to inform one or other aspect of our observations of the whole project process in the field. The interviews were conducted within the framework of an unstructured open-ended interview with the researchers acting as moderators intentionally wanting to understand the language and culture of the respondents, but not imposing any a priori categorisation that could limit our access to the field of inquiry (Denzin and Lincoln 2008).

All interviews were transcribed and extensively discussed in the regular collective meetings of the research team, using both content analysis for identification of emerging themes and narrative inquiry for the approach to the different participants' discourse. Field notes from observations made of music and drama classes as well as meetings of the coordinating teachers were re-examined for the purpose of conferring consistency to the proposed categories of analysis.

In this context, the following themes are a result of our conversations, analysis and re-analysis through a systematic process of examining our own perceptions as researchers and extracting meaning from the collected data.

Theme 1 – innovation

In our first interviews with John (mentor and initiator of the project) and Nora and Manuela (coordinators), it was our intention to capture the original concept of the beginnings back in the 1980s. The first time we sat with John in his office, we had already spent one whole day in the GCEA, looking through a myriad of documentation and trying to figure out for ourselves how the project had arrived at its current size. We decided to begin our conversation at this point, wanting to understand how he might feel looking back in time and positioning himself as the

initiator. John spoke fluently as if he just needed to let his thought patterns speak for themselves:

1st Interview – January 2008

John: 28 years ago when this all began, I was only 25 years old. I was so young and had no idea where this all would go. I dare say that not even our Secretary of Education could imagine the size that this would develop into. We began a pilot study in two schools with a year-long in-service primary school teacher-training program. Because my initial idea was that the primary school teachers would later be the ones to teach music to all children on the island. In the pilot experiment I did the supervision together with my best Music Conservatoire students.

It seems very important for him to stress this starting point back in the 1980s when he still believed that he could implement the project without hiring music specialists. He also tells us about his work with a colleague, Luisa, who had done a specialisation in drama and talked him into the idea of making it part of the music classes. It was not until two years later that he decided to begin to work with music specialists. He then realised that the offer of an ongoing music and drama training programme for primary school teachers had not reached the point of giving them confidence to address these areas in their classes on a regular basis.

John: You know, I began to have two kinds of attendees in my training program. The 40 to 50 year-old primary school teachers with all their lack of musical skills, and that group of younger students eager to learn and showing a totally different attitude (...). Two years later I gave up on the idea that general teachers could be responsible for these areas [Music and Drama], and began to work with this group of younger students who should work closely with the classroom teacher.

It seems crucial for John that we get the real picture of his initial idea. Even having reached the conclusion that the primary school teachers could not take over the music and drama teaching, he does not want to give us the wrong picture:

John: But I didn't give up! For more than 10 years I had regular workshops with primary school teachers. There was a time when I had more than 400 teachers attending. Yes, they loved it, and even tried to do their best in schools but I felt that they needed support so that the project could become really significant.

It is at this moment that John wants to stress the particularly innovative character of 'his' project. He wants us to get the most accurate vision of his ideas as far as the collaborative work between the classroom teacher and the specialist teacher is concerned:

John: It wasn't by chance that I gave the name of 'support teacher' to the music and drama specialists. Music and Drama is part of the school curriculum so the classroom teacher should never feel they are not part of the process. In fact they must assume the need for assistance in these matters while not turning their backs on it, so they don't feel they are not responsible for the whole of the curriculum. That is why they must (emphatically stressing the word) stay in class during the music and drama activities.

As we asked 'and ... they do stay'? John admitted that this is the weakness of the project though it has been worse than it is right now: 'There are still some of them

that take advantage of the presence of the support teacher to take care of their own affairs but I would say that 90% stay in class’.

About this, Nora is particularly eloquent. This is an important issue for her, namely, the concept of ‘cooperative teaching’.

