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## I. Theory

### 1.1. Designing Learning Units: A constructivist approach

*By Sara Figueras, Blanquerna FPCEE – Ramon Llull University*

*The predominance of fragmented learning divided up into disciplines (...) should be replaced by learning that can grasp subjects within their context, their complex, their totality.*

Edgar Morin

#### 1.1.1. Constructivism as the epistemological base of this proposal

Before dealing with the theoretical-practical approach to learning unit programming, we consider it appropriate to provide this chapter with quite specific a framework or paradigm in order to better understand the global sense of our proposal.

Guba (1990) argued that a paradigm is a fundamental set of beliefs guiding human action. In this sense, from a paradigm we are able to understand and give meaning to the world around us, and explain it according to the interpretation keys provided by the paradigm itself. Therefore, it is fundamental to delimit the paradigm or base for this chapter, in order to interpret and give sense to the proposal from a specific perspective, which in our case will be constructivism.

The characteristics of constructivism have been explained by many authors (Piaget, 1954; Novak 1988, 1993; Bruner, 1990; and Denzil & Lincoln, 1994). They all share a basic and common epistemological assumption, which entails stating that, whether there is a reality external to the observer or not, the meaning of reality is only accessible through the construction of interpretation dimensions. The idea is, then, that individuals proactively construct meaning attribution models about the world and themselves (Bruner, 1990), which vary and are modified according to experience and social meetings that take place every day. Therefore, the epistemological assumption of constructivism is that "reality" is built actively by individuals according to some meaning attribution models.

The concern of constructivism about "meaning" is quite recent and starts from the so-called second cognitive revolution caused, among others, by Jerome Bruner's work. The author of *Acts of meaning* claims for a return to origins by recovering those theses that represented the shift from behavioural psychology to the cognitive renewal started in 1956 and 1965.

As can be remembered, cognitive psychology adopted the computational metaphor as the matrix that explained information processing, disregarding, according to Bruner (1990), what was to be the strongest concern of cognitive psychology, that is, the construction of meanings. In this sense, the concern about *information* was eventually given priority over *meaning*, and the concern about *processing this information* was prioritised over *meaning construction* processes.

Cognitive processes were eventually compared to computer program executing processes, and the process of mind was put on a par with the computational process; then, shortly after an analogy arose between mechanisms that explain human mind and mechanisms that explain *virtual mind*. The disregard for meaning and its construction and negotiation processes in communities turned the first cognitive revolution into a more sophisticated version of mentalism, as both stimuli and responses of behavioural psychology were simply replaced by *inputs* and *outputs*.

In this sense, Bruner's (1990, 1996) work aims at restoring the issue of meaning in this second cognitive revolution. The main objective of this second moment is to understand and describe the meanings that we create from our meetings in the world in order to determine the underlying meaning construction processes. Culture becomes a key element in this interpretation of meaning attribution processes on the part of subjects. Although these processes are developed individually, the origin of meanings is always cultural, as the meanings that we give to things are not original, but rather have their origin in exchange and negotiation processes in the community framework. *Culturalism* (Bruner, 1996) becomes the linchpin to understand the world through meanings available in social practices.

This revaluation of the role of culture in meaning attribution processes represents a significant change from the initial proposals of cognitive theses. Although Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development is based on the idea of integral interaction, with a relationship of interdependence between the subject and the object (Parrat-Dayana, 1998), it has to be considered that the role given to the object or medium is secondary and not very explanatory of individual compensation and balance mechanisms that allow the subject to adapt his/her mental structures. The proposals in the second cognitive revolution consider the environment not just as a simple "setting" where the individual develops actions and where he/she *assimilates* elements in order to *adjust* them in an intrapsychic process of structural transformation, but as an element that interacts with the subject in a proactive and transforming manner. So the individual interacts and exchanges shared meanings through cultural tools, and his/her meanings build his/her social reality.

So far, we have tried to give a base to our didactic proposal, which is to be understood within the framework of the constructivist paradigm presented above.

### 1.1.2. Learning Unit

The epistemological framework offered by constructivism forces us to reconsider teaching and learning processes. Knowledge, from this perspective, is understood as a process of joint construction that does not only depend on an intrapsychic process, but culture also has an important role when negotiating and constructing meanings. This involves setting didactic interventions out from every pupil's previous knowledge and meanings, adjusting and sequencing learning and assessment objectives, content and activities, in a process ascribed into a *learning unit*.

In this sense, Gallego (1997) presents a learning unit as an immediate action project that contextualizes and sequences school tasks for a group of pupils, states some objectives, selects some content, chooses appropriate methods, and finally verifies the educational processes of pupils. Programming has to be considered, from the constructivist point of view, as a joint action for pupils and teacher with the objective of planning the educational process bearing in mind the centre's educational project and the pupils' own characteristics. In this chapter, we will attempt to present the basic characteristics of the learning unit, as well as to analyze its different elements from a theoretical and practical perspective.

The basic characteristics of a learning unit have been summarized by Medina and Salvador (2002), by stating that a programming unit has to show: (a) coherence with the school's overall project; (b) contextualization in a certain educational reality with certain children; (c) real practical use or applicability; (d) realistic in its possibilities of success; (e) collaborative and interdisciplinary aspects in its initial design; (f) flexibility when being put into practice; and finally (g) diversity when developing tasks proposed.

Before analyzing and describing the different elements of a learning unit from a theoretical and practical perspective, it is essential to remember at this moment that the

nature of the MOST project implies mobility of prospective teachers and putting into practice their educational interventions in schools from different European countries. This is the reason why we propose, as a previous step before developing the elements of the learning unit, to have some basic knowledge of the country where the educational intervention has to be carried out, at the level of its history, cultures and, certainly, educational policies. The framework of this previous knowledge will guarantee the understanding of the teaching practice developed in schools from different European countries.

Once clarified this need to get to know the host country, we now want to analyse the basic elements of a learning unit that Gil (1997) and the UNESCO chair specify as follows:

1. Initial evaluation
2. Specification of objectives
3. Description of content
4. Selection of learning activities
5. Methodological approach
6. Assessment strategies

In order to make this proposal more intelligible, we will develop each element in two ways: firstly, we will present the elements from a theoretical point of view, and secondly we will set out an example or practical case, using a fictitious axis called "European citizenship." Let it be clear from now that Point 6 of assessment strategies will be included in our proposal in section 4, called in our case design of learning and assessment activities.<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1.3. Initial evaluation

#### *Description of element:*

Initial evaluation implies to analyse previous ideas and knowledge of pupils concerning the issue to be worked on with the objective of promoting learning improvement and adjusting didactic strategies more effectively to their capacities and interests (Tejada, 1999). Therefore, this is an individual and group process that will help the teacher to describe the teaching goals of the intervention in more detail, and will also be helpful to propose individualized curricular adaptations for those pupils with learning difficulties.

Initial evaluation can be carried out differently, although the most common ways are as follows:

- (a) *Individual and in written:* In this case, the teacher would write a list of questions in a piece of paper to be answered by pupils anonymously, if appropriate, and individually. Once the questions have been answered, the teacher collects and analyses them in order to rewrite his/her teaching goals. This structure makes it easy to initially assess all pupils quickly, but it is restrictive and limited, as the instrument is often unable to grasp all the meanings and knowledge of pupils about a topic.
- (b) *Collective and oral:* In this case, the analysis of previous ideas is carried out through a conversation led by the teacher, who addresses the class group and asks different questions about the topic to be programmed. This formula is slower and requires strong and precise conduction from the teacher so as not to let the conversation drift to the pupils' other fields of interest. On the other hand, this conversation, free and shared between pupils and teacher, enhances the elicitation of ideas and shows the pupils' interactions among pieces of knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> This decision will be later justified.

more clearly, although some care has to be taken so that the dialogue does not end up by being monopolized by a reduced group of pupils, initially more motivated by the topic. So this is a very enriching manner to understand the initial state of the question in every pupil.

In any case, the initial evaluation can have a correcting value for the teacher; that is, this is a moment to highly motivate the pupils' free cognitive exploration in order to analyse the pupils' previous cognitive structure with regard to the topic. For the same reason, if this element is carried out properly, it will become an activity that promotes motivation for the topic to be worked on.

An interesting way of finishing individual or collective initial evaluations is by creating a poster or mural with a synthesis of all the ideas that pupils have written or explained in their conversation, whether they are appropriate or not. In this way, at the end of the intervention or learning unit, the revision of old ideas and knowledge from the initial evaluation can be used to reinforce the pupils' new cognitive structure.

#### *Practical case:*

Once situated in the country where we will develop our intervention and guaranteed our knowledge of the school and the psychological characteristics of the pupils with whom we will carry out our learning unit, in our case twelve-year-old boys and girls, we will start the initial evaluation of the ideas that our pupils show concerning the topic to be worked on: "European citizenship." Below we present some questions that could be useful to elicit the pupils' ideas and knowledge about the topic. In this case, we propose an analysis of previous ideas through a collective and oral initial evaluation. The questions that we could use as guidelines would be for example:

- Have you heard about the European Union? What countries belong to it?
- Do you know what the flag is like?
- Have you been to any other European country? Which?
- Would you like to study or work in any other European country? Which? Why?
- What languages are spoken in Europe?
- Do you think that the diversity of languages is a problem or a treasure?
- What would you ask a pupil from a Belgian school?
- What do you think we all Europeans have in common?
- What concerns do we Europeans have?
- What does feeling European mean? Do you feel European?

#### 1.1.4. Teaching Goals

##### *Description of element:*

In this case, the idea is to specify the goals that pupils have to attain individually throughout the educational process. These goals can be adapted and individualized depending on the previous evaluation carried out by the teacher at the beginning of the intervention.

Beyond grammar needs, it is important to specify teaching goals properly in order to facilitate the progression of the educational process among the pupils. For this reason, we will discuss some characteristics that always have to be taken into account when formulating teaching goals in a learning unit.

- (a) *Flexibility in the initial design:* Teaching goals have to be flexible concerning the possibility to be written or structured again after the results of the initial evaluation with the class group, both from a group and individual points of view (Medina & Salvador, 2002).

- (b) *Goals versus purposes*: Teaching goals have to establish objectives attainable through an educational process that takes into account the different learning rates of pupils in the class group. In this sense, it is important not to mistake teaching goals for learning purposes, because while the former are concrete and attainable, the latter present general tendencies, to what end things are done, but are never attainable ultimately.
- (c) *They have to be liable to evaluation*: Teaching goals have to be written in such a way as to establish the degree of specification and resolution and, therefore, all the participants in the educational process should be able to evaluate them at the beginning, continuously, or at the end, through learning or assessment activities (Fernández & Elortegui, 1999).
- (d) *They have to be complex in their design*: Teaching goals have to establish objectives that include not only the acquisition of theoretical concepts, but also at the level of skills, abilities, and techniques (procedures in general) that pupils have to attain in order to be able to manage their own learning; as well as attitudinal objectives that specify attitudes, values and basic norms to be attained by the group and individuals in a negotiated manner as a crucial part of their learning process (Coll, 1987; Medina & Salvador, 2002 & Díaz, 2002). Procedural and attitudinal elements have to be also liable to evaluation.
- (e) *Goals have to be sequenced*: It is important to establish some order of resolution and attainment of teaching goals in order to enhance the educational process. In the case of conceptual objectives, this sequencing will be established from the epistemological rationale of the discipline(s) worked on and, in the case of procedural and attitudinal objectives, with the process that will go from totality to specificity.

#### *Practical case:*

Now we present what could be the display of teaching goals with the initial topic of "European citizenship" with the fictional group of 12-year-olds. Obviously, the exercise is presented without the context of a particular reality, as the aim is only to provide an example of the different characteristics from the theoretical framework. For this reason, we present some general teaching goals for the entire class group, without specifying possible individualized curricular adjustments.

We would also like to say that teaching goals are written by using infinitives, as this form is the most representative to attain a goal in general.

At the end of the educational process, pupils should be able to:

1. Learn the roots of the European Union and know what countries belong to it at present.
2. Get to know the culture of countries belonging to the European Union: geography, customs, language, currency, flag...
3. Reflect on what being a European citizen means and its implications at the level of rights and duties.
4. Look for information in small groups in order to be autonomous in their learning process and summarize this information when explaining it to the group, using the proper language.
5. Talk in an orderly fashion within the class group, by respecting the floor and classmates' opinions.
6. Value the European cultural diversity and be aware of the importance of exchanges to get to know other European countries.

### 1.1.5. Learning content

#### *Description of element:*

Content is made up of information, learning experiences and attitudes needed to attain teaching goals (Hornero, 1987). The idea is, then, not to limit learning content to the field of concepts only, but also to introduce at the same time procedural and attitudinal content that guarantees the global attainment of proposed goals. Below we specify every kind of content in order to understand the practical case more clearly.

- (a) *Conceptual content*: It represents the set of information and concepts required to attain the goals. In this aspect, Coll (1987) differentiates between: (a) *concepts*, defined as a set of objects, events, actions, ideas, or symbols with some characteristics in common; (b) *principles*, referring to statements that describe how changes that happen are related to other changes; (c) finally *facts*, which represent support content.

Although historically this content was at the forefront of any educational process, nowadays its selection is understood to respond to criteria of importance, usefulness and applicability in the daily life of our pupils.

- (b) *Procedural content*: It refers to the set of actions, usually resulting into abilities, skills and techniques, orderly and addressed at achieving some goals (MEC, 1989). Procedures are learning tools ascribed into the section of "know-how" in order to solve problem situations and are characterized by: (a) they require some action; (b) the action has to be orderly; (c) the action has to be addressed at attaining a goal. Procedural content has been gaining ground in the pedagogical field as a result of the methodological changes in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, when pupils became the protagonist of their own learning and "learning to learn" became a fundamental competence for every pupil.

- (c) *Content of attitudes, values and norms*: We refer to *attitudes* as tendencies, acquired or not, which persist in the behaviour of people (Zabala, 1998). They should not be exclusively mistaken for behaviours, as they introduce emotional (feelings and preferences), cognitive (knowledge and beliefs), and finally behavioural (actions and intentions) elements.

Coll (1987) defines *values* as ruling principles that regulate individual behaviour and are part of the social culture where the school is in.

Finally, values are shown in some *norms*, which refer to some rules or behaviour patterns (Medina & Salvador, 2002), negotiated and agreed on in a social context.

#### *Practical case:*

Following with the proposed working line of European Citizenship with 12-year-old boys and girls, we would establish the following content to be worked on, divided into three types:

#### Conceptual content:

1. The European Union: countries, geography, and cultures.

#### Procedural content:

1. Search for information about the different countries belonging to the European Union in different documentation sources.
2. Arguing and supporting one's own point of view in a dialogue.
3. Analysis and synthesis of research outcome.
4. Appropriate use of language.

#### Attitudinal content:

1. Interest in getting to know current Europe and the chances of mobility among the different countries.
2. Awareness of the added value that the diversity of cultures in Europe represents.
3. Respect for speaking turns and for classmates' opinions.

#### 1.1.6. Design of learning and assessment activities

##### *Description of element:*

In this chapter, we have already hinted the need to present learning and assessment activities at the same time. We think that learning activities cannot be separated from assessment activities, as assessment, in its dimension of continuity, has to measure the pupil's daily and continuous process. In this sense, concepts, procedures, and attitudes are assessed every day through learning activities.

Once this point is clear, we will understand learning activities as that set of actions or events that help pupils attain some goals (Fernández & Elortegui, 1999). It has to be taken into account that one activity has to contribute to attain different goals, and that one goal has to be worked on in different activities. Learning activities have to be thought so as to be adjusted to the different levels in the class group, guaranteeing the appropriate educational process for every one.

Below we present the different kinds of learning activities that Fernández and Elortegui (1999) specify in: initiation, development, ending, assessment, deepening, and reinforcement activities.

- (a) *Initiation activities:* They are a set of activities carried out during initial evaluation with the aim of placing and motivating pupils for the topic to be worked on. As has already been seen, they represent an assessment of the pupils' previous knowledge on the topic. They can be carried out by analysing different videos or articles, outings, brainstorming, lab experiences, open debate within the class group, and so on.
- (b) *Development activities:* Addressed at finding and analysing significant information from the creation of working hypotheses. In this moment, the topic is developed at most, by collecting and discussing information. Different activities can be proposed, such as bibliographical research, individual or small-group working plans, outings, experimental activities inside and outside the classroom, teacher's explanations, debates and discussions within the class group, elaboration of portfolios or working dossiers, resolution of cases, and so on.
- (c) *Ending activities:* We refer to those learning activities that allow pupils to elaborate their initial positions again and reconstruct their cognitive schemas through new meanings, resulting from the conclusions of the studied topic. These ending activities can be essays or reports, discussions, debates, presentations, posters or murals, elaboration of presentations using ICT, elaboration of mind maps or working outlines, and so on.
- (d) *Assessment activities:* These activities should allow the teacher and pupils to assess the development in their learning of the matter, as well as the degree of satisfaction with the task carried out. These assessment activities often coincide in time with learning activities.  
The final aim is not for the teacher to supervise or punish, but to be aware that, through these activities, pupils or the group should be able to extract information for the self-regulation of their learning process, by introducing, if appropriate, procedural or attitudinal correctors. Some of these activities could be as follows: self-evaluation patterns, personal working diaries, direct observations on the work

carried out, periodic revisions of portfolios or working reports, partial presentations of work, surveys, and so on.

- (e) *Reinforcement and deepening activities:* We should always remember that within a class group there will be different levels of knowledge and motivation with regard to the topic to be worked on. For this reason, some reinforcement activities should be always proposed for those pupils with comprehension difficulties, and deepening activities for those pupils that attain teaching goals faster than the rest.

