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Emotional Education and Early School Leaving: A comparison

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ISPA Conference

Manchester Metropolitan University, 2017

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Structure

- Why we carried out the research
- Our theoretical framework
- Our research questions
- Initial findings
- Questions?

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Why do the research?

Involvement in ERASMUS+ project

Interested in comparing different countries' conceptualisations of EE and how they perceive links with ESL.

Early School Leaving

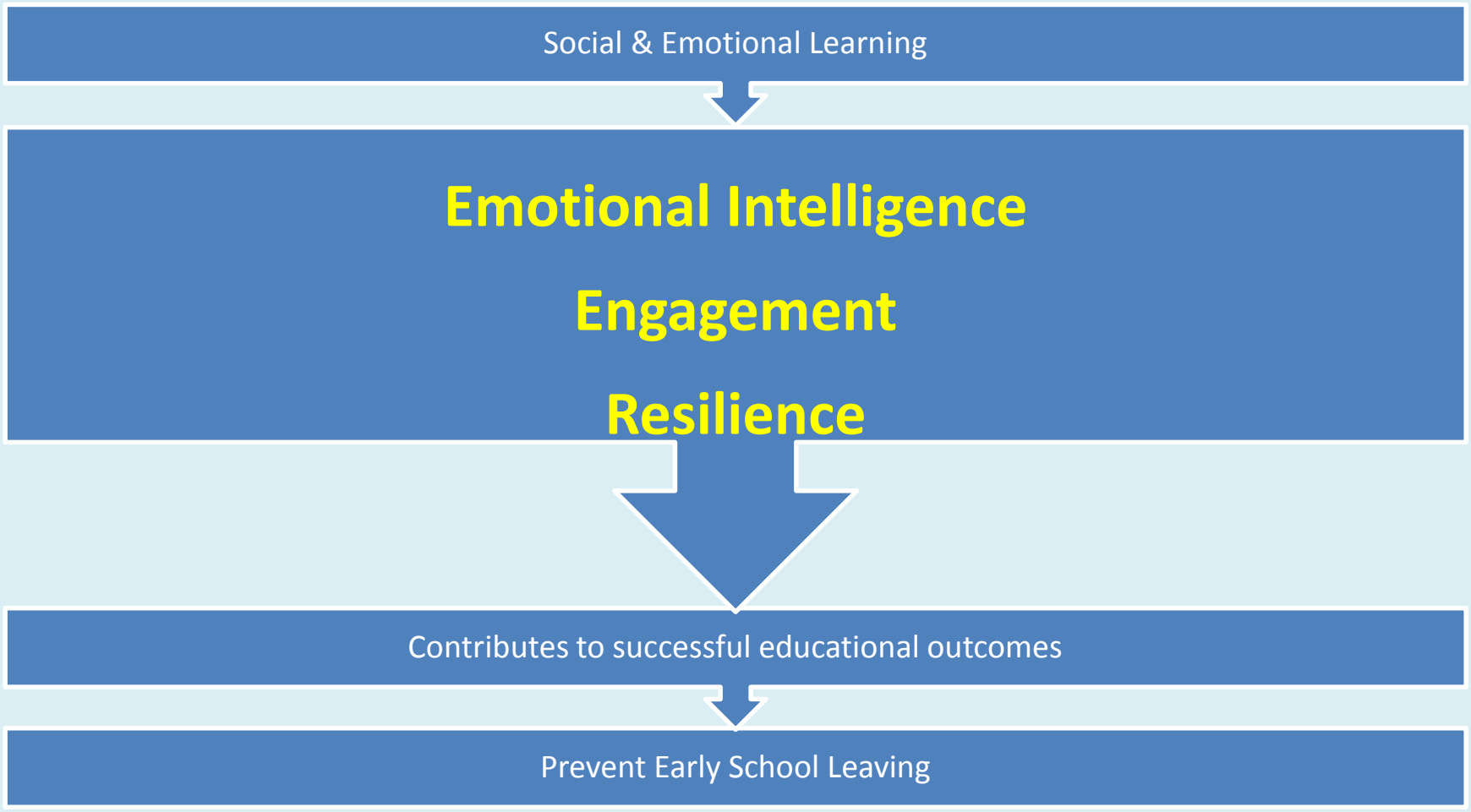
Early school leaving is about early exit from a formal education system before having attained the socially agreed level of education.