Nora began her contact with the GCEA as a music and drama support teacher. She had worked with John as a Conservatoire student before she went to the mainland to take her Music Education degree. Back in Madeira, she worked as a music educator in the field till she was invited to join the GCEA as a coordinator. She feels proud of her academic and professional career that she has consciously built with the idea of contributing positively to the development of music education in Madeira: ‘... and having served in the GCEA for four years as a support teacher I knew the system’s organisation, the philosophy of the project and the culture of the institution very well’.

Concerning the issue of collaboration between the classroom teacher and the support teacher, Nora has strong, clear ideas that, from her point of view, are the touchstone of the particularly innovative character of this project:

1st Interview – January 2008

Nora: When I started at the GCEA as a coordinator I thought that after all these years we needed to stop and reflect on the work done. I began to implement a reflexive attitude towards teaching and the need to innovate. But our discussion showed that the concept of innovation is multilayered, and I felt the need to go on with my studies, and that is why I did my Master’s in Pedagogical Innovation. It had everything to do with my work here. I read our meeting minutes, and learned that ‘the classroom teacher does not cooperate with the support teacher’ or ‘the classroom teacher leaves the room when we teach music and drama’, and thought ‘where does the philosophy of this project go?’ However there were also positive descriptions of good practices in collaborative teaching. That’s when I decided to carry out an action research for my Master’s dissertation in a classroom where I knew the teacher was open to collaboration. (...) She [the classroom teacher] was like another pupil in the class, she sang, played, and danced, which was acknowledged by the children as a completely normal situation. It was a very rich experience, and one that absolutely contained the essence of the GCEA project.

This notion that the project is unique also appears in Manuela’s narrative, the other coordinator in the GCEA, and Nora’s right-hand person in her and John’s own words.

Manuela’s story, as the youngest coordinator, goes back to her third grade in school when she already had access to the GCEA’s specialist music and drama teaching. She remembers how the teacher talked her mother into providing music lessons for her at the Conservatoire, given her interest and level of musical skills. After completing high school, she decided to apply for a Piano degree in Lisbon. As she didn’t pass the entrance examinations, she applied for Music Education and completed the same degree as Nora. Having done international workshops in Orff instrumental playing, Manuela started to teach in Madeira as a support teacher in primary schools. Meanwhile, she completed a Master’s in Music Education and was invited by John (her former teacher at the Conservatoire) to join the GCEA as a coordinator. She is not only in charge of the whole supervision network and works closely with the teachers’ coordinators but also has direct intervention through regular visits to observe music and drama classes. Manuela’s vision of the project’s uniqueness appears to be strongly connected to what she understands of its mission:

1st Interview – January 2008

Manuela: It is about providing a number of different experiences, not only the recorder, but also singing, dancing, giving children the opportunities to create a movement . . . Reaching all children with some of what music is really about, as I say: ‘try to motivate children with a good repertoire (. . .) good *blues*, good *rock*, prepare simple arrangements for the recorder.’ (. . .) Our intention, the GCEA’s intention, is to change musical practices, that’s it.

A discourse about leadership was systematically present in the three interviews we did with John. He tended to address this issue as a central one, directly dependent on his decision-making and connected to the survival of the project.

2nd Interview – December 2008

John: I guess I made the right choice when choosing my leaders. Nora is really a highly competent leader. You know, not everybody is born to be a leader because sometimes you may say ‘yes’ but at other times you have to say ‘no’. You mustn’t be afraid of saying ‘no’. And you shouldn’t be lobbying to defend your colleagues. The problem here is that leaders tend to be recruited among their peers, and at the end they just mutually defend each other and the projects get stuck. (. . .) That is why I always try, when choosing my closest assistants, to choose people with these leadership skills. People highly dedicated to the project and to the institution, and, above all, people that are able to learn. I believe that we need to be a learning organisation; we need to learn from each other.