#### *Practical case:*

##### Initiation activities:

- *Class debate:* We will negotiate with the class group what is going to be learnt in this learning unit called "European Citizenship." We will reflect with the class group on the meanings of the teaching goals proposed, and present them with the need to go deeper into some other points they think interesting in relation to the learning unit.
- *Brainstorming:* A brainstorming activity will be carried out with the entire class group about the European Union to see their knowledge and ideas about this topic, on the basis of the questions expressed in the previous section of initial evaluation and the pupils' personal experiences.

##### Development activities:

- *Pedagogical contract:* Four-pupil mixed groups will be formed and they will sign a small-group pedagogical contract, where they will commit themselves to develop the objectives of this learning unit (if they consider it appropriate), and to plan and carry out different tasks needed to attain the goals. Once written their working plan, they will present it to the teacher, who will accept the proposal and, together with the small group, sign the pedagogical contract, which commits them to carry out the designed tasks.
- *Search for information:* The group will begin a period of information collection through a research based on different information sources, as guided by the teacher: Internet, bibliography, outings or visits, video viewing, and so on.

##### Ending activities:

- *Elaboration of a working synthesis:* Working groups will have to summarize all the collected information in order to present it to their classmates.
- *Discussion:* The different working groups will present the outcome of their research to the rest of the class group, and will develop their assessments on the topic worked on.
- *Debate:* After every presentation by a working group, there will be an open debate to share ideas and meanings of every group.
- *Writing minutes:* Every group will have to be responsible for taking notes of the ideas that arise in the presentation of one group's work, so that at the end of the presentations there will be a collection of minutes that will become a final dossier of the topic.

#### Assessment activities:

- *Field diary*: Every small group will have to write a field diary throughout the different developmental moments of the working project, where they will express, objectively, the development of the tasks carried out in the working day by the entire group; and their assessment on this work: time was not wasted, all the members were involved in the work at the same degree, difficulties that arose... This diary will be discussed daily with the teacher and the working group.
- *Self-assessment form*: Every pupil, at the end of the presentation, will carry out self-assessment on his/her performance and general participation in the work developed by the group.
- *Assessment of small group*: At the end of every presentation and general debate, the rest of the class group will assess the task carried out by the pupils who presented their work, trying to contribute with ideas for improvement and change, as well as highlighting strengths in the classmates' work.
- *Assessment of large group*: It can be carried out in groups or individually, by revising the knowledge items collected when implementing the learning unit for the first time, when pupils expressed orally and freely everything they knew or thought they knew about the topic through a brainstorming activity.
- *Conversation with teacher*: Finally, every small group will meet the teacher in order to assess the task carried out and the process followed, using as tools: the initial pedagogical contract, the group's field diary, self-assessment forms of every pupil, and assessment carried out by the entire class group on their presentation.

#### Reinforcement or deepening activities:

- *Readjustment of goals and tasks to be carried out*: Reinforcement or deepening activities will depend on the reality of the moment. We have to take into account, though, that the small-group work is always inclusive, as it promotes participation by all the members on the basis of the idea of reciprocal support or teaching among pupils. Even so, if through the daily revisions of the field diary we could see that a group is not evolving properly, their pedagogical contract could be changed by guiding the pupils towards rethinking the progression of their tasks and their workload.

#### 1.1.7. Methodology and didactic resources

##### *Description of element:*

Before describing this element, we think it is important to clarify the terms used in this section, more particularly the difference between method and methodology, in order to be able to identify what we mean at every moment of our discourse.

The word method comes from *methodus*, which comes from Greek *méthodos* that means "path with a particular aim." Therefore, we understand method as an orderly and systematic manner of acting in order to achieve a goal. On the other hand, methodology means "science of method" and, therefore, has to be interpreted as the study of methods. Thus, methodology and method are not synonymous but have more or less global meanings to be respected.

The methodological question always responds to *how* to teach and learn (Medina & Salvador, 2002). However, the answer we can give to this question can never be disconnected from *what* or *what for*, that is, the teaching goals or initially planned

objectives, as the criterion to use one methodology or another is always dependent on the type of teaching goals proposed. In this sense, we could state that there are no *good* or *bad* methods deriving from methodologies, but rather teaching goals of diverse nature.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, we have to consider that, as expressed by Díaz (2002):

*... we can see that there is no universal method applicable to every situation and pupil, but, on the contrary, the method to be chosen is that resulting in the pupils' significant learning.* (p. 181)<sup>3</sup>

The same author describes four didactic methods: the traditional method, the discovery method, the expository method, and globalized teaching methods.

- (a) *Traditional method*: In this method the protagonist of the teaching-learning process is always the teacher, who designs, plans a fixed programme, presents content in a lecture style, and assesses it as a group, without considering possible differences among pupils. The role of pupils is rather passive, as they are understood as empty containers to be filled with conceptual content that they have to memorize by reproducing the teacher's discourse.

Among its most important defects, Díaz (2002) stands out, firstly, that the method takes into account neither the pupils' attention spans, nor their interests and motivations. Secondly, it focuses too much on repetition and reproducing memorization procedures and unidirectional dialogue. It is, therefore, an exaggeratedly intellectualist method.

- (b) *Discovery method*: It springs from the basic principle by Novak and Gowin (1984) that human learning produces a change in the meaning of every individual's experience and, therefore, has a clear constructivist concept of teaching-learning processes. From this perspective, the proposal of the traditional method, where pupils accumulated some knowledge receptively and passively, is totally brought into question. On the contrary, the discovery method transforms the pupil into an active agent of knowledge. The teaching-learning process proposed follows the rationale of the scientific process; for this reason, it is fundamental to provide pupils with some content of a procedural nature (skills, techniques, and strategies) that allows them to approach learning with success and autonomy. Therefore, this method promotes the person's integral learning, as in this active intervention the development of all the person's dimensions is enhanced: cognitive, emotional, social, and physical. Although it is rather difficult to explain the steps to be followed in a discovery method, as there are many versions and particularities in its implementation, there are five steps that are practically common to all discovery practices (Joyce & Weil, 1978):

- Posing a problem or problematic situation to pupils.
- Searching for and collecting information about the topic.
- Experimenting and reflecting on the data and information collected.
- Organizing and summarizing information collected. Elaborating one's own theory.
- Reflecting on and assessing one's own strategy throughout the process.

In this process, the teacher becomes a guide or companion for the pupil or group of pupils that construct their own learning actively.

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<sup>2</sup> Some could comment on more appropriate or useful teaching goals here for the pupils' integral training.

<sup>3</sup> Translated by author.

- (c) *Expository teaching*: As expressed by Díaz (2002), it is characterized by setting out the conceptual structure of the scientific discipline to be taught with the aim that pupils are able to relate it with their previous ideas and knowledge about the matter. This method, therefore, tries to find a balance between the expository need, that is, the inward process in teaching-learning processes, and the pupils' inner process of giving meaning to new learning, thus, an outward process. The method usually develops in the following phases:

- Presentation and previous organization of goals and content.
- Presentation of materials and learning activities.
- Development of the conceptual structure by contrast between previous ideas and thematic area worked on.

- (d) *Globalized teaching methods*: We refer to a set of methods based on the need to approach knowledge globally and, therefore, from interdisciplinary elements. Their origin is in the New School and studies by Decroly, who, as a doctor, studied the spontaneous procedures used by children to learn. Decroly proposes that the mental activity is always produced by some first global knowledge, and its analysis always depends on the subject's interest in approaching the topic. Thus, just like reality is not broken into pieces, knowledge cannot be divided into independent plots, but has to be based on the complexity and interaction among pieces of knowledge from different disciplines.

Some concrete proposals to approach interdisciplinary and globalized teaching are as follows:

- Focus of interest: It refers to topics used to organize the content of different subjects.
- Project method: They are small research projects carried out by groups of pupils or the entire class group in general, through a topic generally agreed upon by them.
- Environmental research method: In this case, the research is proposed as a natural learning process. The topics to be worked on have to come from the pupils' environment or immediate experience.
- Workshops: In this way of organizing the teaching-learning process, the tasks proposed always have a theoretical-practical element that forces pupils to learn by doing, activating all kinds of strategies and techniques to develop their learning.

#### *Practical case:*

As can be seen both in the development of activities and in the description of methods, the working method we proposed is easily identified as a synthesis between the discovery method and the globalized teaching method. Therefore, it is a highly focused choice, appropriate for the constructivist approach of teaching-learning processes.

Thus, with this section about the methodological option of the didactic intervention comes the end of the presentation of characteristics of the learning unit and the analysis of its different elements.

Finally, we would like to say that, although the didactic intervention represents a broad topic to be approached from different perspectives and analyzed from different viewpoints, we think that using the constructivist approach to education represents quite

a consistent option, bearing in mind the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Future Europe has to go for education based on the cognitive complexity of its future citizens, as the best option to take the greatest advantage of our cultural diversity. A Europe where differences count can only be imagined from a Europe that goes for education based on brave, global and complex approaches.

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## 1.2. Classroom Management for the Beginning Teacher

*By Prof. Dr. Christopher Bezzina, University of Malta*

### 1.2.1. Introduction

Knowing how to prepare a plate of pasta or a salad does not make you a successful restaurateur. For that you need to know about accountancy, local regulations, EU standards, sanitation laws, customer care and employee relations amongst others. In other words, the first thing you need to know is how to manage the restaurant.

The same applies to teaching. Whilst successful teachers operate in many different ways, they have one thing in common – an ability to manage their classrooms effectively. As Wragg (1994, 2001) points out, without this basic skill, the most inspiring and knowledgeable teacher will fail.

As we address the challenges of national curricula and a host of other reforms we come to realise that knowledge of a subject or a degree in a particular area does not make a teacher. You need to know about formative and summative forms of assessment, portfolios and profiling, learning styles, motivation theory, identification of learning difficulties, parent participation, gender issues, and a host of other things.

Whilst teachers have to think of content (i.e. knowledge of a particular subject), of lesson planning and preparation, of activities, handouts, ICT, etc., we also realise 'that we are employed so as to take a group of students and turn them into interested and productive learners' (Bezzina, 2001: 13). Therefore, the first thing teachers need to know is how to manage a class full of students. This is what this chapter aims to address.

This chapter focuses on what we consider to be some of the most important issues when discussing the area of classroom management. These are treated in a number of sections. In the first section we discuss a more inclusive definition of classroom management which goes beyond mere discipline and control. From there we move on to discussing the characteristics of the classroom as a learning environment which we consider to be another important requisite in the process of learning to teach. Undeniably, this process also involves the acquisition of basic skills which we describe at some length in the concluding section.

### 1.2.2. What is Classroom Management?

Traditionally, the teacher's task was conceived as consisting of two separate and separable commitments. First he/she was expected to be skilful in the keeping of order and discipline and, secondly, to be able to communicate knowledge to the students. In the nineteenth century, the first was given far more importance than the second. In fact, being able to discipline and control classes, even in the absence of a satisfactory knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical skills, qualified a candidate for teaching (Grace, 1985). It is this pervasive assumption that is captured in Delamont's (1976: 99) observation:

Much teacher behaviour is in accordance with the role expectations held for them by their pupils and society at large. They attempt to control their classes and then to teach them something.

The management task of teaching was not only narrowly conceived as consisting of the ability to control students in the classroom, but it was assumed that control preceded instruction.

Decades later, educators, especially those involved in teacher training programmes, while accepting the distinction between the two roles, redefined the first one to include, besides discipline and control, the following skills:

- Establishing rules and procedures;
- Developing a rapport with students;
- Managing time;
- Using resources; and,
- Organizing the classroom space.

However, it became increasingly apparent that, in learning to teach, the twin tasks of management and instruction flow and feed into each other. This is evidenced even by everyday experience. The advice in the pedagogical folklore to beginning teachers *first* to establish order and *then* begin to teach may not be that logical after all because the way the teacher selects and organizes subject matter and communicates it to the students with the support of appropriate resources, is an enabling factor in the successful management of the classroom. A forceful argument for the integration of the twin tasks of management and instruction has been made by Boostrom (1991), Richardson & Fallona (2001) and Fenwick (1998).

Therefore, classroom management includes many different skills, including the way a teacher arranges the classroom, establishes classroom rules, responds to misbehaviour, monitors student activity, selects rewards and reinforcement, and uses daily routines to maintain a caring, supportive, efficient and productive learning climate.

If you ask a number of teachers how they handle particular classroom management issues, you are likely to receive several different, and perhaps even contradictory, responses. As Davis (1983) has pointed out, different teacher personalities, teaching styles and management practices will create very different classroom atmospheres. We go on to add, that, as a result, they will encourage different forms of feedback from students. Depending upon their own experiences and personal views, teachers approach classroom management from a number of different philosophies. For our purposes, these approaches to dealing with classroom behaviour can be grouped into three general traditions.

One tradition emphasizes the critical role of communication and shared problem solving between teachers and students. This approach is called the *humanistic* tradition and is represented by the writings of Ginott (1972) and Glasser (1986, 1990). The second tradition comes from the field of *applied behaviour analysis* and is best represented by the writings of Madsen & Madsen (1970), O'Leary & O'Leary (1977), Alberto & Troutman (1986), Jones (1987) and Canter (1976, 1989), who apply behaviouristic principles, such as behaviour modification, to the classroom. The third approach, which is the most recent, emphasizes skills involved in organizing and managing the classroom. This approach is called the *classroom management* tradition, and its major principles can be found in the writings of Kounin (1970), Doyle (1986), Good & Brophy (1990), Emmer, Evertson, Clements & Worsham (1997) and Wragg (1994, 2001).

Our discussion in this chapter will emphasise the classroom management tradition. We have chosen to highlight this approach because its principles are derived from research in the classroom and the central role that teachers play in the learning process.

The research indicates that the amount of time that students spend actively engaged in learning activities are directly linked to their academic achievement. It also shows that teachers who are good classroom managers are able to maximize student engaged time or academic learning time.

Various research studies of teacher effectiveness (e.g. Wragg, 2001; Emmer, Evertson and Anderson, 1980; Brophy & Evertson, 1976) report that classroom management skills are of primary importance in determining teaching success, whether it is measured by student learning or by ratings. Given this, management skills are crucial and fundamental. A teacher who is grossly inadequate in classroom management skills is probably not going to accomplish much (Bezzina, 2001).

As MacDonald & Healy (1999: 205) state, competent classroom management is essentially a human relations skill. It reflects a teacher's ability to purposefully organize individual and group learning activities within a supportive classroom climate. Teachers need to possess the leadership skills to draw students into orderly encounters with activities/tasks which they may initially be indifferent or resistant to. This usually requires a firm presence and a strong sense of purpose, qualities that need to be balanced with considerable patience and good humour.

Classroom management includes all of the things a teacher must do towards two ends:

1. To foster student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities.
2. To establish a productive working environment.

To foster student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities, the effective teacher plans a variety of activities that are appropriate for learning. These activities may include reading, taking notes, participating in group work, taking part in class discussions, participating in games, and producing material. An effective teacher has every student involved and cooperating in all of these activities.

For all students to work on their activities, the environment must be conducive to learning. Students must pay attention, be cooperative and respectful of each other, exhibit self-discipline, and remain on task. In addition, the room must have a positive climate, all materials must be ready and organized, and the furniture must be arranged for productive work.

### 1.2.3. Characteristics of a Well-Managed Classroom

We are living in a period of time where many stores, large departmental stores are the rule of the day. And, as we all know, one expects such establishments to be well managed. When asked what that means, one expects the following characteristics to be mentioned:

- The store: Its layout, organization, and cleanliness
- The merchandise: Its display, accessibility, and availability
- The help: Their management, efficiency, knowledge, and friendliness

You could probably do the same for a restaurant, an airline, or a doctor's office. In fact, you have probably said more than once, "If I run this place, I would do things differently." Well, if you ran a school or a classroom, which is what you do, how would you run this place? That is called classroom management, and the characteristics of a well-managed classroom are well known.

Read Chapter 15 : « The classroom Environment and situational factors », in guide to Teaching Practice by Cohen, Manion and Morrison

### Activity

Imagine that you are taking the class for the first time. Think of answers to the following questions:

1. What information about the class would you find useful before meeting the students?
2. What would you try to communicate to them during the initial encounters?
3. What would you be paying attention to during the first lessons?
4. What kind of expectations would you have of the class?

#### 1.2.4. The Characteristics of a Well-Managed Classroom

1. Students are deeply involved with their work, especially with academic, teacher-led or guided instruction.
2. Students know what is expected of them and are generally successful.
3. There is relatively little wasted time, confusion, or disruption.
4. The climate of the classroom is work oriented, but relaxed and pleasant.

*Source: Edmund E., Evertson, C .  
Clements, B. and Worsham M. (1997)*

Veenman (1984) observed that classroom management is the most often reported concern of beginning teachers. Classroom management is most likely a concern (to some degree) for all teachers. When 25 to 30 children are placed in one room at the same time with one teacher, some system of order must exist so that learning may take place.

Much information and several excellent models are available on classroom management. Some resources are listed throughout this handbook. What follows, are some bottom line, practical considerations, that many classroom management models have in common.

#### 1.2.5. Some Considerations

Classroom management is not simply establishing rules and routines, which you will use for the remainder of your teaching career. The rules and routines you choose will vary depending on the building and its principal location, students (grade level, interests, aptitudes, maturity, cliques), activities, time of year, and most importantly your philosophy of education.