Villalba (2014)

It is a particular problem across Europe, including economic and social costs. It is often seen as the outcome of a process of declining school engagement.

(European Commission, 2013)

Theoretical Framework



Emotional Intelligence

- Emotional intelligence is 'the ability to observe the emotions of oneself and others while utilizing these observations in the direction of one's behaviour and thinking' (Salovey & Mayer, 1989)
- Fundamental set of abilities
- Emotional knowledge predicts academic performance (Izard 2002)

Engagement

Why engagement?

Engagement as a concept has had an explosion of interest in the last 25 years (Skinner and Pitzer, 2012). This interest has come about due to what has been described as a decline in student engagement in the last few decades, particularly in secondary schools in the Western world (Eccles and Midgely, 1989; Wilms, 2003; Deakin-Crick, 2012).

What is engagement

Engagement is a complex multidimensional construct consisting of three main components, the behavioural, the cognitive and the emotional (Fredricks, Blumenfield and Paris, 2004)

Resilience

"a variable quality that derives from a process of repeated interactions between a person and favourable features of the surrounding context in a person's life." Gilligan (2004:94)

"Resilience is not considered an attribute or personality trait that some children possess and others do not, but rather a developmental process."

Gutman & Schoon (2013:27)

Working Research Questions

1. How do teachers and education professionals in six countries across Europe (Italy, England, Hungary, Austria, Romania and Turkey) conceptualise their role in providing emotional education in schools?
2. To what extent do teachers and education professionals in these countries believe that emotional education is related to preventing early school dropout?
3. In what ways do teachers and education professionals in these countries believe that emotional education can contribute to preventing early school dropout?

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Data Collection

Online questionnaire (minimum 100 education professionals per country N=600)

Individual interviews with education professionals (approx. 10 in each country)

Emerging Themes from qualitative data

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1. Conceptualisation
2. Relationship between emotional education and early school leaving
3. The interaction of the role of Schools and Family
4. Implications for practice

Theme 1 – Conceptualisation and role of emotional education

Consistency in definitions and understanding of emotional education.

A common understanding of conceptualisation of emotional education.

'Discovering themselves. Knowing themselves better.' **(Romania)**

However, there were some anomalies

'It doesn't exist' **(Hungary)**

4 out of 8 interviewees from Austria were unable to define emotional education

Theme 2 – Relationship between emotional education and early school leaving

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There were different push and pull factors that reflected the cultural and economic contexts of each country.

Economic – Turkey, Romania

Feelings of failure - Romania

Lack of belonging – Hungary, UK

Family factors – Italy, Austria, UK

Mental health - UK

Theme 3 – The interaction of the role of Schools and Family

All 6 countries indicated that the responsibility for emotional education was primarily located within the family.

"collaboration with the families as they are the first actor in the emotional education" **(Italy)**

For the UK, emotional education was instrumental in achieving academic success, which highlights the schools' responsibility for emotional education.

'Hugely important part of the jigsaw' **(UK)**

Theme 4 – Implications for practice

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Expert vs holistic approaches

Expert: Hungary, Austria, Turkey

Holistic: Romania, UK, Italy

Suggestions

- **Expert approach: drama pedagogy, psychologists in every school, punitive measures for parents for non-attendance**
- **Holistic approach: ITE and CPD, teacher self-awareness, targeted support for vulnerable students, collaboration between parents and teachers, curriculum integration**

Questions?

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