Theme 2 – concepts of music education

Throughout our interviews with John and Nora (and to a certain extent also with Manuela), the issue of the project’s underlying concepts of music education became a recurrent issue that we wanted to understand, first from the voices of our participants, and secondly through our own observations in the field. Although the narratives that we recorded showed a significant level of reflexive thinking, we felt the need to scrutinise the ways of speaking about what was really happening in terms of a praxis in the schools. Given the fact that the GCEA issued four music textbooks to be used primarily in the music and drama classes, it seemed necessary to understand to what extent the concept of teaching and learning music and drama was present and was being passed on to the support teachers working in the field as educational system guidelines.

Throughout the three interviews with John, we brought this theme up on more than one occasion. He answered in a variety of ways, referring to his own musical background and the key figures that he acknowledges as having shaped his own musical development:

3rd Interview, February 2009

John: When this project started, back in 1980, it took place following my own experience with Pierre Van Hauwe on courses in Porto. As you know, my musical education took place at the Madeira Conservatoire where we were very well trained as instrumentalists. However, we had no preparation as teachers, not even as teachers of instruments. We had no courses in pedagogy or methodology. Through Pierre I became acquainted with the possibility of using Carl Orff’s and Zoltan Kodaly’s notions of music pedagogy, i.e., instrumental and vocal pedagogy. As I began to work in this direction with my students at the Conservatoire it made all the more sense to take it into primary schools. I just replicated with the children what I was already doing with my students. Yes, that was the basis at that time. And then we decided to include Drama education through my collaboration with Luisa, a colleague from the Teacher Education College, her ideas from the Dalcroze methodology and others with whom

she had specialised. Finally, we got hold of the Madeira chordophones⁴ as we acknowledge the importance of having children value their own traditional musical instruments. And we immediately started with methodologies for teaching these instruments. We must say that twenty-four years ago almost nobody was playing these instruments except for a small number of older people in rural areas.

In this area, John goes on to explain the role of the GCEA in revitalising traditional instruments, and how they are being played today by hundreds of children and young people in small ensembles and as solo instruments. And back again to pedagogy:

John: Taking the very best of Orff and Kodaly's methods as well as others, we went on to seek our own way of permanent development, which was always based on the annual cycle of planning, implementing and evaluating. (...) For us, each school year must take that into account, making the necessary steps for change so that the project won't disappear. Had we not followed this logic, the project would be dead.

Besides John, who commits himself to Orff and Kodaly, our conversations with Nora and Manuela revealed that they both tend to rely on their own degrees in Music Education to be able to recognise 'good or bad practices'. The fact that the support teachers should preferably follow the music textbooks ('but we never impose... teachers are free to use their own materials...') determines that the main lines of musical activities are around performance. As already mentioned, a systematic analysis of these books revealed that the whole content is targeted towards performance, neglecting composition and music appreciation activities, which was confirmed by our own observation of the classes.

Concerning the drama education part of the classes, it is acknowledged by Nora and Manuela that when Luisa retired (the drama specialist who had been part of the project from its beginnings) 'drama education was somewhat lost, and teachers are uncomfortable addressing its basis, its playful character and its specific techniques'. Our own observation of classes confirmed that miming songs and small choreographies were the most common situations that were understood by teachers as the 'drama education part' of their lessons.

Theme 3 – teacher's initial and continuing education

In the discourses of our three participants, teacher education appears as the touchstone for the success of the project. The word 'supervision' is part of all narratives concerning how the project is monitored in the field. As has already been explained, when it all started back in the 1980s teachers' recruitment relied solely on the island resources. Today, teachers are recruited mainly from the various music education colleges on the mainland, which is a source of some criticism concerning the lack of music education skills in some areas.

3rd Interview, February 2009

John: You know, we need to recruit our teachers from different sources, i.e., coming from different colleges of education on the mainland. And, in my point of view... some of them are not prepared enough in terms of voice and Orff pedagogy. They are very skilful with their own instrument but they lack good vocal skills and also the preparation to work with children at the level of choral conducting. Furthermore, they have had experience with Orff instruments but lack the necessary methodological know-how.