- Work on that mental image of what you want your room to be like. What is the feeling? How does it look (ordered, relaxed)? How does it sound (low buzz, quiet)? What does it say to your students?
- Be flexible. Hang on to those things that work, but don't be afraid of those things that don't. Few teachers use one model or approach to classroom management. They borrow from several models to create the learning environment they want for their students.
- On the other hand, don't give up on a new idea too quickly. One must give a new idea a fair chance, and that means, allowing time to practice, making mistakes, observing effects, and adjusting.

- Students need continuity and stability. Avoid making frequent drastic changes in, for example, seating order, expectations and rules. Make changes only when necessary.
- Base changes you make in classroom management on reasons which are educationally sound. A large body of solid research is available today. Consult the literature.
- The key to classroom management is to be proactive. This means organizing the classroom to maximize time on task. It is based on the ability of the teacher to foresee learning.
- Develop a resource file for classroom management with ideas from conferences, books, workshops, and other teachers. You should eventually have several different ways on file to carry out every routine task.

#### 1.2.6. Techniques to help you implement the four characteristics of a well-managed class

Characteristics	Effective Teacher	Ineffective Teacher
High level of student involvement with work	Students are working.	Teacher is working.
Clear student expectations	Students know that assignments are based on objectives.  Students know that tests are based on objectives.	Teacher says, "Read Chapter 2 and learn the material by heart."  "I'll give you a test covering everything in Chapter 3".
Relatively little waste of time, confusion or disruption	Teacher has a discipline plan.  Teacher starts class immediately.  Teacher assigns tasks/work	Teacher makes up rules and punishes according to his or her mood.  Teacher takes roll and dallies.  Students repeatedly ask for work to be assigned.
Work-oriented but relaxed and pleasant climate	Teacher has invested time in practicing procedures until they become routines.  Teacher knows how to bring the class to attention.  Teacher knows how to praise the deed and encourage the student.	Teacher tells but does not rehearse procedures.  Teacher yells.  Teacher uses generalized praise or none at all.

### 1.2.7. The Room

In Reggio Emilia, a city in northern Italy where preschools are renowned for their quality of education, the two teachers in every classroom refer to the environment as the *third teacher*. They recognize the importance of the physical setup of the classroom and, therefore, take great care in preparing it.

I share this view. The environment one creates can either make or break one's effort to work effectively with students. How one arranges the furniture, utilizes floor and wall space, and select and organize resources and materials all need to be carefully considered. Here are some ideas for creating a purposeful environment – one that will help students become strategic learners.

Your teaching styles and the types of activities you plan will help you make these decisions. The best room arrangement is one which puts the least distance between the teacher and any student in the class. However, there are some guidelines to keep in mind:

- Keep high traffic areas free of congestion!
- Be sure you can see all of the students at all times.
- Keep frequently used materials readily accessible.
- Be sure students are able to see presentations.
- The placement of the teacher's desk is best in the side or back of the room. Teaching from a sitting position behind a desk is one of the least effective styles you can use.
- Students seated facing each other or at tables in small groups are more likely to interact with each other. Students facing the teacher from rows, or a horseshoe are less likely to interact. The type of lesson should dictate the chair arrangement. Some possibilities for alternative room arrangement are given next.

### 1.2.8. Room Arrangement

The most widespread instance of visual distraction occurs in the classroom where students are seated around tables looking at one another during teacher talk. Four of the five senses are distracted: sight, hearing, smell, and touch. Thoughts about what that person across the table is wearing or doing compete with the teacher. Placing students with distractibility problems around tables all day only exacerbates their problems. In fact, students diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) should have nothing between them and the teacher during teacher talk. In addition, they should not be seated close to other students with distractibility or hyperactive symptoms. Neutralizing the distractions in the classroom is a necessity if we aim to get active listening and not just hearing from all students.

The questions below will help you decide how you are going to arrange your room.

1. *How will you use your bulletin board space?*
  - List daily assignments
  - Post daily objectives
  - Display student work
  - Communicate unit theme.

2. *How will you arrange the desks and chairs?*

- Rows
- Horseshoe
- Square
- Groups
- Circles

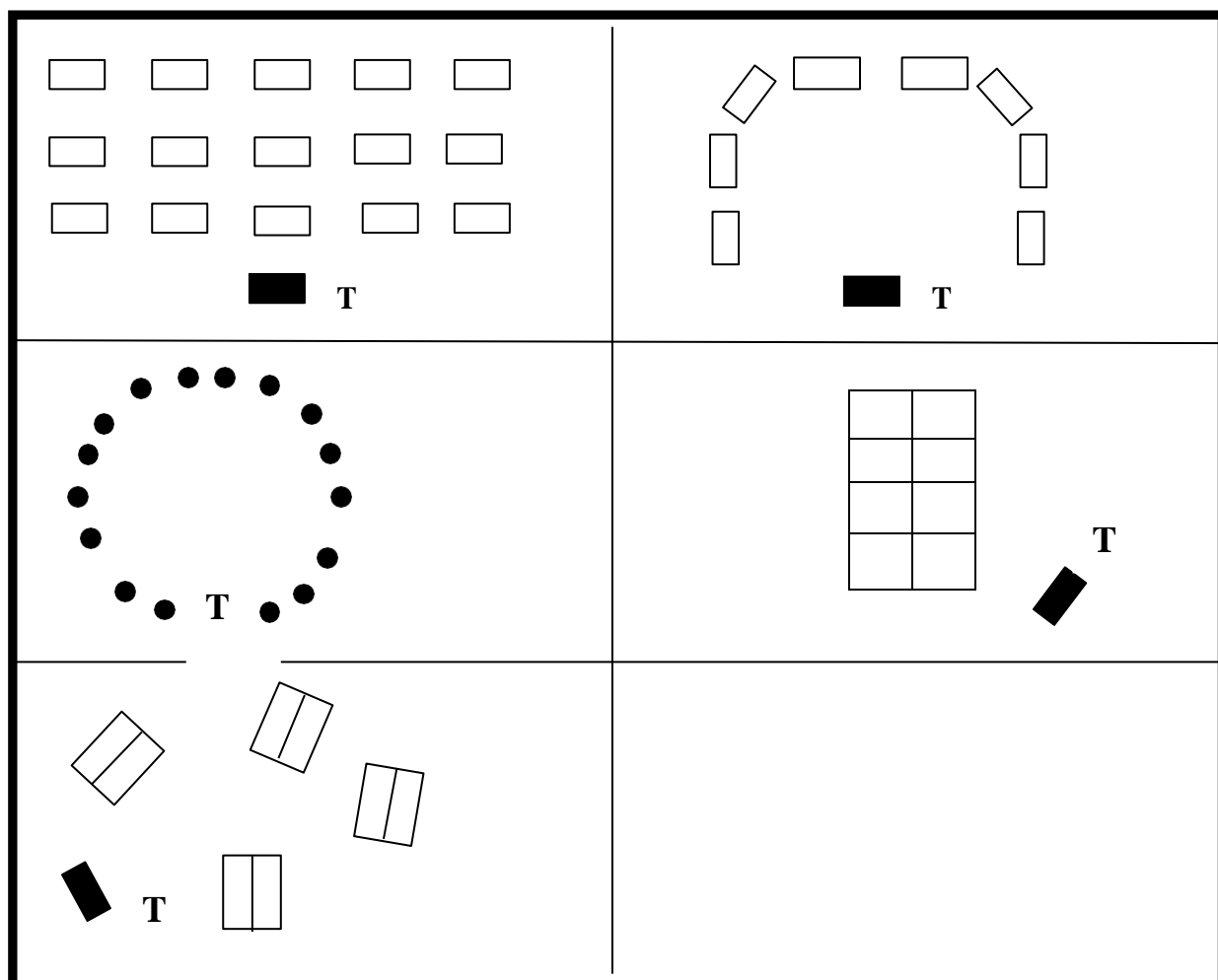
Figure 1. shows five possible configurations. The seating pattern should maximize the opportunity to focus on a task and listen actively. It should also minimize transition time between activities. Competing distractions must be minimized during teacher talk. The transition from teacher talk to group work or independent work should take only seconds. What other configurations have you come across? Which ones have you used? Which ones have you found effective? Why?

3. *How will you use your desk?*

- Conference centre (i.e. to meet students individually or groups)
- Work station (i.e. to conduct an experiment)
- Supply cabinet (i.e. to pass on materials)

4. *Where will you put your desk?*

- At the front of the room
- At the side of the room
- Behind students
- In the centre of the class



- Learning Centres
  - Book Case
  - Overhead projector
  - Computers
  - Plants
  - Personal items
  - Items easily stolen
  - *Other items?*
6. *Where will you meet individual /small groups of students?*
- Near a black board / white board
  - Near a bulletin board
  - In a corner of the room
7. *Do you want an open area for movement activities?*
8. *Do you want a "time out" area?*
9. *Do you want to display pets or plants?*
10. *Do you want a special cabinet spot in the room for paperwork?*
- Collecting papers/copybooks
  - Folders or Files
  - Homework assignments
  - Returning papers/copybooks
  - Portfolios
  - Self-assessment sheets
  - Others

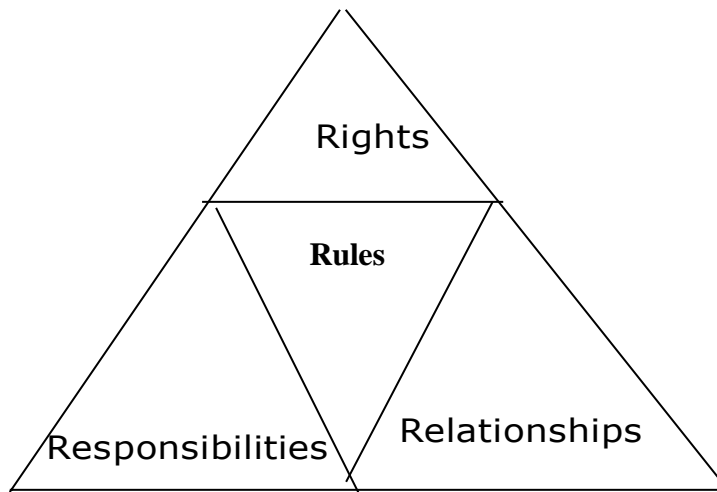
### 1.2.9. Procedures

#### Introduction

During your school experience phases in schools you have observed students acting differently to different teachers. You have reflected, made observations and shared ideas as to why this is so. Central to classrooms being described as safe, busy, buzzing with learning or even chaotic are *procedures*. Students readily accept activities. As Thody et al. (2000) point out, the lack of procedures also leads to students acquiring undesirable work habits and behaviours that are then quite difficult to handle and correct.

Read Chapter 2: "Creating a positive learning environment" in *The Teacher's Survival Guide* by Thody, Gray and Bowden.

Thody et al.(2000: 17) talk about a framework for the development of positive behaviour involving four elements. These elements work together to create a caring community of learners in which all the strands are interdependent and all are dependent on the quality of the relationships in the school.



These four elements show that, whilst each element is distinct from the other, they are closely bound:

**Rights:** The right for everyone (teacher and students alike) to feel safe (physically and emotionally); to be treated with dignity and respect; to be listened to, and to learn.

**Responsibilities:** According to Thody et al. (2000: 18) "responsibilities go hand in hand with rights". Covey (1987: 71) expresses this well as "response - ability", which he defines as "the ability to choose our response". To demonstrate responsibility, students need to be given opportunities to practice. In this way, students learn the skills of making decisions and *reflecting* on the effects of their choices.

**Rules:** Rules are based on rights and responsibilities. There are, at least, two types of rules which are used in schools: *School rules and Teacher's rules*.

School rules, which can be similar or different from those of other schools, concern issues such as dress code, behaviour in the school yard, gym or science laboratories. Then, there are teacher's rules on matters such as talking and movement and setting-out of work.

It is essential to remember, that rules need to be expressed in positive phrases, written in terms which show what you and your students will do.

Ted Wragg presents a very interesting chapter on Rules and Relationships in the practical manual entitled *Class Management* (1994), London, Routledge.

Effective teachers present their rules clearly and provide reasonable explanations for their need. In fact, the most successful classes are those in which the teacher has a clear idea of what is expected from the students and the students have a clear idea of what the teacher expects from them (e.g. Wragg, 1994).

- ✓ Rules are expectations of appropriate student behaviour.
- ✓ Rules help to create a work-oriented atmosphere.
- ✓ Rules create a strong expectation about the things that are important to you and the school.
- ✓ It is important to clearly communicate to students in both verbal and written form to students what you expect from them as appropriate behaviour.
- ✓ As a teacher you will have more confidence in your ability to manage a class if you have a clear idea of what you expect from your students and they know that that is what you expect from them.
- ✓ It is easier to maintain good behaviour than to change inappropriate behaviour.

***Do you agree with the elements put forward by Ted Wragg?***

*What should my rules be?*

Some examples...

- Be in your seat when the bell rings
- Bring all books and materials to class
- Enter the gym in the proper gym shoes
- Food is to be eaten in the designated areas
- No cursing or teasing
- Show consideration to others
- Only one person talking at a time

Rules can fall under various headings. In a research study involving primary school teachers Wragg and Bennett (cited in Wragg, 1994) identified a variety of rules used by teachers. These fell under nine headings. Some examples for each case follow:

**Movement:**

- No running in the corridors
- Ask first if you want to go to the toilet

**Talking:**

- No shouting out
- Put your hands up, if you want to ask a question

**Work-Related:**

- Being able to work independently on your own
- Do not distract others when they are working

**Presentation:**

- Taking care with content
- Knowing how to set out work and when to hand it in

**Safety:**

- Take care with scissors, rulers, pencils etc.
- No swinging on chairs

**Space:**

- Not allowed in classroom during break time

**Materials:**

- Keep library books tidy
- No scribbling on desks or books

**Social behaviour:**

- Be willing to share things and cooperate
- Show good manners

**Clothing:**

- Clothing to be neat and clean
- Wear designated school uniform

(adapted from Wragg, 1994: 28 - 29)

What are your reactions to this list?

Wragg presents a series of questions, which are worthy of consideration. Teachers, individually and more so collectively, should be discussing the importance behind rules, especially within the context of a school-wide discipline plan.

The following questions will help you get started:

From the above set of rules which do you consider most important and which trivial?  
Which would you wish to see in operation in your own class?

Take a particular rule, and discuss with other teachers how you would: a) establish it, b) explain the need for it, and c) fine tune it.

Identify rules on which disagreement amongst teachers exists. Discuss a) what problems may emerge, b) what solutions need to be found to avoid difficulties.

Discuss the extent to which there should be uniformity and diversity in different teachers' class rules within the same school.

### Relationships:

Positive relationships are built when people feel valued and respected. Establishing effective relationships should be tops on our agenda. I would go on to add that relationships are essential at all levels: administrators and teachers; teachers and teachers, teachers and students, students and students, and the school and the community. All forms of relationships will, to a large extent, effect the rapport that people build *within* the school and more so between teachers and students.

Learning is enhanced or hindered by the social processes at work. When good relationships have been established, we can create opportunities for personal development. You have the necessary building-blocks for creating a positive climate for learning when members of the class community know and trust each other, are able to skilfully communicate with each other and are able to solve relationship problems. Genuine openness requires self-awareness and self-acceptance: you need to be able to trust to be able to express how you feel. All members of the class community should be enabled to listen to each other and to learn how other people want to be treated.

Naturally, we all know that this is far from an easy undertaking. At this point, therefore, the question: 'What about the need for discipline?' is legitimate.

Isn't discipline necessary for learning to take place? Effective teachers know and research shows (Bennett & Dunne, 1992) that the more time on task spent by students the more they learn. Learning takes place when students are focused and at work. All discipline does is stop misbehaviour. The reason coaches have their teams go through certain steps or paces over and over again is that the more they practice the better they will be to execute them during the game. The reason parents have their children practice the piano is that the more they practice, the better they play. Descriptions of the effective and ineffective classrooms are captured in the Box below.

An Effective or Ineffective Classroom	
Effective Classroom	Ineffective Classroom
The students are actively involved in meaningful work. The procedures govern what they do and they understand how the class functions. The teacher is moving around the room, also at work, helping, correcting, answering, monitoring, disciplining, smiling, and caring.	The students are in their seats doing busy work or nothing. The only person who is observed working is the teacher. The teacher is in control of the class.  Learning only occurs when a person is actively engaged in the process.

### 1.2.10. Are students actively engaged in your classroom?

Procedures, like rules, communicate expectations for behaviour. However, they apply to specific activities. Teachers of well-managed classrooms think about appropriate behaviour during different activities. These procedures fall into three categories:

- beginning of class
- during the class
- end of class

Procedures need to be clearly explained, modelled, and reviewed with students. Procedures for starting class should not require your input or attention to begin. Students will try to distract the teacher from his/her task. The teacher needs to be consistent about reinforcing the opening procedure. Materials for the start of class should be centrally located so that students may get them and quietly get to work. Distractors, such as calling out names, should be avoided.

Consistency is essential to maintain a productive classroom. Procedures need to be established that the teacher will be able to reinforce all the time. Some students are conditioned at home to wear the rule-giver down. Effective teachers set standards that they will not negotiate. In establishing these standards they also consider the time of day. Teachers may consider varying standards in the time after lunch, for example, if they feel that the students need a little leeway. So long as the students know and appreciate what the ground rules are than this option should be considered. Never assume that they know or understand your expectations. These clearly need to be set and discussed at the start of a scholastic year.

Research shows that teachers can increase student learning by taking time at the end of class to summarize the day's objectives. To do this they establish clear ending procedures and watch the clock carefully. At the same time the end of lesson/day bell should never be the signal for students to move out of class. It is always the teacher who should dismiss students.

On the following pages a series of questions aim to help you outline your expectations for classroom procedures.

#### Beginning of the class

1. Where will you keep the materials you will need?
2. Where will you position yourself in the room to take the attendance?
3. Will you call out the names?
4. What will students do with absentee notes?
5. How will you handle tardy students?
6. What do you expect students to do while you take their attendance?

*Other questions you would address.*

#### During the class

1. What procedures will you use when the students need to leave the room?
2. How will you handle forgotten materials/books?
3. Will you allow students to return to their lockers for forgotten materials?
4. Which materials and equipment are students allowed/forbidden to use?
5. How will you expect students to behave when you are presenting information?
6. How will you expect students to behave during seatwork activities?
7. How will you expect students to behave during group work?
8. What will be acceptable behaviour when asking for help?

*Other questions you would address.*

End of class

1. How will you assign homework?
2. How will the students help straighten up the room?
3. How will you handle an incomplete lesson?
4. How will students know that they can get out of their seats?

*Other questions you would address.*

Activity

Observe two teachers in the school you are attached to. Notice the techniques they use to start their lesson and to gain student attention. Do they get students in tune with them before they attempt to teach? What attention-getting and initiatory manoeuvres do the effective teachers employ most frequently? What do the less effective teachers fail to do or do ineffectively when they attempt to initiate classroom activities? Think about what specific initiatory moves you would use in those situations.

### 1.2.11. Conclusion

This chapter has helped the reader to appreciate what it takes to create a positive and rewarding climate for learning to take place. It has shown, amongst other things, that the most important factor governing student learning is classroom management. It has been emphasized that how teachers manage the classroom is the main determinant of how well students will learn. The chapter has shown that teachers who spend the first days/weeks of the scholastic year establishing procedures and routine help to set the class up for success to take place. Indeed, the teacher makes the difference in the classroom.

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### 1.3. Communication

### 1.4. What competencies do inclusive teachers need to be competent in?

#### 1.4.1. Inclusion versus segregation

In the debate about education and what competencies teacher trainees need, it would be important to know something about the overall objectives of schools. It would be wise to know something about the school and the students they will meet. Do they have to teach a variety of students in the same classroom? Are children with special needs integrated in the regular classrooms? Are children with behaviour/learning disabilities segregated and taught in Special schools?

Where are the different countries attitudes as it comes to the question of teaching the students with emotional/learning disabilities? Do differentiation policies of justice and equality in the various countries enhance relatively homogenous or pluralist environments? Is there an overall aim towards the universal inclusion of all children? We know that there are basic cultural differences between countries in Europe. But we know that most countries have designed the Salamanca declaration!

#### 1.4.2. The Salamanca declaration

In 1994 representatives of 92 countries and 24 non-governmental organisations attended a world conference on the theme: "Special Educational Needs": Access and Quality" in Salamanca, Spain. From this meeting the philosophies of an inclusive education were ratified, and Salamanca Document on Inclusive education was signed. The document is based on Education from a fundamental universal human rights perspectives, as was documented in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights (U.N. 1948).

The document declares five main principles, which are as follows (1):

1. Every child has a fundamental right to education and must be given the opportunity to achieve an acceptable level of learning.
2. Every child has unique characteristics, interests and learning needs.
3. Educational systems should be designed and programs implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics, interests and learning needs.
4. Those with special needs must have access to regular schools that should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy, capable of meeting these needs.
5. Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminating attitudes, creating welcoming opportunities, building an inclusive society, and achieving education for all, moreover they provide an effective education to the majority of children, and improve the cost-effectiveness of the entire educational system.

The Salamanca Statement addresses the issue of the inclusion of children-at-risk from a human perspective, stating that all children have the right to education, and that inclusive education is the preferred option. . *Inclusive schools do not ask: "How does this student have to change in order to be a fourth grader?" but rather, "how do we have to change in order to offer full membership to our students with disabilities?"* (2:1). It is stated that special schools are permitted only in a supportive role, and as transition to full integration.

The Salamanca Declaration specifically urges UNESCO to ensure that the inclusive education issue is dealt with in all bodies where education is discussed. UNESCO's role in the development of inclusive education has been undeniable. Today, little over a decade after Salamanca, many advances have been made towards inclusion and ensuring the right for all children regardless of their emotional or intellectual differences.

The teacher trainees in the Most-project come from industrialized countries that have given their commitment to the Salamanca declaration. They are all introduced into the philosophy of human rights and inclusion. But they will notice that the school systems and legislation acts are different, and as they enter the classrooms, they may wonder how idealistic ideas about inclusion are realized. Countries that have signed the declaration, are working on different paths to implement the philosophy of inclusive education. Just to get a short glimpse of educational legislation, structures and practices we will give an example looking at Norway.

#### 1.4.3. A look at politics and practices in Norway

Back to 1951 a special school act was passed which formed the legal basis of the establishment of a nation-wide network of special schools in Norway. In the 1960s the policy of building many state-owned special schools became increasingly a subject of debate. In 1967 an act passed in Parliament, making clear that children with malfunctions were to be educated in their local environment and were only to be moved to central state schools or local special schools if absolutely necessary. The integration and normalisation debate in Norway resulted in a change in the legal framework of education. The legal framework of special education was incorporated into the basic school law of 1975. The aim of the incorporation of the special education law was as far as possible to integrate all pupils in regular schools and to teach them according to their abilities and qualifications. The responsibilities for students with special needs were transferred from the state to the municipalities. Many state own special schools were closed and the local community had become responsible for the fulfilment of the right of each child to be educated in their own local environment (3).

To day Norway is one of the most responsible countries in Europe as it comes to the practice of inclusion (4). In 2003 0.5 per cent of students with special educational needs were taught in special schools, and the remainder were educated in mainstream schools. 5,5 per cent were offered some sort of special education in regular schools. Until 2003 pupils were organized in classes where "permanent" ability grouping between classes was legally prohibited. The most common differentiation method was team teaching, whereby a teacher collaborates with one or more other teachers to arrange teaching so that students can work according to their own level of knowledge and have individualised instruction (3). The legislation act saying that each student has the right of belonging to a class was changed in 2003, saying that each student has the right of belong to a group. But still it is prohibited to establish permanent ability groups.

The Reform of 1997 stated that pupils with special needs shall participate in social, cultural and subject-related environments that are characterised by the spirit of community and equality. The underlying thought behind the new Reform of 2006 is to create equal possibilities for all pupils where schools help pupils develop into value-aware, socially committed and learning-oriented individuals. More emphasis is laid upon the principle of treating each student as an individual who has different learning strategies and learning abilities.

A Strategy Plan for Learning Environment in Primary and Secondary Education in Norway (2005 – 2008) claims the overall objectives (5):

- All pupils and apprentices are to be ensured a physical and a psycho-social learning environment that promotes health, well-being and learning.

Primary and secondary education is to promote the pupils' and apprentices' value awareness in a positive and accepting learning environment. A good learning environment must take into account the diversity to be found among pupils, apprentices and parents, and comply with the variations in preconditions and need of pupils and apprentices.

School must meet the challenge of giving the same possibilities of participation in the local school with a principled attitude towards diversity and the management of differences. Emphasis must be put on dialogue with parents, on user participation and mutual respect. Furthermore, education must give pupils and apprentices knowledge about human rights and democracy, so as to facilitate their participation in the democratic system (5).

In the strategic plan for the learning environment areas of measures is to improve competence in schools, training establishment and teacher training in order to achieve a health-promoting and accepting learning environment for all.

#### 1.4.4. What competences do teachers need?

Canadian Council for Exceptional Children presents the competences a competent inclusive teacher need as follow:

- Ability to problem solve, to be able to informally assess the skills a student needs (rather than relying solely on standardized curriculum).
- Ability to take advantage of children's individual interests and use their internal motivation for developing needed skills.
- Ability to set high but alternative expectations that are suitable for the students; this means developing alternative assessments.
- Ability to make appropriate expectations for EACH student, regardless of the student's capabilities. If teachers can do this, it allows all students to be included in a class and school.
- Ability to determine how to modify assignments for students; how to design classroom activities with so many levels that all students have a part. This teaching skill can apply not just at the elementary or secondary level, but at the college level as well. It will mean more activity-based teaching rather than seat-based teaching.
- Ability to learn how to value all kinds of skills that students bring to a class, not just the academic skills. In doing this, teachers will make it explicit that in their classrooms they value all skills, even if that is not a clear value of a whole school.
- Ability to provide daily success for all students. Teachers have to work to counteract the message all students get when certain students are continually taken out of class for special work.

Other competencies that will help general education teachers in an inclusive environment include:

- a realization that every child in the class is their responsibility. Teachers need to find out how to work with each child rather than assuming someone else will tell them how to educate a child.
- knowing a variety of instructional strategies and how to use them effectively. This includes the ability to adapt materials and rewrite objectives for a child's needs.
- working as a team with parents and special education teachers to learn what skills a child needs and to provide the best teaching approach.
- viewing each child in the class as an opportunity to become a better teacher rather than a problem to be coped with or have someone else fix.
- flexibility and a high tolerance for ambiguity.

*"Teachers today more fully recognize the value of inclusion because they see its power as an effective instructional practice. We feel that two factors are critical to the effectiveness of the district's inclusion efforts: effective collaboration among classroom teachers and the special education staff, and a weekly block of instructional planning time."* Logan, Diaz, Piperno, Rankin, MacFarland, & Bargamian. (December 1994/January 1995). Educational Leadership.  
(<http://www.uni.edu/coe/inclusion/standards/competencies.html>)

Perhaps this is a useful way to express what is special to be inclusive teacher, but he needs to be "ordinary" teacher too, so this is not a complete list of competences needed to be a good general teacher.

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## II. Practice

### 2.1. Lesson Template

# LESSON TEMPLATE MOST-PROJECT 2007

SUBJECTS	LEARNING UNIT			COUNTRY SCHOOL NAME
NO. OF PUPILS	LEVEL			PERIOD
DIDACTIC OBJECTIVES	CONTENTS			ACTIVITIES
	CONCEPTS	PROCEDURES	ATTITUDES	
MATERIAL			ASSESSMENT	
RESOURCES				

## 2.2. Visualisation Exercise: Skilful Class Management

I am sure that we all recall as children taking on different roles –the role of doctor, father, mother, and teacher. At the beginning of this time-honoured fantasy game a common ritual followed. One child will step forward and say, 'I'll be the teacher' and from then onwards that person is assumed to be in charge. It is fascinating to see what happens next. Some children role-playing as a teacher will immediately move centre stage and start ordering everyone else around, 'Right, you sit here, you go over there'. It seems to be the element of control that attracts. Others mimic a more kindly style. In this mirror of classroom life, where the players know better than anyone else what the reality is, some children will start to misbehave and then maybe told off or even sometimes whacked about the body or head in a way that would have a real teacher up before the nearest magistrate.

Control over the behaviours of others, however is only one aspect of class management. Every day, busy teachers will find they are planning lessons; choosing topics or tasks; making judgments about what they as teachers should determine and what children should be encouraged to decide or choose for themselves; supervising movement around the classroom or school; organizing often a variety of activities undertaken by individuals, small groups or the whole class; praising good work or reprimanding pupils who misbehave; make sure the right materials and books are available; selecting from a range of possible teaching strategies. All these are aspects of class management and the list could go on (see Chapter 1 (pp. 6-35) *Becoming a Teacher in Learning to Teach in the Secondary School* by Susan Capel, Marilyn Leask and Tony Turner, London: Routledge, 1997).

One of the features of research into classroom behaviour is that there are many ways of teaching effectively. In the nineteenth century, teacher training institutions were known as 'normal' schools (Wragg, 1974). The assumption was that there was some agreed 'norm', some single approved way of teaching that all must copy. It led to Charles Dickens describing M'Choakumchild in *Hard Times* as like 'some one hundred and forty schoolmasters [who] had been turned at the same time at the same factory, on the same principles, like so many pianoforte legs'. The tendency in teacher training in recent times has been to encourage a variety of approaches to teaching generally and to class management in particular.

Inability to manage classes skilfully is often the single most common reason for failure on teaching practice and for failing the probationary period. Fear of being unable to control a class is often the greatest anxiety of student-teachers before teaching practice. The management of people, time and resources is right at the heart of human skill in a variety of occupations, not just teaching. Those who waste resources, fritter away time or alienate their workmates or their customers are often a source of intense irritation. In teaching, the ability to use time skilfully, to win the support of children and to make effective use of what are often scarce resources lies at the heart of professional competence. Time devoted to improving class management is time well spent.

I shall, therefore, adopt the following two principles in what follows:

1. Class management is what teachers do to ensure that children engage in the task in hand, whatever that may be.
2. There are many different ways of achieving the state where children work at the task in hand.

In order to help clarify your own or your colleagues' views of what constitutes effective class management, the following exercise can be undertaken. It is based on, though not identical to, techniques developed in personal construct theory (Kelly, 1970), which allows people to examine their own thinking and constructions by comparing and contrasting individuals and concepts.

#### Activity 1:

##### Step 1:

Think of two teachers who taught you in primary or in secondary school (or else of two teachers whose teaching you know well). The first teacher (Teacher A) should be someone in whose lessons you felt pupils learned a lot and enjoyed being present. The second teacher (Teacher B) should be a different teacher, one in whose lessons you felt little was learned and which pupils did not seem to enjoy. To refresh your memory, picture Teacher A and Teacher B as clearly as you can in your mind's eye. Without exaggerating, write a brief descriptive paragraph about each in the spaces provided on the next page. There may be quite ordinary things that stick in your mind, such as 'This teacher always had the patience to explain things clearly to you, even if you did not understand first time. I remember feeling really frustrated about a maths problem once, and she just sat and did it with me until I understood the principle'; or, 'This teacher was sometimes unfair in her use of punishments. Once she kept the whole class in at lunchtime just because one boy had knocked someone's gym kit over, and everyone deeply resented it.'

Write your own descriptions in the space provided.

##### Step 2:

Look at your descriptions and assemble a set of dimensions, using adjectives and phrases that are opposite of each other like 'tidy – untidy' or 'turned up on time – was often late'. It is not essential that Teachers A and B should be the exact opposite of each other on each dimension: for example, they might both have been strict or neither might have been. It is important that you pick out *in your own way* aspects of teaching, especially where class management is involved, and write these down in your own words.

For example, your first four pairs might be:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Interested in students as individuals | - Not interested in students as individuals |
| 2. Is strict, but fair                   | - Lets children do what they like           |
| 3. Has a sense of humour                 | - Has no sense of humour                    |
| 4. Well organised and prepared           | - Is disorganised                           |
| 5. Enthusiastic                          | - Disinterested                             |

*Task for Step 1*

Teacher A

*General description*

*Memorable event 1*

*Memorable event 2*

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Teacher B

*General description*

*Memorable event 1*

*Memorable event 2*

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## Task for Step 2

Write up to ten pairs of opposites in the grid below:

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

1. Interested in students as individuals	1	2	③	4	5	6	7	Not interested in students as individuals
2. Is strict but fair	1	②	3	4	5	6	7	Lets students do what they like
3. . Has a sense of humour	1	②	3	4	5	6	7	Has no sense of humour
4. Is well organised and prepared	1	2	③	4	5	6	7	Is disorganised
5. Enthusiastic	①	2	3	4	5	6	7	Disinterested

## Step 3:

Now think of your 'ideal teacher', someone who has left an impression on you and maybe even influenced you as a person. This person might be similar to Teacher A, but not necessarily so, since no one is perfect. You should attempt to define what for you is the ideal teacher on a seven-point scale, using your own list of ten pairs of opposites. For example, suppose you think that your ideal teacher would be highly enthusiastic, slightly strict, have a good sense of humour, is well organised and be very interested in students, then your grid might look like the example above.

Now write your own pairs of opposites in the grid below and rate the ideal teacher by circling the appropriate number on each seven-point scale.

1.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

1. Interested in students as individuals	1	2	③	<del>4</del>	5	6	7	Not interested in students as individuals
2. Is strict but fair	1	2	③	4	5	<del>6</del>	7	Lets children do what they like
3. Has a sense of humour	1	②	<del>3</del>	4	5	6	7	Has no sense of humour
4. Well organised and prepared	1	2	③	<del>4</del>	5	6	7	Is disorganised
5. Enthusiastic	①	<del>2</del>	3	4	5	6	7	Disinterested

#### Step 4:

The next stage is to think once more about these attributes, but this time to give an honest appraisal of yourself, either as you think you are, if you are already teaching, or as you think you will be when you start. With the thought '*myself*' put a cross through the appropriate number on the seven-point scales above. You should do this as honestly as you can, being neither too severe nor too generous with yourself. When you have finished you can compare your self-appraisal with your own ideal. For example, if you saw yourself as enthusiastic, as fairly permissive, with a sense of humour, slightly disorganised and interested in students as individuals, then your grid would look something like the grid above. This would show that you are close to what you perceive to be the ideal teacher on two of your dimensions, humour and interest in individuals, but some distance away on strictness and being businesslike. The benefit of this analysis is not that it tells you exactly what kind of person you really are (you would need comments from other people to have a better idea of that!), but that it allows you to compare yourself with your ideal on your own set of criteria.

## Step 5:

There are several possible follow-ups to this exercise.

*As an individual* you can ask yourself:

- How do I compare with my ideal teacher?
- Will / Should I change on any of these dimensions?
- What must I do in order to develop in the dimensions I am rather weak in?

*In a group* you can consider:

- How do group members' views of ideal teachers differ from each other (the circled numbers)?
- What features are common?
- How different from each other are individual members of the group on their self-ratings (the crossed numbers)?
- Can the group members help and support each other to grow at the individual and professional level?
- Who else can help us?