John, Nora and Manuela are proud of having a system that strongly privileges supervision. When asked about the teachers' reactions to the need to have their classes regularly supervised by the coordinators, they have independently given the same answer: 'They always say that they have already been supervised in their music education degree [the so-called *Licentiate degree in Music Education*]. We reply that what they have is a licence to learn. Nora is in charge, together with Manuela, of the whole supervision system.

2nd Interview – December 2008

Nora: I coordinate here in the GCEA the Arts Education department, and Manuela is my right-hand person. She works directly with schools and with the coordinating teachers. I meet weekly with her and we try to solve all the problems that may arise following the visits to the schools. Every fortnight the coordinating teachers come here for a meeting, and they also meet with their support teachers. In this way, directives are passed on through the whole system.

Our attempts to understand the supervision model in more depth were not always met by a coherent discourse among the three. John tries to clarify:

2nd Interview – December 2008

John: Supervision from our point of view only makes sense if it goes together with on-going education. So, when people arrive they are firstly integrated into the philosophy of the project. They must understand our model. In September we provide a week of integration so that they all understand how this works, what the procedures are, how it all develops throughout the school year. (...) Later, the teachers will be permanently accompanied by their coordinator. Every two weeks they meet with their colleagues and coordinator for pedagogical work, sharing experiences, exchanging opinions, and also evaluating their performance, why this worked out, why that didn't... So you can say it is also a process of on-going education.

And he goes on to praise the number and the type of opportunities that are offered to the teachers to further develop their musical and teaching skills:

John: Our teachers can attend a number of different workshops throughout the school year. For example, concerning choral singing there is an opportunity throughout the whole year, the same goes for the Madeira chordophones. (...) we always say: "if you don't have the necessary skills in traditional Madeira instruments you just have to sign up for a workshop here in the GCEA. You don't even have to pay."

In our informal meetings with Nora and Manuela, ongoing education of the music and drama teachers seems to be a problem in the sense that, in their point of view, teachers tend to neglect the need for a systematic updating of their theoretical and practical skills and do not sign up for the many workshops that are offered by the GCEA. In this area, John always comes back to the magnitude of the project and the need to focus on the quality of the teaching practices.

3rd Interview, February 2009

John: It is important to clarify that what we have here is a regional project, not just a local one. It has a regional coordination, it includes supervision, which means that I need to know what is happening in the music and drama classes: "if I don't know what you are doing in your classes, I cannot guarantee the success of the project". Therefore we have the figure of the coordinating teacher who shouldn't, in any way, be seen as an

inspector! They are just specialists like the other teachers, and they teach their own classes. The only difference is that they have a reduced teaching schedule in order to be able to support their younger colleagues. [. . .] In this way not only will good practices be acknowledged but also bad ones, those that need to be eradicated. At the end of each class there is a conversation about what was good and what can be improved, and a written report is agreed on between the two parties and returned to us [the GCEA].

Listening to the voices of our participants in the three narratives, a great consonance is perceived as themes arise and notions of ownership and leadership are shaped and reshaped through their accounts of the different phases of the project's construction.

In the final part of this paper, we will discuss the two concepts, ownership and leadership, in view of the literature, and as they appear through the narratives, sometimes clearly elucidated and sometimes vaguely or ambiguously alluded to by the participants.

Final discussion – coming to ownership and leadership

In the narratives given in this paper, we encountered a clear sequence of events within a given context, displaying the involvement of the different participants (*sequentiality*), a communication of subjectivity (the *factual indifference*), the assumption of a certain originality (*departures from the canonical*) and the imbalances and ambiguities (*dramatic quality*) that characterise, according to Bruner, the development of a story. Temporality appeared in the three narratives as the move from the past, to the present and to the future, where the development and implementation of the project was played out in relation to their personal and social lives, which are contextualised and situated.

As we started to listen to our interviewees, mentor and coordinating people in the Madeira project, we began to make sense out of discourses that had both common and repeated elements as well as shared meanings while showing some of each one's particular approaches. In many instances, we came across their insights into the world of 'self-making' and 'self-telling' while addressing the nature and shape of selfhood in their process of owning and leading the project. This is clearly in line with Bruner's insights into the world of making stories.