## Step 6: Action

The final stage is to translate analysis into action. First of all, work out what each of your conclusions means in terms of *classroom behaviour*. Reflection on characteristics means little unless you decide what you must do to improve practice. Here are two examples of conclusions based on the examples above and how someone might translate these into action.

*Conclusion: Need to be a bit more strict*

Think about this first. Why do you need to be more strict? If children are misbehaving it may be because the work is boring, unsuitable, over- or under- demanding, rather than because you are too soft.

*Possible action includes:*

- Review class rules
- Clarify classroom rules about movement, talking, setting out of work, etc.
- Deal with misbehaviour as soon as it occurs.
- Make fair use of punishments when appropriate, but also praise good behaviour.
- Review lessons so that they are based on students' knowledge and understanding.
- Make sure that lesson objectives are clearly set out and attainable.
- Make sure tasks are suitable, clearly defined and children know what they are supposed to be doing.
- Discuss with pupils what sort of misbehaviours is not right, and what steps children should take to be responsible for their own good behaviour.

*Conclusion: Need to be better organised and well prepared*

If you decide this, then you need to ask yourself why, and also what you understand by 'well organised' and 'well prepared'. Do you have a sound knowledge of the content that needs to be learnt? Do you dedicate enough time to prepare appropriate lessons that take note of the varied abilities of the students under your care. Are tasks creative, motivating enough? Do they challenge the students to enjoy and seek further learning? These, and other questions need to be addressed. Do you forget to bring the right materials and books? Are your instructions to the class not clear? Do you not monitor and record children's work effectively?

*Possible action includes:*

- Prepare lessons more carefully.
- List requirements such as books, materials beforehand and make sure they are available.
- Work out in advance which are the key points you wish to stress when you give instructions or explanations.
- Improve the organisation of the beginnings and endings of lessons.
- Take note of the pacing of the lesson.
- Look at the layout of the room and how appropriate it is for the activities taking place.
- Review the students' work to check for understanding.

### 2.3. Exercises on communication

## 2.4. Exercise on teacher quality: interviews

### 2.4.1. Interviews: the making off

Visit with some colleagues the city or the school where you will have your practicum and try to interview some people from different generations and backgrounds:

- pupils in primary/secondary education
- parents from pupils in secondary education
- students in higher education (student-teachers and students studying other disciplines)
- men on the street
- teacher educators and professors in other disciplines

### 2.4.2. Questions you can ask in the area of teacher competences

- Try to ask open-ended questions, in a free associative manner. Following this strategy you can discover what the real (un)conscious thoughts are of individuals interviewed.
- You can ask the following types of questions:
  - a. What's the first thing that comes in mind if you hear the word 'quality'?
    - ⇒ explore the answer of the person interviewed
  - b. What do you think about the education system in this country?
  - c. What are the characteristics of good education?
  - d. Which role do teachers play in this?
  - e. Can you give me a definition of "teacher quality"?
  - f. Can you give me some suggestions to improve "teacher quality"?
  - g. What are qualities every good teacher should possess?
  - h. Questions upon background (depending on which person/generation/... you have in front of you) to map the "profile" of the different persons interviewed.
    - ⇒ Are you following, at this moment, studies in secondary/higher/... education? Which type of education? Which subject?
    - ⇒ Or do you have children who are attending school? What did you study? What's your profession?
    - ⇒ Age?
    - ⇒ ...

### 2.4.3. Methodology and Comparative analysis

The interviews (or an assembly of the interviews) can be screened during an intercultural seminar, as starter of a debate upon "teacher quality".

The participants get the following questions in advance (before looking at the interviews). They take notes while looking at the interviews. Afterwards the individual answers are debated by the Most-team.

- a. Confront your answers from the "Skilful Class Management" –exercise with the qualities stated in the interviews. Do you discover similarities? Differences?
- b. Are there qualities/answers stated that you strongly disagree with? Why?
- c. Would you adjust your answers on the MRT-exercise after seeing the interviews? Why?
- d. Do you notice similarities between the answers of the different persons interviewed?
  - ⇒ Is it possible to extract "core/universal" teacher qualities?
- e. Can you formulate in your international team a definition of "teacher quality" and of "teacher quality enhancement"?
- f. What did you learn from this exercise?

#### 2.4.4. Objectives of this exercise

- Enhance the reflective skills of the Most-team by confronting different views on "teacher quality"
- Towards a "common" definition of teacher quality.

### III. Observation sheets

#### 3.1. Lesson Supervision Plan for Mentors

### Student

Name Student	
Nationality	
Subjects specialized in, year of education	

### Observer

Name	
Department	

### Placement School

Name					
Country					
Section		Year		No. Of pupils	

### Lesson

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

## Competencies on Group Level

Being sensitive and responsive to students different ability level

### ☐ ACTIVITY PLANNING

Paying attention to material and mental preparation.

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### ☐ IMPLEMENTATION

Paying attention to:

class management, mastery of subject content, organisation, creativity

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### ☐ COMMUNICATION

Paying attention to:

Verbal and non-verbal communication, spoken and written language

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- ☐ **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**  
Paying attention to assessment techniques and reflection

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## Competencies on School Community Level

- ☐ **COMMUNICATION**  
Paying attention to cooperation with colleagues and openness for other views

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- ☐ **SCHOOL ORGANISATION**  
Paying attention to participation in school life

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## Competencies on Society Level

- ☐ **Educational System**  
Paying attention to knowledge upon national curricula and culture

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Date	Date
Student's signature	Observer's signature

## 3.2. Observation Sheets for Pupils

3.2.1. Version on lesson preparation and delivery

3.2.2. Version on communicative skills

3.2.3. Version on class management

3.2.4. Version on questioning and motivating skills

- Nationality:.....
- Age:.....
- School:.....
- Year and Main Subjects:.....
- Date:.....
- Topic European Lesson:.....
- Name Teacher European Lesson:.....

During the lesson you were perhaps thinking “what a boring lesson”, or “how interesting!”. Maybe you were staring through the window, looking to the clouds passing by. Or maybe you was listening with full attention to what the teacher was saying. Maybe you felt very bored or uncomfortable. You can write your ideas in the box below.

1. These were my expectations towards the European lesson:	
2. This is how I felt during the lesson:          What did the teacher do to make you feel like that?	
3. This is what I was thinking during the lesson:          What did the teacher do to make you think that way?	

<p>4. This was my behaviour during the lesson:</p>          <p>What did the teacher do to make you behave like that?</p>	
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## Observation Sheet

In a traditional education context pupils are the ones being observed and evaluated. Within this part we would like to switch roles, because we know you also have an opinion upon what makes one a good teacher. In the table below you can give your opinion on how well the teacher was prepared and how he delivered the lesson<sup>4</sup>.

On lesson preparation and delivery	Y	N	I	Comment
Did the teacher capture your attention? How?				
Was the conclusion of the lesson transparent?				
Was the lesson tempo adequate? Not too slow nor too fast?				
Did the teacher use interesting resources? Give some examples:				
Did these resources help you to understand the lesson better?				
Did the teacher seem well prepared?				
Was the content of the lesson interesting?				
Was the lesson tuned into your experience world?				
Was the lesson tackled in a creative manner?				
Did the teacher give clear instructions?				
Did the teacher efficiently organise his lesson?				
Did the teacher prepare interesting activities?				
Was the tempo of the lesson adequate (not too slow or fast)?				

<sup>4</sup> Y = Yes

N = No

I = This is not an important quality of a good teacher.

### General comment

- What makes this a good and interesting lesson for you?

.....  
.....  
.....

- What could the teacher do to make this lesson better?

.....  
.....  
.....

### What's your definition of a good teacher?

Think of your best teacher in the school. Give the 5 most important qualities or characteristics which makes him or her your most remarkable teacher.

01.
02.
03.
04.
05.

Thank you for answering these questions!

### Personal Information

- Nationality:.....
- Age:.....
- School:.....
- Year and Main Subjects:.....
- Date:.....
- Topic European Lesson:.....
- Name Teacher European Lesson:.....

### Expectations towards the European lesson

Within this part we would like to know what your expectations were towards the European lesson you attended. And whether the lesson met these expectations or not. Also we would like to know what effect these lesson had on your personal behaviour, on your feelings and thoughts.

During the lesson you were perhaps thinking "what a boring lesson", or "how interesting!". Maybe you were staring through the window, looking to the clouds passing by. Or maybe your were listening with full attention to what the teacher was saying. Maybe you felt very bored or uncomfortable. You can write your ideas in the box below.

<p>1. These were my expectations towards the European lesson:</p>	
<p>2. This is how I felt during the lesson:</p>    <p>What did the teacher do to make you feel like that?</p>	
<p>3. This is what I was thinking during the lesson:</p>    <p>What did the teacher do to make you think that way?</p>	

<p>4. This was my behaviour during the lesson:</p>          <p>What did the teacher do to make you behave like that?</p>	
--	--

### Observation Sheet

In a traditional education context pupils are the ones being observed and evaluated. Within this part we would like to switch roles, because we know you also have an opinion upon what's a good teacher. In the table mentioned below you can give your opinion on how well you think the teacher managed the classroom<sup>5</sup>.

On class management	Y	N	I	Comment
Did all students cooperate during the lesson? Was everyone involved?				
Did the teacher react adequately when students were disruptive or misbehaved?				
What was the reaction of the teacher?				
Did the teacher immediately start his lesson, without losing time (searching for materials,...)?				
Was the teacher well organised?				
Did the teacher give clear instructions?				
Did the teacher efficiently organise his lesson?				
Did the teacher manage to engage you in the activities?				
Did the teacher establish a friendly relationship with the pupils?				
Did the teacher succeed to create a routine in class?				
Did the teacher clearly explained the activities and lesson content?				
Did the teacher promote positive behaviour in the classroom?				
Did the teacher arrange the furniture and equipment effectively? How?				
Did the different activities follow each other smoothly?				

<sup>5</sup> Y = Yes

N = No

I = This is not an important quality of a good teacher.

### General comment

- What makes this a good and interesting lesson for you?

.....

.....

- What could the teacher do to make this lesson better?

.....

.....

.....

### What's your definition of a good teacher?

Think of your best teacher in the school. Give the 5 most important qualities or characteristics which makes him or her your most remarkable teacher.

01.
02.
03.
04.
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Thank you for answering these questions!

### Personal Information

- Nationality:.....
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- School:.....
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- Date:.....
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- Name Teacher European Lesson:.....

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Within this part we would like to know what your expectations were towards the European lesson you attended. And whether the lesson met these expectations or not. Also we would like to know what effect these lesson had on your personal behaviour, on your feelings and thoughts.

During the lesson you were perhaps thinking "what a boring lesson", or "how interesting!". Maybe you were staring through the window, looking to the clouds passing by. Or maybe your were listening with full attention to what the teacher was saying. Maybe you felt very bored or uncomfortable. You can write your ideas in the box below.

1. These were my expectations towards the European lesson:	
2. This is how I felt during the lesson:          What did the teacher do to make you feel like that?	
3. This is what I was thinking during the lesson:          What did the teacher do to make you think that way?	

<p>4. This was my behaviour during the lesson:</p>          <p>What did the teacher do to make you behave like that?</p>	
--	--

### Observation Sheet

In a traditional education context pupils are the ones being observed and evaluated. Within this part we would like to switch roles, because we know you also have an opinion upon what's a good teacher. In the table mentioned below you can give your opinion on how well you think the teacher communicated with the pupils in the class<sup>6</sup>.

On communication	Y	N	I	Comment
Did the teacher write accurately (faultless and clear)?				
Did the teacher speak adequately? (fluent and in good English)				
Did the teacher use nonverbal gestures? Which ones?				
Was the teacher always visible in the classroom?				
Did the teacher have eye contact with the students?				
Did the teacher use adequate facial expressions when he was communicating with the students?				
Was the teacher audible from all corners of the classroom?				
Did the teacher put enough variation in his/her tone of voice?				
Was the teacher mobile enough (= not static)?				
Did you always understand what the teacher was saying?				
Did the teacher act friendly and patient with the students?				
Was there a nice atmosphere in the classroom?				
Did the teacher use a clear pronunciation?				
Did the teacher deliver the lesson in a calm and open manner?				
Is the teacher a good listener?				

<sup>6</sup> Y = Yes

N = No

I = This is not an important quality of a good teacher.

Did the teacher invite you to ask questions?				
Did the teacher ask questions to all the students in the class?				
Did the teacher invite you to communicate?				
Or was he/she the only one talking all the time?				

### What's your definition of a good teacher?

Think of your best teacher in the school. Give the 5 most important qualities or characteristics which makes him or her your most remarkable teacher.

01.
02.
03.
04.
05.

Thank you for answering these questions!

- Nationality:.....
- Age:.....
- School:.....
- Year and Main Subjects:.....
- Date:.....
- Topic European Lesson:.....
- Name Teacher European Lesson:.....

Within this part we would like to know what your expectations were towards the European lesson you attended. And whether the lesson met these expectations or not. Also we would like to know what effect these lesson had on your personal behaviour, on your feelings and thoughts.

During the lesson you were perhaps thinking “what a boring lesson”, or “how interesting!”. Maybe you were staring through the window, looking to the clouds passing by. Or maybe you were listening with full attention to what the teacher was saying. Maybe you felt very bored or uncomfortable. You can write your ideas in the box below.

1. These were my expectations towards the European lesson:	
2. This is how I felt during the lesson:          What did the teacher do to make you feel like that?	
3. This is what I was thinking during the lesson:          What did the teacher do to make you think that way?	

<p>4. This was my behaviour during the lesson:</p>          <p>What did the teacher do to make you behave like that?</p>	
--	--

### Observation Sheet

In a traditional education context pupils are the ones being observed and evaluated. Within this part we would like to switch roles, because we know you also have an opinion upon what's a good teacher. In the table mentioned below you can give your opinion on how well you think the teacher managed to motivate you<sup>7</sup>.

On motivation and questions	Y	N	I	Comment
Was the teacher enthusiastic and inspiring in the classroom?				
Did the teacher reinforce you positively (complement you) when you answered a question, when you cooperated,...? How?				
Did the teacher provide challenging and novel lesson contents and activities? Give an example:				
Did the teacher motivate you to cooperate? How?				
Did the teacher encourage pupils to speak out?				
Did the teacher encourage you to work together with other pupils?				
Did the teacher help you with your tasks and activities?				
Did the teacher punish someone who misbehaved? How?				
Did the teacher ask a lot of questions to the pupils?				
Did the teacher encourage you to ask questions?				
Did the teacher listen to your questions?				

<sup>7</sup> Y = Yes

N = No

I = This is not an important quality of a good teacher.

### General comment

- What makes this a good and interesting lesson for you?

.....  
.....

- What could the teacher do to make this lesson better?

.....  
.....  
.....

### What's your definition of a good teacher?

Think of your best teacher in the school. Give the 5 most important qualities or characteristics which makes him or her your most remarkable teacher.

01.
02.
03.
04.
05.

Thank you for answering these questions!

### 3.3. Classroom observation sheets for students observing teachers and teacher students

# most

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SHEETS  
FOR MOST STUDENTS  
OBSERVING TEACHERS AND PEERS

MOST PROJECT 2007

## Observer

Name	
Nationality	
Subjects specialized in, year of education	

## Teacher/peer observed

Name	
Nationality	

## Placement School

Name					
Country					
Section		Year		No. Of pupils	

## Lesson

Date	
Subject	
Topic	

## Overall description

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the context<sup>8</sup>.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What did the teacher do?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What did the pupils do?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you think the teacher felt?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do you think the pupils felt?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you think the teacher thought?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you think the pupils thought?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you think the teacher wanted?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What do you think the pupils wanted?</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Examples are : maybe it's the last day of school before holidays or before the weekend. Or perhaps it's very hot in the classroom, or it's stormy weather. Maybe there aren't enough chairs and tables available; Or the students are very energetic after an exciting physical training lesson,...

## Competencies on Group Level

Is the teacher or the teacher student sensitive and responsive to students' different ability levels

### ☐ **ACTIVITY PLANNING**

Paying attention to material and mental preparation.

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### ☐ **IMPLEMENTATION**

Paying attention to:  
class management, mastery of subject content, organisation, creativity

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### ☐ **COMMUNICATION**

Paying attention to:  
Verbal and non-verbal communication, spoken and written language

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### ☐ **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Paying attention to assessment techniques and reflection

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---

## Competencies on School Community Level

### ☐ **COMMUNICATION**

Paying attention to cooperation with colleagues and openness for other views

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### 3.4. Self-observation

## IV. Assessment

### 4.1. European Standard: a molecular model



# European Standard for the Beginning Teacher

most

This document represents a European standard for teacher trainees, as developed through action research within the Most project. It consists out of all the competencies teacher trainees should have achieved to function as a beginning teacher within a European context.

The standard is presented as a molecule, consisting out of 3 surrounding atoms, connected by one core atom.