The three identified themes – innovation, concepts of music education and a teacher's initial and continuing education – came out in the narratives of our three participants with a strong coherence, despite the obvious lines of delimitation between John, Nora and Manuela. John appears as the mentor, the one that started the project, the big leader, and its natural 'owner'. In his own words, he chose Nora as his right-hand person and Manuela as Nora's right-hand person. John manages and controls the whole project, has a clear idea about its beginnings, its development and how it should be preserved from internal and external threats. In that sense, his narrative also follows the previously described characteristics of human storytelling. On the other hand, he seems to be aware of the need to express things as they need to be said, much as in Bruner's idea that we should be looking for what people say and why they say it, independently from what they do. In this particular case, John gives us a completely organised discourse concerning what he considers to be the touchstones for the continuity of his project and the need to defend it against possible threats. As the initiator, he tends to assume entire responsibility for the orientations and its course of development in the last 30 years while acknowledging

its weaknesses. The latter mainly came out when confronted with the feedback of our own music and drama class observations, namely, the absence of music appreciation and creative activities on the one hand, and a somewhat narrow perspective for drama education. He points out as possible reasons problems with today's initial teacher training and the lack of motivation shown by the specialists to improve their skills through the in-service workshops regularly offered by the GCEA. This is an idea that was also present in Nora's narrative. She appeared to us as the most articulate in philosophical and pedagogical terms, though more distanced from the work of the teachers in the field. As a matter of fact, she hardly communicates directly with them. Their dialogues tend to be mediated by the intermediate intervention of the coordinating teachers, and in some cases by Manuela, the contact person with the support teachers.

These ideas bring us to the concepts of ownership and leadership as they run through the narratives of our three participants.

Going back to the aforementioned first characteristic that defines the concept of ownership, in other words, the 'processes by which voices are heard and considered legitimate and valid', John's narrative about the construction of the Madeira project, tells us how he developed this kind of ownership of process, by starting to negotiate the involvement of the primary school teachers and, later, the music and drama specialists so that he had reached such an authoritative status that he could convince the Regional Secretary of Education to give the necessary funds to start the GCEA. In fact, his expertise, and tenacity led to the implementation of a process where the music educational community he had built around him reached a shared responsibility and ownership with the political decision-makers through working together to achieve mutual goals.

Concerning the second characteristic, 'ownership involves not only the definition of the problem, but a voice in the outcome', we argue that our three participants showed an ambiguous position concerning this matter and that a process that should be inherently dynamic and potentially highly creative, often seemed to be formalised through meetings where information was mostly disseminated one-way with little input from the performers at the other end of the continuum: the teachers and the children. The urge that the GCEA shows to control the whole process appears to lead to a precarious redistribution of power over the outcomes and, therefore, promotes little or no intervention from the side of those that work in the field – the schools.

With reference to the last characteristic, 'its distribution across diverse social, political and ecological scales', the coordinators from the GCEA seem to have developed a somewhat limited capacity to construct ownership over the institutional boundaries. In our research we have found, especially among the specialist teachers that are native to the island, this notion of ownership towards the whole project. However, it seemed to be more connected with the best execution of the delivered planning from above than with direct involvement in its conception. As noted in the literature, 'successful planning is more than simply producing a product (i.e., the final planning document) but rather involves other significant dimensions related to learning, relationship building, interest representation, and social and political acceptability' (Lachapelle and McCool 2005, 282).