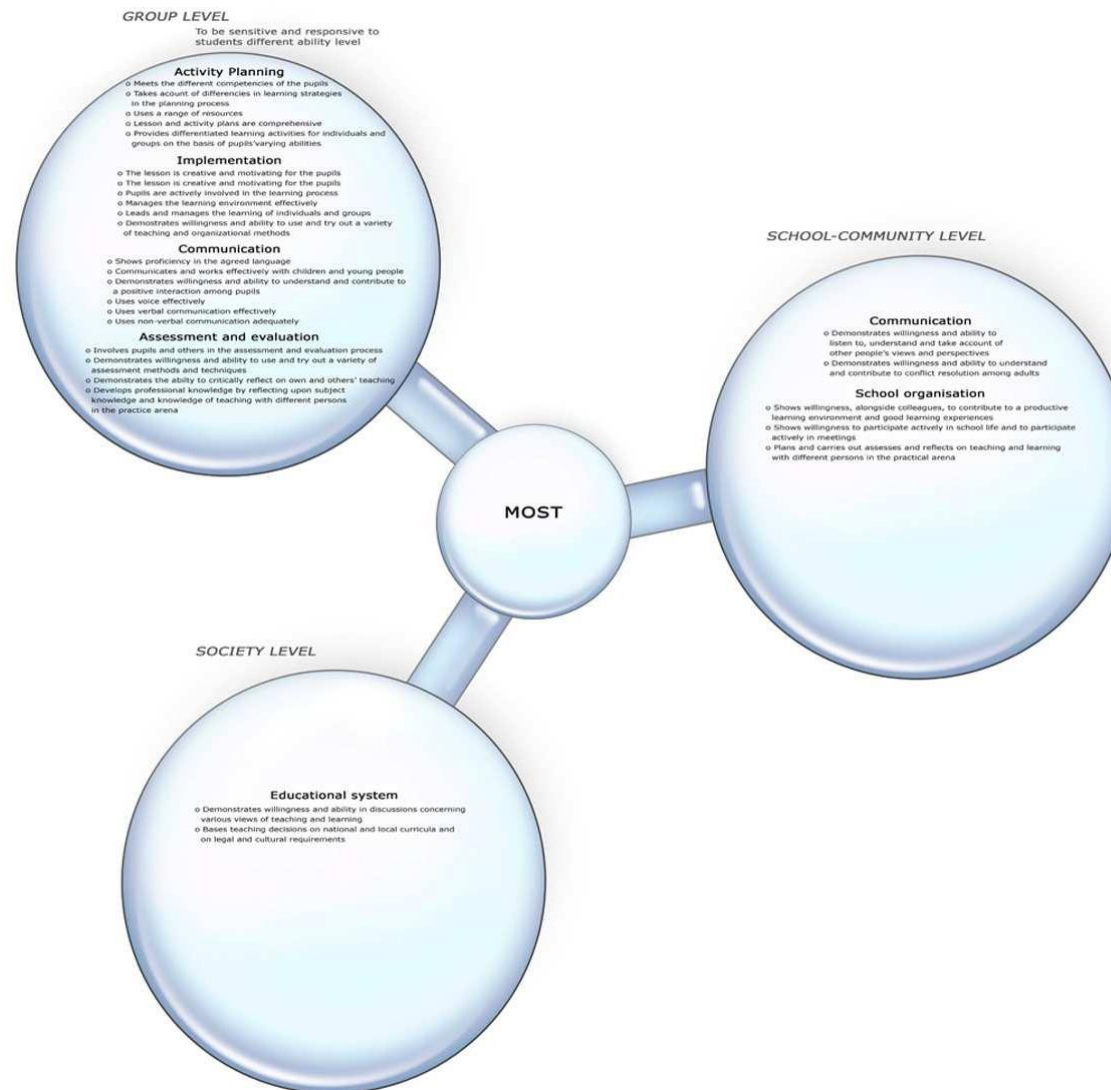
The three surrounding atoms represent three domains of competencies:

- GROUP LEVEL
- SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEVEL
- SOCIETY LEVEL

These domains incorporate all skills and attitudes within the area of education that should be attained in the practical part of the course. The different levels of competencies are presented as similar atoms within one molecule, as all levels are equal in importance to function as a good teacher within a European context. When one atom is lacking, the molecule breaks down.

The three surrounding atoms connect within the core atom of the molecule, defined as the *"emergent identity of a European teacher"*. This connection symbolizes:

- that all levels are equal in importance
- that the whole of competencies, as basic condition to become a good teacher in a European context, connect with the particular personality of the teacher in question. It is in this unique combination of competencies and qualities that the identity of a European teacher emerges or appears. In that way this molecular model leaves enough space for cultural and personal differences and a variation in education styles among different "qualified" beginning teachers within a European context. That is also why the standard has been kept rather compact; to leave enough freedom for each teacher and teacher student to develop an own "European" teaching style and identity.



## **GROUP LEVEL**

To be sensitive and responsive to students different ability level

### **Activity Planning**

- o Meets the different competencies of the pupils
- o Takes account of differences in learning strategies in the planning process
- o Uses a range of resources
- o Lesson and activity plans are comprehensive
- o Provides differentiated learning activities for individuals and groups on the basis of pupils'varying abilities

### **Implementation**

- o The lesson is creative and motivating for the pupils
- o The lesson is creative and motivating for the pupils
- o Pupils are actively involved in the learning process
- o Manages the learning environment effectively
- o Leads and manages the learning of individuals and groups
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to use and try out a variety of teaching and organizational methods

### **Communication**

- o Shows proficiency in the agreed language
- o Communicates and works effectively with children and young people
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to understand and contribute to a positive interaction among pupils
- o Uses voice effectively
- o Uses verbal communication effectively
- o Uses non-verbal communication adequately

### **Assessment and evaluation**

- o Involves pupils and others in the assessment and evaluation process
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to use and try out a variety of assessment methods and techniques
- o Demonstrates the ability to critically reflect on own and others' teaching
- o Develops professional knowledge by reflecting upon subject knowledge and knowledge of teaching with different persons in the practice arena

## ***SCHOOL-COMMUNITY LEVEL***

### **Communication**

- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to listen to, understand and take account of other people's views and perspectives
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to understand and contribute to conflict resolution among adults

### **School organisation**

- o Shows willingness, alongside colleagues, to contribute to a productive learning environment and good learning experiences
- o Shows willingness to participate actively in school life and to participate actively in meetings
- o Plans and carries out assesses and reflects on teaching and learning with different persons in the practical arena

## *SOCIETY LEVEL*

### **Educational system**

- o Demonstrates willingness and ability in discussions concerning various views of teaching and learning
- o Bases teaching decisions on national and local curricula and on legal and cultural requirements

## 4.2. Assessment document for mentors

## ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT MOST-PROJECT 2007

Name Practise School: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address school: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name student: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Host country: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mentor Practise School: \_\_\_\_\_

This is an assessment document indicating what the students should have achieved to function as a beginning teacher within a European context. This document is based on the standard, as developed through action research within the Most-program.

The standard is presented as a molecule, consisting out of 3 surrounding atoms, connected by one core atom. The three surrounding atoms represent three domains of competencies:

- GROUP LEVEL
- SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEVEL
- SOCIETY LEVEL

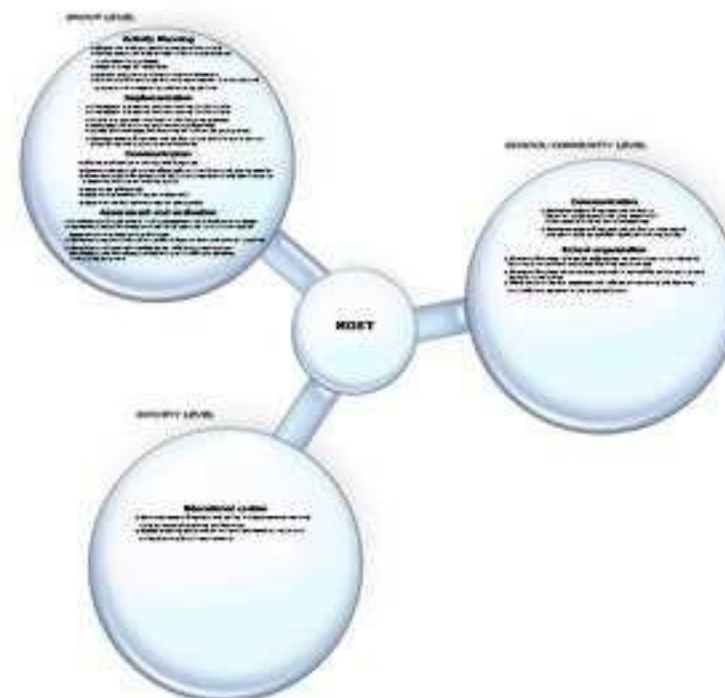
These domains incorporate all skills and attitudes within the area of education that should be attained in the practical part of the course. The different levels of competencies are presented as similar atoms within one molecule, as all levels are equal in importance to function as a good teacher within a European context. When one atom is lacking, the molecule breaks down. The three surrounding atoms connect within the core atom of the molecule, defined as the “*emergent identity of a European teacher*”. This connection symbolizes:

- ☐ that all levels are equal in importance
- ☐ that the whole of competencies, as basic condition to become a good teacher in a European context, connect with the particular personality of the teacher in question. It is in this unique combination of competencies and qualities that the identity of a European teacher emerges or appears. In that way this molecular model leaves enough space for cultural and personal differences and a variation in education styles among different “qualified” beginning teachers within a European context. That is also why the standard has been kept rather compact; to leave enough freedom for each teacher and teacher student to develop an own “European” teaching style.

Symbols are used for the assessor to mark whether the student has reached the corresponding competence.

Y	Yes: The aim expected of the trainee has been reached
N	No: The aim expected of the trainee has been reached
I	Information lacking: During the practice period there were no opportunities and situations available for the students to prove he has reached the expected aim.

### The molecular model of the standard: a miniature version



### GROUP LEVEL

To be sensitive and responsive to students different ability level

#### Activity Planning

- o Meets the different competencies of the pupils
- o Takes account of differences in learning strategies in the planning process
- o Uses a range of resources
- o Lesson and activity plans are comprehensive
- o Provides differentiated learning activities for individuals and groups on the basis of pupils' varying abilities

#### Implementation

- o The lesson is creative and motivating for the pupils
- o The lesson is creative and motivating for the pupils
- o Pupils are actively involved in the learning process
- o Manages the learning environment effectively
- o Leads and manages the learning of individuals and groups
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to use and try out a variety of teaching and organizational methods

#### Communication

- o Shows proficiency in the agreed language
- o Communicates and works effectively with children and young people
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to understand and contribute to a positive interaction among pupils
- o Uses voice effectively
- o Uses verbal communication effectively
- o Uses non-verbal communication adequately

#### Assessment and evaluation

- o Involves pupils and others in the assessment and evaluation process
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to use and try out a variety of assessment methods and techniques
- o Demonstrates the ability to critically reflect on own and others' teaching
- o Develops professional knowledge by reflecting upon subject knowledge and knowledge of teaching with different persons in the practice arena

## ***SCHOOL-COMMUNITY LEVEL***

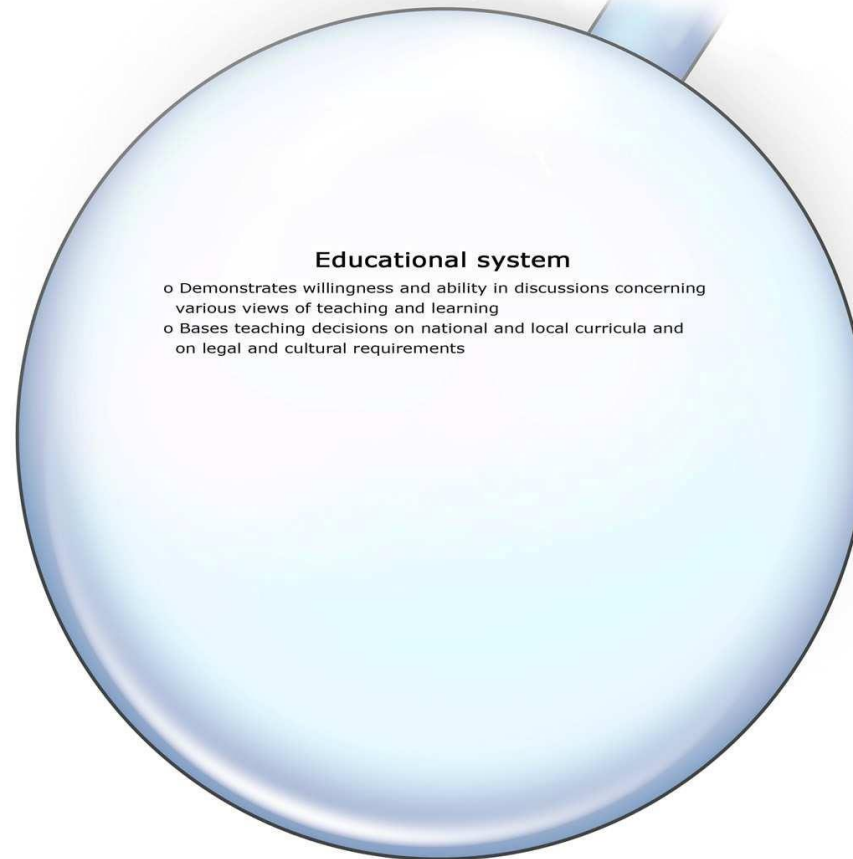
### **Communication**

- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to listen to, understand and take account of other people's views and perspectives
- o Demonstrates willingness and ability to understand and contribute to conflict resolution among adults

### **School organisation**

- o Shows willingness, alongside colleagues, to contribute to a productive learning environment and good learning experiences
- o Shows willingness to participate actively in school life and to participate actively in meetings
- o Plans and carries out assesses and reflects on teaching and learning with different persons in the practical arena

## *SOCIETY LEVEL*



## GROUP LEVEL:

to be sensitive and responsive to students different ability level

				Strengths and Targets for Reflection & Development		
ACTIVITY PLANNING	Y	N	I			
Meets the different competencies of the pupils						
Takes account of differences in learning strategies in the planning process						
Uses a range of resources						
Provides differentiated learning activities for individuals and groups on the basis of pupils' varying abilities						
Lesson and activity plans are comprehensive						
IMPLEMENTATION	Y	N	I			
The lesson is creative and motivating for the pupils						
Leads and manages the learning of individuals and groups						
Shows mastery of subject content						
Manages the learning environment effectively						
Demonstrates willingness and ability to use and try out a variety of teaching and organizational methods						
Pupils are actively involved in the learning process						
COMMUNICATION	Y	N	I			
Shows proficiency in the agreed language						
Communicates and works effectively with children and young people						
Demonstrates willingness and ability to understand and contribute to a positive interaction among pupils						
Uses voice effectively						
Uses verbal communication effectively						
Uses non-verbal communication adequately						
ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION	Y	N	I			
Involves pupils and others in the assessment and evaluation process						
Demonstrates willingness and ability to use and try out a variety of assessment methods and techniques						
Demonstrates the ability to critically reflect on own and others' teaching						
Develops professional knowledge by reflecting upon subject knowledge and knowledge of teaching with different persons in the practice arena						

SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEVEL

COMMUNICATION		Y	N	I		
Demonstrates willingness and ability to listen to, understand and take account of other people's views and perspective						
Demonstrates willingness and ability to understand and contribute to conflict resolution among adults						
SCHOOL ORGANISATION		Y	N	I		
Shows willingness, alongside colleagues, to contribute to a productive learning environment and good learning experiences						
Shows willingness to participate actively in school life and to participate actively in meetings						
Plans, carries out, assesses and reflects on teaching and learning with different persons in the practice arena						

SOCIETY LEVEL

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM		Y	N	I		
Demonstrates willingness and ability to participate in discussions concerning various views of teaching and learning						
Bases teaching decisions on national and local curricula and on legal and cultural requirements.						

Other General Comments

Name and Signature Assessor:

Date:

### 4.3. Portfolio

## Your Professional Development Portfolio

### Why a portfolio?

There are many theoretical and practical reasons why portfolios are being used in a range of contexts like in education, nursing and management. They are also being used for a variety of purposes like professional development and achievement. One of the reasons being that there has been dissatisfaction with assessment procedures derived from a quantitative tradition (Klenowski, 2002). It is argued that portfolio use for assessment and learning offers the opportunity to redress the imbalance caused by testing and mechanistic and technicist conceptualisations of curriculum and assessment. The use of portfolios for a range of purposes has the potential to make more explicit the important relationship between curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. Shepard(2000) and Looney(2000) have stressed the need to build a symbiosis between curriculum and assessment policy that is reflected in pedagogical practice. The use of the portfolio offers

Te opportunity for the realisation of this vital integration of assessment with curriculum development. The use of portfolios has become a *sine qua non* in teacher education programmes mainly with the aim to the development of important skills such as reflection, self-evaluation and critical analysis.

### What is a portfolio?

Arter and Spandel(1992) admit that it is not always clear what is meant by a portfolio especially in the context of portfolio assessment but their definition acknowledges the developmental nature of the assessment process of the portfolio and puts emphasis on the active involvement of the student in portraying what they know and can do. The integration of assessment with teaching and learning and the recognition of the purpose of student reflection on the learning processes involved in the work accomplished are also highlighted in their definition:

....a purposeful collection of student work that tells the story of the student's efforts, progress, or achievement in (a) given area(s). the collection must include student participation in selection of portfolio content; the guidelines for selection; the criteria for judging merit; and evidence of student self-reflection.

(Arter and Spandel, 1992: 36)

## How are portfolios used?

The use of a portfolio itself is an experience in on-going learning. The portfolio is an example of the learning process but at the same time demands that the student develops important insights, skills, strategies, dispositions and understandings for continuing learning (Klenowski, 2002). The portfolio should help the student to focus on his/her own learning strategies and achievements. The progress and the quality of the learning process are valued over how much has been learnt and whether the knowledge represented in the portfolio matches a centrally predetermined objective response. The portfolio purports to show more than one indicator of achievement. There can be several entries that show assessment types for example, essay answers, artefacts, video-sessions, pictorial representations, illustrations, narratives, reflective writing and exhibitions of learning.