The distribution of leadership among the coordinators of the GCEA may be best ascribed, at least at the beginnings of the project, to the instructional leadership

model as previously identified in the literature. John's speech about the choice of 'right-hand people' puts the decisions essentially on his side, based on what he believes to be the urge for accountability of the project in view of his funding sources, mainly the regional government. However, his close collaborators, and more specifically Nora, might have contributed to a slight shift towards a distributed leadership in the sense of the transformational model where:

...leadership occurs when one or more persons engage with one another and they increase their levels of motivation and morality (...). The result of this leadership is a mutual relationship that converts followers to leaders and leaders into moral agents. (Stewart 2006, 9)

Nora's narrative shows this level of assumption with the project, and we almost dare say that she would be prepared to be the next leader. Having said that, it remains to be clarified to what extent John would be prepared to withdraw from the leadership and ultimate control of the GCEA, and also how far Nora's own notion of leadership is instructional rather than transformational. In view of her actual planning and style of one-way decision dissemination to the entire system, this is an issue that remains to be further explored.

In the next and last section of this paper, we would like to look into the future of the GCEA project and add a few lines that put into perspective not only our role as researchers in this particular environment but also the implications it may have for both its healthy survival and music education on the mainland.

Looking forward

In this paper, we have made an attempt to look at part of our research data from the point of view of narrative inquiry, with an emphasis on the emerging concepts of ownership and leadership. We are aware that the richness of the data collected leaves aside a number of issues that must be faced with the GCEA leaders. These include the support teachers and, most significantly, our own observations of the music and drama classes, aimed at collecting data about the whole area of music and drama content. This last point has already been reported in other papers addressing further aspects of this research. It is through the triangulation of all this research material that tensions, conflicts and successful outcomes may ultimately help to shed light on and unveil the complexity of this fascinating project.

Another issue deserving attention relates to our roles as researchers in this specific project. The GCEA's 30 years of implementing music and drama on Madeira signified, from their point of view, an expectation that our intervention would have both a formative and an evaluative counterpart. However, as this was research funded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the researchers worked in total independence from all the project participants and, most significantly, from its coordination. Although we would like to stress here the full collaboration of the GCEA, unrestrictedly opening for us the doors that enabled our understanding of this project, the fact is that the research team had a delicate job to fulfil when writing the final report. The evaluative aspects were communicated to the coordinators from the GCEA and coordinating teachers in the context of a final meeting, while

recommendations in terms of the identified fragilities were made so as to provide a few guidelines for the future.

As far as the aspects that were approached in this paper are concerned, we would like to offer two final ideas that may be taken as *leitmotifs* for the further development of the Madeira Music and Drama project, thinking in terms of a qualitative transformation and bearing in mind the previously developed concepts of ownerships and leadership. From our point of view, these are the touchstones that stress the importance of looking at this project in terms of its strong potential to inform music and drama education on the mainland as well as apply it to the wider international music education community. As far as we are aware of, a project with this consistency and level of implementation, over such a long period of time, does not exist. Learning from its weaknesses and understanding its strengths is, therefore, a major challenge.

First, we suggest that the GCEA project would gain from a more widely shared ownership and a more inclusive distribution of power among all its participants. Rather than the limited interaction of the small group of coordinators, a redistribution of ownership could give to all those involved in the project, a genuine sense of input and control over processes and outcomes.

Second, the project would profit from a significant shift from instructional to transformational leadership in order to become more innovative, to establish steady connections among the whole staff, and to focus on a shared vision of its goals and values.

The ultimate positive impact for the hundreds of children involved in arts education (music and drama) on Madeira warrants closer attention is given to these issues.

Notes

1. From here on, the word 'project' will be systematically used as referring to the GCEA's implementation of music and drama in primary schools, while this investigation will be named either as 'study' or 'research'.
2. For further information please consult http://dre.madeira-edu.pt/gcea/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=41&Itemid=188&lang=pt
3. Fictional names.
4. The Madeira chordophones are the *Braguinha* (a small guitar with a flat back and four metal strings); the *Rajão* (a slightly bigger relative of the *braguinha* with six metal strings) and the *Viola de Arame* (similar to the Spanish guitar but smaller with nine strings). <http://www.atlasofpluckedinstruments.com/europe.htm> accessed on the 27 December 2010.

Notes on contributor

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