## References

Arter, J.A. and Spandel, V. (1992) 'Using Portfolios of Student Work in Instruction and Assessment', *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, Spring, pp.36-44.  
Burke, P. and Rainbow, B. (1998) 'How to Compile a Portfolio', *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 30 October, pp.30-1.  
Klenowski, V. (2002) *Developing Portfolios for Learning and Assessment*. London: Routledge Falmer.  
Faculty of Education *Professional Development Portfolio* University of Malta.

## Your portfolio

Your Professional Development Portfolio is a cumulative record of your experience/accomplishments during the Journey on the MOST Project. It is a unique record that will provide a comprehensive picture of your growth and professional development throughout the Project. Your development will include meetings, lectures, school visits, teaching experience, cultural visits, whole group/individual reflective meetings. The portfolio belongs to you and though there are tasks to carry out yet it is you who decide what to include in it and leave out. It is a very personal document because it tells your story on a journey, the way you experienced it. Though it is a personal document yet it is a public document because it is accessible to the Project coordinators and colleagues. Nevertheless the responsibility for the development, format, presentation and completion of the portfolio is solely yours.

## 1. The Journey begins.

The MOST Project is a Journey with a beginning and no end. You started this journey when you expressed an interest to form part of the Project and thus embarked on the Journey. The end of the Journey is never-ending because what you experience on the Journey will be part of your development. On the Journey you will be asked to observe, collect artefacts, read and reflect on the experiences you go through.

You are responsible for all that is collated and written down in this portfolio. Start with writing about yourself.

### 1.1. Write your autobiography.

Some tips might be the following:

- Where do you come from?
- What is your story?
- How did you arrive at this stage in your life?
- ...

### 1.2. What are you expecting from this Journey?

⇒ List a set of objectives that you wish to achieve.

## **Week 1 – At the Arteveldehogeschool - Ghent**

For the first week on your Journey you will be hosted at the Arteveldehogeschool, Bachelor in Education: Secondary Education. You will meet the Belgian coordinator and be introduced to the various educational systems which make part of the Project. You will be asked to write about the lectures you attend, collect artefacts and even reflect on your learning experience.

### 1.3. Write about your initial impression of the Arteveldehogeschool.

### 1.4. Make a list of the main structure of the other Educational Systems, which were presented by the other national teams.

### 1.5. Compare and contrast the different educational systems you have heard about in your first lectures.

### 1.6. Collate photographs of your visit to the old city of Ghent. Include any artefacts which you might have collected.

### 1.7. Write your reflections about your visit to the old city of Ghent.

- What caught your attention?
- Did anything surprise you?
- ...

### 1.8. What are the main characteristics of a Reflective Practitioner?

1.9. You have attended the lesson upon good lesson preparation.

- ⇒ Include all lessons you prepare in your portfolio. For the preparation of your lessons you use the lesson template, as developed within the Most Project.

1.10. Video Record your presentation upon your educational system and one of your micro- teaching sessions.

1.11. Include the visualisation exercise on skilful class management within your portfolio and video record the street interviews upon teacher quality.

- ⇒ Compare and contrast both with each other, with the exercise of your colleague students and with the European Standard, as developed within the Most Project.
- ⇒ Can you discover similar teacher qualities within all sources?
- ⇒ Based on these sources, what conclusion can you draw upon important teacher qualities?

1.12. You attended the lecture upon communication. Watch carefully the video record of one of your presentations or micro teaching sessions.

- Write a reflective paragraph on your verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
  - How does it feel to watch yourself?
  - Does anything surprise you? Do you use gestures, movements, facial expressions that you were not aware of before watching the movie?
  - What communication skills (verbal and non-verbal) do you need to improve to act as an efficient communicator within the classroom practice?
  - ...
- Draw your own Johari Window, illustrating your own position and ways of communicating within the international Most-team.
  - Do you show a lot of yourself towards the other Most-participants?
  - ...

1.13. Select one or more lectures that you attended this week and list five main points which you regard as important to become a very good beginning teacher.

1.14. Video record some of your reflections which will be shared during a group session at the end of the journey.

## 2. The Journey begins – School Placement

---

In the second week you will observe pupils in the classroom, have a meeting with heads and teachers in schools and attend lectures. You will also give your first lessons. You are expected to observe and reflect on this part of the Journey.

- 2.1. What are your impressions of the 2 schools you visited?
- 2.2. After your lesson/s observation sessions<sup>9</sup> discuss at least the following points:
  - a. How did the teacher/s communicate with his/her students?
  - b. Where the students cooperative?
  - c. Did the teacher/s manage to achieve his/her objective/s in the lesson?
  - d. Did the teacher/s use any resources?
  - e. Was the lesson observed structured in any way? And if yes, how?
  - f. How did the teacher/s manage the students?
- 2.3. Write a reflective paragraph reviewing your classroom observation sessions in the secondary schools.
  - ⇒ For this reflection you can use the following questions (inspired by the ALACT-model of Fred Kothagen, )
    - Describe the context.
    - What did the teacher and the pupils do?
    - How do I think the teacher and the pupils felt?
    - What do I think the teacher and the pupils thought?
    - What do I think the teacher and the pupils wanted?
    - What's the connection between the answers to the previous questions?
    - What's the influence of the context or the school as a whole?
    - What made this lesson successful or not?
    - What alternative ways of teaching do you see? What would you have done differently, why?
    - What are the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives you propose?

---

<sup>9</sup> Use the Classroom Observation template during your observation sessions in the schools.

2.4. After each day of teaching you reflect on all your lessons. The main areas of concern to be considered this week are planning, preparation, lesson delivery and communication skills.

2.4.1. As a start reflect on your planning, preparation and lesson delivery. To facilitate your reflection answer the following questions and then write your reflective task.

- A. Analyse a lesson or a set of lessons and focus on its three basic components. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - a. Was the introduction motivating? What did you do to capture the students' attention?
  - b. Was the flow of the lesson adequate?
  - c. Did you manage to tackle all the teaching points in the development?
  - d. How did you bring the lesson to a close? (i.e. focus on closure)
  - e. How did the students react to the conclusion of the lesson?
  - f. Was the time factor adequate?
  - g. What could you have done better?
- B. Select a lesson that you have delivered and ask yourself these questions:
  - a. Did you envisage any change/s at the planning stage?
  - b. Did the lesson fit with the rest of the curriculum?
  - c. Did you change anything whilst delivering the lesson?
  - d. How did the students react to the lesson content?
  - e. Were the learning outcomes achieved?
  - f. Did the resource/s facilitate the learning process?
- C. Select a lesson that you have conducted. Reflect on the decisions you made when you were planning the lesson relating to:
  - a. instructional objectives
  - b. teaching materials/resources
  - c. selection and sequencing of activities
  - d. assessment of student learning.
- D. Focus on the resources of a lesson that you have delivered and reflect on:
  - a. Are the resources intricately linked to lesson?
  - b. Was the time invested in preparing the resources worth it?
  - c. How many resources did you prepare?
  - d. Was the timing of the resources appropriate with the flow of the lesson?
  - e. Did the resources facilitate teaching and learning?
  - f. If the lesson was void of resources would learning have taken place just the same?
  - g. How far would you say that the resources were the determining factor/s in the success of the lesson?

- 2.4.2. As a second competency which you will be asked to reflect on this week is your ability to manage a classroom effectively. The following questions should set you reflecting on your classroom management skills. There is no word limit to your reflections so make sure you reflect on all aspects of your management skills.
- A. Focus on your style of classroom management and try to fit it in one/more of the following role models. When you do, reflect on it.
    - a. strict disciplinarian
    - b. democratic leader
    - c. laissez-faire leader
    - d. poor organiser
    - e. inconsistent legislator
    - f. incessant critic.
  - B. The effectiveness of any class management depends on a teacher's attitudes and practical intelligence. Reflect on these basic principles:
    - a. Have you established a friendly relationship with your students?
    - b. What did you establish the relationship on?
    - c. Do you consider yourself to have established a supportive and trusting relationship?
    - d. What is your regard towards disruptive student/s?
    - e. Can you honestly say that you have a positive regard towards disruptive student/s?
    - f. Do you consider your approach to be optimistic and no-nonsense approach?
    - g. If you do, how did you set about establishing it?
  - C. One of the positive ways of establishing classroom control is by promoting a positive classroom environment. Ask yourself these questions:
    - a. Have you managed to create a routine in class?
    - b. How did you set it up?
    - c. Do you feel you are committed to an organised work routine?
    - d. Have you managed to engage your students in meaningful learning activities?
    - e. Do you consider that you can maintain a certain amount of momentum and smoothness in the direction of class activities?
  - D. Inappropriate behaviour is bound to occur in class from time to time. Reflect on it in the following questions:
    - a. Did you experience unacceptable behaviour during your T.P.?
    - b. What form of unacceptable behaviour? Describe.
    - c. How did you deal with it?
    - d. Was your strategy/ies effective?
    - e. What were you concerned with in your approach?
    - f. What did you feel at the time of dealing with the behaviour?
    - g. What was the final outcome of your strategy?

2.4.3. As a third competency which you will be asked to reflect on this week is your skill in communicating effectively.

- A. Non-verbal communication is a useful tool in class. Basically it refers to the use of space, movement, gestures, facial expressions and posture in communication. Keep this in mind and reflect.
  - a. Are you visible in class?
  - b. Is there eye contact between you and the students?
  - c. Do you use facial expressions to communicate with your students?
  - d. Do you vary the tone and pitch of your voice?
  - e. Do you drop your voice at the end of an utterance?
  - f. Do you have voice modulation?
  - g. Do you think that you are audible from all corners of your class?
  - h. Do you think you can project your voice effectively?
  - i. Do you use non-verbal gestures? If yes, what for?
  - j. How effective are these gestures?
  - k. Is such communication one-way or two-way?
- B. Reflect further on whether you are communicating effectively in class by replying to the following:
  - a. Are you making yourself understood?
  - b. Is your English a problem?
  - c. Are you clear in your pronunciation?
  - d. Do the students understand what you say?
  - e. Are you logical in your arguments/reasoning?
  - f. Are you interesting?
  - g. Have you managed to bring down the material to the level of the students?
  - h. How accessible are you?
- C. A competent teacher has proficient communication skills. The first of these skills are the 'personal qualities and attitudes of a teacher'. Reflect on these skills:
  - a. Are you friendly and patient with your students?
  - b. Do you deliver your lessons in an open, calm manner?
  - c. How would you define your classroom climate?
  - d. Do you think that the students feel comfortable in your presence?
  - e. Do you think that the students feel threatened in your presence?
  - f. Do you ever talk down to your students? If you do, why? when?
  - g. Are you a good listener?
  - h. Do you respond to your students' queries?
  - i. How relaxed do you feel about your students?
  - j. How do they feel?

D. The next proficient communication skills concern 'learning'.  
Reflect on these questions:

- a. What are you planning to enhance communication skills in your students? Mention examples.
- b. Do you train your students in active learning?
- c. Do you use group discussions?
- d. Do you teach your students how to verbalise ideas?
- e. Do you train your students in how to make a point without being aggressive or demanding?

2.5. Select one of your lessons and video-tape the lesson. You can ask one of your colleagues to record the lesson.

⇒ Focus on all aspects of the learning process during the recording. You are expected to bring in the recording of your lesson for group discussion in the last week of the Project.

⇒ Write your reflections about the recording.

2.6. Include one of your tutor's reports and reflect about it.

2.7. Select one or more of your best lessons this week and include it in your portfolio. Write your reflection about it/them.

### 3. The Last week of Teaching Practice

During this week you will continue your practicum in schools. You will plan and prepare lessons, organise learning, video-tape a lesson or two, reflect on your practice and collect your best work to include it in your portfolio.

After each day of teaching reflect on all your lessons. Reflections should focus on all aspects of classroom practice, even the highly personal and autobiographical dimension must be considered. The main areas of concern to be considered are planning, preparation and lesson delivery, classroom management skills, communication skills, questioning skills, motivation/self-directed and independent learning and assessment and feedback. You should write a daily reflection throughout the whole week.

#### 3.1. Invite different colleague students to observe some of your lessons.

- ⇒ Ask the observing student(s) to fill in the “classroom observation sheet” for you.
- ⇒ Include these observation sheets within your portfolio.
- ⇒ Write a reflective paragraph on these peer observations.

#### 3.2. “Let pupils in the classroom evaluate you!”

- ⇒ In the Most Handbook and on the Dokeos Learning platform you can find observation sheets developed for pupils in the classroom.
- ⇒ There are several versions. Observation sheets focussing on;
  - a. Preparation and lesson delivery
  - b. Class management
  - c. Communicative skills
  - d. Motivating and questioning skills
- ⇒ Pupils are also asked to enumerate qualities of their best teacher (comparable with the visualisation exercise you had to fill in).
- ⇒ Let pupils observe some of your lessons, and let them be focussed on one competence at a time. Make sure that at the end of the road all competences are “evaluated” by pupils who attended your lessons.
- ⇒ Include these observations in your portfolio.

#### 3.3. Last week you already started reflecting on your planning, preparation, lesson delivery and communicative skills. To facilitate your reflection you answered some questions and wrote your reflective task. During the last week of your teaching practice, you have to continue with

your daily reflections like last week. To help you in your growth towards a good European Teacher you will also have to reflect further upon your questioning-, motivating-, assessment- and feedback-skills.

3.3.1. Start this week by reflecting on your questioning skills

- A. Select a lesson from your T.P. File and focus on the questions in your lesson plan. Reflect on the following:
  - a. How many questions did you ask?
  - b. What kind of questions have you asked?
  - c. Give examples of high-order questions.
  - d. Give examples of low-order questions.
- B. 'Questioning is effective for promoting classroom interaction.' Keeping this statement in mind, reflect on these questions:
  - a. Do you use questions to promote interaction in class?
  - b. Do you think that questions promote interaction?
  - c. How is it possible?
  - d. What happens as a result of the interaction?
  - e. How do you, as a teacher, take up the cue and use the stimulus created to enhance learning?
- C. Sometimes students are inhibited from asking questions by the threat of criticism from their classmates, because they feel that their question might not be relevant or due to the negative reaction of the teacher. Keeping all these issues in mind and others which you might think of, reflect on the following:
  - a. Do you create 'question time slots' in your lessons?
  - b. Do you invite students to ask questions?
  - c. Do you wait, patiently, for questions or is eager to get on with the lesson?
  - d. Do you welcome questions when they are asked?
  - e. Through your strategies, do you encourage students who show a degree of perplexity?
  - f. Are your questions concerned with prompting students' thinking abilities?
  - g. Are your questions directed at confident learning and high motivational objectives?
  - h. Do you focus on the vocabulary and syntax of your questions?
  - i. Do you match your questions with the ability of your students?
- D. Now you must reflect on how you ask questions:
  - a. Do you create an order (from easy to difficult) in the questions you ask?
  - b. Do you match the sequence of questions with the series of specific objectives in your lessons?
  - c. Are your questions formulated in a proper logical order?
  - d. Do you allow students to formulate an answer before asking them another question?
  - e. Have you ever rephrased questions? Why?

- f. Do you allow the pace of question-asking and wait-time to suit the questions being asked?
- g. Do you distribute questions to all the students in your class?
- h. How do you keep track of questions asked, to whom, and responses given?

3.3.2. The second competency you are asked to focus on this week is your skill to motivate students and your ability to promote self-directed and independent learning:

- A. Getting students motivated to take part in learning and to maximise on the expectancy, value and emotional aspect of motivation is important. Reflect on these issues:
  - a. Are your objectives realistic, relevant and attainable?
  - b. Do you use reinforcers to help students achieve learning goals?
  - c. In your lessons do you encourage co-operation among students to achieve common learning goals rather than stressing competition?
  - d. Do you provide challenging, novel, and varied learning activities and experience to motivate students to high levels of achievement?
  - e. How far do you ensure that your students experience success and feelings of competence?
  - f. Do you provide on task assistance to promote motivational success?
- B. One way of getting students motivated is to provide extrinsic incentives. Reinforcements, if used effectively are highly motivational. Focus on some here:
  - a. Have you ever juggled up with potential reinforcers for different students?
  - b. Do you use popular classroom activities as reinforcers for less desirable learning activities?
  - c. What kind of verbal encouragement and praise have you used in your teaching?
  - d. Have you ever used negative reinforcers when positive reinforcers have failed?
  - e. Do you use continuous reinforcements in the early stages of learning?
  - f. And if you have, what were the effects?
  - g. Do you use intermittent reinforcements when learning has been established?
  - h. Do you use punishments?
  - i. Why and when do you use them?
  - j. What are the short and long term effects of punishments
- C. Self-regulated and independent learners have a repertoire of learning strategies for selection and implementation according to the demand of tasks. They constantly monitor and update their strategies. Reflect on these strategies:

- a. Do you expose your students to a range of strategies for various learning tasks?
- b. Is the teaching of studying skills part of your repertoire?
- c. If yes, how do you use it?
- d. Do you encourage your students to produce their own representations of subject matter?
- e. Are you a teacher who demonstrates strategies that promote self-directed learning?
- f. Are your students capable of monitoring their own learning?
- g. Do you encourage students to believe in their own cognitive worth?
- h. What kind of support do you provide?
- i. Do you devise co-operative learning activities in your classroom?
- j. Are your instructions for working in groups clear and precise?
- k. Do you reward acceptable individual behaviour for whole group members?
- l. Do you use pair work in your class?
- m. How, when and why do you use it?
- n. Do you encourage social skills?
- o. How do you do it?

3.3.3. In this final focus you are asked to reflect on assessment and feedback.

A. There are different types of assessment procedures. Reflect on initial assessment procedures:

- a. List the different types of assessment available.
- b. What form of assessment do you use in class?
- c. Are the children in your class aware of 'your' assessment procedures?
- d. Are they compliant with the procedure?
- e. What is the reaction of the parents to 'your' procedure?

B. You are requested by a parent to provide a profile of his/her son's/daughter's performance in your class. Consider what you would write:

- a. Where would you start from?
- b. How would you set about compiling evidence of your claims?
- c. Do you base your assessment on factual data?
- d. Do you use the child's work to put across a weakness or success patterns?
- e. What conclusions would you arrive at?
- f. What is your evidence to support your conclusion/s?
- g. Is the evidence based on your impression/s or on actual samples of the child's work?
- h. Do the assessment and comments provide a 'complete' picture of the child?

C. Feedback is highly important for all the stakeholders in your classroom. Reflect on feedback through these questions:

- a. Do you set standards for performance on learning tasks?
- b. Are the students aware of the set standards?
- c. If yes, do you give feedback according to achievements measured against your standards?
- d. Do you use your feedback to inform your students of the stages achieved in reaching learning goals?
- e. What kind of feedback do you provide?
- f. Does your feedback assist learning?
- g. Would you consider your feedback as accurate?
- h. Why?

D. When to give feedback is an essential dimension in classroom practice. Reflect on such issues:

- a. When do you provide feedback?
- b. At the beginning of a learning task or the end of it?
- c. When do you use partial feedback?
- d. How much are you available to provide feedback?
- e. What approach do you adopt when you provide feedback?

3.4. Select one of your lessons and video-tape the lesson. You can ask one of your colleagues to record the lesson. Focus on all aspects of the learning process during the recording. You are expected to bring in the recording of your lesson for group discussion in the last week of the Project. Write your reflections about the recording.

3.4.1. In this final focus you are also asked to answer the following questions (based on the ALACT-model of Fred Korthagen):

- Describe the context.
- What did the pupils do?
- How do you think the pupils felt?
- What do you think the pupils thought?
- What do you think the pupils wanted?
  
- What's the connection between the answers to the previous questions?
- What's the influence of the context or the school as a whole?
- What made this lesson successful or not?
  
- What alternative ways of teaching/approach do you see? What would you do differently in the future, why?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives you propose?

3.5. Compare this self-observation with the video analysis of a lesson given in your first week of practise.

⇒ Describe your own growth in your teaching practice.

- 3.6. Compare the self-observation (of the recorded lesson in the second week of practice) with all the observation material<sup>10</sup> you collected through the whole journey.
  - ⇒ Do you discover contradictions and similarities between the different types of observation?
  - ⇒ Do the different stakeholders (pupils, tutors, teacher students) focus on different teacher qualities?
- 3.7. Select one or more of your best lessons this week and include it in your portfolio. Write your reflection about it/them.
- 3.8. Collect any testimonials from the administration team at your school.
- 3.9. Try to interview one or more teachers and teacher educators upon teacher qualities.
  - ⇒ For this task you can use the questions proposed in the street interview exercise in your handbook.
- 3.10. Collect a sample of students' work and reflect about them. Include copies of students' work.
- 3.11. Include one of your tutor's reports and reflect about it.
- 3.12. Video record some of your reflections which will be shared during a group session.

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<sup>10</sup> Observation by peers, by pupils in the secondary schools, lesson supervision forms of tutors.

## 4. Flemish culture and beyond

4.1. Write your reflections about your visit to one (or more) of the cities in the Flemish Culture week.

- What caught your attention?
- Did anything surprise you?
- ...

4.2. Collect photographs of your visits. Include any artefacts which you might have collected.

4.3. Make a European Standard for the Starting Teacher. Do this together with your colleagues in the programme,

⇒ For this exercise you compare the following sources:

- Visualisation exercises filled in by pupils in secondary schools.
- Visualisation exercises filled in by students in the Most Program.
- Street interviews
- Interviews with teachers in secondary schools
- Lesson supervision forms by tutors

⇒ Can you discover similar teacher qualities within all sources?

⇒ Based on these sources, what conclusion could you draw upon important teacher qualities?

⇒ You have to present this conclusion in the form of a European standard<sup>11</sup> in the last week of the Journey.

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<sup>11</sup> Or different European standards, in the case the answers of pupils, student teachers, teachers and tutors are divergent.

## 5. The final stop on the Journey

You have finally reached your final week in the MOST project. You must surely have learned a lot from the experiences on your Journey. In this last week you will be asked to reflect on your last 4 weeks and even look to the weeks and months ahead.

5.1 Reflect on a significant event during your Journey. An event which you will never forget.

5.2 Look back on your initial auto-biography on week 1 and reflect on your weeks and months to come.

5.3 Reflect on your whole Journey and reflect on your whole experience by attempting the following questions:

- What did I do right?
- What did I do that I will never do again, never? Why?
- What will I change from now on?
- Did I achieve my original objectives?
- Have I identified new objectives along the way?

### Articles which can be used for reflective tasks:

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DeSchon Hamlin, K.(2004) Beginning the journey: supporting reflection in early field experiences, *Reflective Practice*, 5(2), Pages 167-179.

Glazer, C., Abbott, L. & Harris, J.(2004) A teacher-developed process for collaborative professional reflection, *Reflective Practice*, 5(1), Pages 33-46.

Korthagen, F. (2001) Linking Practice and Theory: The Pedagogy of Realistic Teacher Education. *Paper Presented at The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*.

Newton, J.(2004) Learning to reflect: a journey, *Reflective Practice*, 5(2), Pages 155-166.

Pedro, J.Y. (2005) Reflection in teacher education: exploring pre-service teachers' meanings of reflective practice, *Reflective Practice*, 6(1), Pages 49-66.

Ryken, A.E.(2004) A spider and a fly in a web: seeing myself in the details of praxis, *Reflective Practice*, 5(1), Pages 111-123.

## V. Experiences from the past

### 5.1. Reflective Journal *By Bengt söderhäll*

In this article you can find some reflections upon the exchange programme by pupils in year seven at Älvboda Friskola and students teachers in the MOST-Comenius project 2006.

#### 5.1.1. Two Small Talks

Two of our visiting teachers from Lithuania, Spain and Belgium work together with four pupils. One of the teachers is observing and taking notes, the other is leading the talk. Change roles and groups at lesson two.

Monday 20<sup>th</sup> (10.00-10.40) and Thursday 23d of February (10.00-10.40)

*Suggested topics for the visiting teachers*

- Where you live?
- How you live?
- With whom you live
- Interests
- School experiences
- Favourite subjects
- Ideas for the future

*Suggested questions for the pupils*

Please try to find out and take notes about the visiting teachers:

- Where they come from
- About their families
- Their interests
- Why they are becoming teachers
- What they think is the most important skill a teacher needs
- What they think about Sweden (food, snow, people, prices, our school...)

#### 1.2.5. Comments on "Two Small Talks"

At the seminar after the second round of "Two Small Talks" in class seven at Älvboda, we decided that the eleven of us (Liselot, Jan and Maarten from Gent, Lina, Veronika and Jurgita from Vilnius, Rosa, Elisa, Tere and Daniel from Barcelona and Bengt from Gävle) should write down thoughts about the two talk in the class. The texts produced are to be collected in one document as an example of a starting didactic research

the following was presented to the visiting teachers.

- a) A tiny little model: Didactic construction, with origin in a seminar among teachers of social science
- b) *We argue*, a text cut from a book written by the members of the teachers in 'didaktik' at the University of Sweden, a text where didactic research is in focus
- c) ...on a scale, a personal tool presented by the tutor as an example of a way to understand practical teaching-learning situations (see below).

Comments

*Lina:*

Talk one

I worked with Liselote and for the first time we had four pupils. As there was a paper given, children usually asked questions from it. And we also followed the written example.

I was the first speaker.

I introduced myself and then every time I used to wait for the question from children. I wanted them all to speak, so I requested each one to ask me a question. The plan worked only at the beginning, because later on children forgot my request. One girl was the most active and children used to ask her help when they wanted certain word. Adam was not very active at the beginning, but later on, when they heard unknown word, it was he, who found it and proudly announced to others 😊

Children began to take notes about the facts they asked me, because they could be asked to tell what they found out during our talk.

Well, in my opinion, the talk wasn't very good, because on the whole we simply followed the plan we were given. Of course the very first talk makes you feel a bit nervous, but it was better to take initiatives, i.e. the beginning could be as in written form, but the 'body' ... I think, the successful talk would end talking about completely different things than in the list – this would show that children were really interested in what we did and wanted to know more than simply those facts. Another factor is the language factor – maybe they were interested, but were afraid to ask. Maybe. The fact is that I don't have enough practice to use a variety of methods during the first talk. I'm a child as well. Another point of should come from Liselote 😊

Talk two

The model of the second meeting was the same as in the first time.

Liselote was the speaker.

I loved than talk, because I sincerely believe that the best way to approach children is through senses and feelings. Liselote was really good for her humour / she constantly interrupted her speech with short anecdotes which awakened one or another child which was about to do day dreaming.

As we had the same group, there remained the same active children. Liselote addressed to each one asking question about him/her. It is really important to try them to feel better and in the light of popularity 😊

But what seemed not very good was that she showed that it was not interesting to her to talk. I understand that talking sometimes is tiring, but children shouldn't feel that, because I think that they should see that teacher believes in what she does. This is highly motivating. Beside this, if you play with children, you shouldn't show your disinterest / it demotivates and lowers your image in the eyes of children (this is also from my own experience). But that's it.

I am still on my own research due to the impact of feelings towards children memorizing and learning.

*Rosa: (in brackets notes on other lessons than "Two Small Talks")*

For my teaching lessons I worked together with Marten. For the first lesson we introduced ourselves to the students but make no references to our countries more than where we come from. We planned to do a "storm of ideas" consisting on asking each student what word came to his/ her mind when thinking about Spain or Belgium. We were taking notes on the words and then talk about them. We use an atlas to situate both countries and then we compare on the lifestyle of each country. We were talking about music, food, free-time, etc.

I think the students had a good reaction because they show interest by making questions and trying to explain their opinions and helping Marten and me to compare the Spanish and Belgium lifestyle to the Swedish one. For me it was very important not only talking about our own countries if not involving them in the talk by allowing them to explain and

be an active part on the conversations. We tried not to make a magisterial lesson if not letting the students to feel important by showing interest not only in their own country if not also in their own activities. Each student was willing to his/her turn to explain of its weekends and free-time and they were also asking for our own activities and leisure.

As they showed so much interest in our own countries we said them we will bring them some music and some photos of Spain just to show them what we had been talking about.

On the next lesson Marten prepared some songs of his own country and I prepared a power-point presentation about Spain and especially about my city Barcelona. As they showed interest about food and culture moreover than free-time, the power point was plenty of photographs, as my idea was not to fill it with so much text that bored them if not some images just to comment on them. We started with the power point and were making some comments on the photos we were seeing, as for the food we talk about ingredients and the way of cooking them; for culture and free-time we show some pictures of famous Spanish singers and actors, actresses, etc. so we have a nice chat on music and movies, which in my opinion is one of the topics students at their age like to talk about. Moreover, Marten had promise them to bring some Belgium chocolate and we were enjoying some nice chocolate during the lesson. To finish this second lesson we put some Belgium and Spanish songs just for letting them know about different types of music.

Concretely on this second lesson I had the impression that time had run too quickly and the students had the same impression because we could have expend so many time talking and listening about the different music and seeing the pictures that it was a pity not having more time on that lesson.

For me the important issue of these lessons was to catch our students interest and be able to let them to express their own opinions and ideas. As the lessons were on the English subject we thought of not making them lessons of grammar or this kind of staff that for us is not too much relevant if not working on the conversational skills just to allow them to communicate, what it is for us the purpose of the language.

(For the rest of my lessons I was with the teacher of special needs imparting English and with the teacher of Spanish.

For the lessons on the English subject I had a group of 4 girls aged between 12 and 13. I introduced myself and then they made me questions. It was important for me that they feel free to ask me personal questions and I thought it was nice if they feel free to have an amiable talk with me. On the same purpose of improving communicative skills and having notice they were interested in girls conversations I directed the conversation on a girlish spoke, so I can say we have a friendly and a nice talk.

At the beginning they need lot of translation to the Swedish but towards the end of the conversation they were capable to understand more and capable to utter a higher number of sentences in English.

For my other English lesson, I had 2 boys and 2 girls aged about 9 or 10. They were fascinated of hearing I was from another country so they made lots of questions. I used the "storms of ideas" and after making a list of words related to what they thought it was Spain each student had to invent a sentence. As they were quite a moved boys and girls I asked each of them to write the sentence on the blackboard, and at the end of the lesson we had a nice blackboard plenty of sentences in English and I feel the students were very proud of reading aloud to their teacher what they have written on.

On the next lesson I had to do in English we ask the teacher of special needs to stay in the class with the rest of the group so me and Elisa passed our power-point of Spain to the students. This group also enjoyed the presentation very much.

Related to the Spanish lessons I worked together with Elisa, Tere and Dani. As the students were having lessons of reinforce to the exam they were suppose to do at the next day, we ask the teacher for the contents of the exam and the we split them in little groups and made a kind of quiz just to revise the contents. As we do not speak Swedish I think it was interesting the fact that they need to make the effort to address us in Spanish.

As far as I am concerned, in my opinion we have had a nice welcoming on the school not only by the other teachers if not by the students. The fact of having foreign teachers has increased their curiosity and for me it has ended up by lots on nice interactive situations, what is the purpose of the school.

If I had to do it again I think I would use the same methodology because I always tried to encourage my students to speak and share as much I ideas as possible. So, with these lessons imparted with foreign teachers we have been able to use language and communication a lot.)

*Jurgita:*

During the first lesson we tried to encourage pupils to activate their English vocabulary. I and Eliza were telling about our countries, our history, culture, traditions, national food, sports, etc. For example, while telling about sport we asked children to tell something about their favourite kinds of sport or most popular sports in Sweden. Of course it took time for them to gain courage to speak out, they were very shy at the beginning, but later they were more active and brave. We tried to interest them using pictures, a map, body language and mimics and you could notice that they were so much exited and inspired. I and Eliza tried to move dynamically from one theme to another exchanging as much experiences as possible often asking if children understand, can follow movement of the fought. it was grate when Eliza explained the word 'peninsula' using her nose as an example, children liked it. Especially children were involved at the end of the lesson when we were talking about hobbies and free time. A minus for that lesson was that forgot about time. And we were short of time, the lesson ended too soon for us. And one more thing was that at the beginning children were very shy and silent, just observing us with curiosity, so I and Eliza talked too much, I think. We could let children talk more than we. So for the next lesson we tried to make some planning work to organize the lesson properly. During the Second lesson children were much more active. They told us about their country and themselves more because they already knew us. They tried to find words in English tried explain their national food and they were working in group for that. They took the initiative and find the map explaining us what places we should visit in Sweden! Another nice thing was that they found a dictionary for a word they didn't know. Also, they asked Kristina for a name of a dish in English. It was grate because pupils really were active and they tried hard to explain us different things. One boy, Mikel, wasn't so active, but he always answered a question if you ask. So we tried to ask him more things and involve him in a game we played. The goal of the game was to tell as mush things about Lithuania, Sweden and Spain as possible.so we made two groups: children against us. And they wonJ because they remembered a lot from previous lesson! (E.G. the currency in Spain before euros (peseta) or how we prepare Lithuanian national dish.) It was nice. The minus of the lesson was that we had to skip our plan of the lesson we had prepared before. But it was a plus also, because we need to react to the situation.

*Maarten*

## Lesson 1

The first real experiment we did during our teaching time in Älvboda, was a intimate teacher-student talk in small groups of 2 teachers and about 5 students. My fellow teacher was Rosa, a member of the Spanish MOST-team.

Before the lesson, Rosa and I discussed about how we were going to handle this talk with the students, and we came to an agreement to do things a bit different then what was planned. Instead of one teacher talking, and the other taking notes, we decided to both talk, and afterwards reflect together about how things went.

We started the lesson by doing a brainstorm about our countries. One of the first things that were obvious, is that the students knew a lot less about Belgium then about Spain, I would have a lot of work to do. By starting the lesson by letting the students feel how much they knew, we succeeded in making them curious about the rest of the talk. After the short brainstorm, Rosa and I took turns in talking about our country. First we started by what they'd already mentioned, but soon after that, we started talking about more general things.

I felt that Rosa and I were a good duo, we were good in working together, completing things, and we both had a good idea of where we were going with the conversation.

In the beginning however, the students were a bit shy, and we noticed that we were doing most of the talking. When we then switched to asking what the students interests were, how things happened in their country, the became a bit more talkative. We talked about various things, such as their hobbies, sports, music,...we also mentioned things we ourselves liked.

During this conversation, we noticed that the students were more interested in these aspects of our countries then the general things. So we promised them to bring music the next lesson, and maybe even to do some salsa-dancing!

At the end of the lesson Rosa and I were both satisfied about the result, because we both felt that we had caught the students attention, and that they had spoken a fair bit of English. And what was maybe even nicer, was that when one student couldn't find a word, the others were very helpful.

## Lesson 2

Rosa and I felt eager to teach the next lesson to this group of students, during the week, some students of "our" group had already asked us when we were coming back, so we were both very motivated to start a new conversation.

For this lesson, we both prepared a few things, Rosa made a nice PowerPoint about Spain, and I looked for some "Belgian" music, and took along a little surprise..

The lesson was in a nicer location then the last time, instead of having to sit in a noisy dining room, we found a cosy little room for ourselves. Another thing was different, we had a visitor, none other then Theresa from the University of Gävle.

We started the lesson with the sad announced that we couldn't do the Salsa-dance, Rosa had made a nasty fall that morning. But that couldn't prevent us from having a nice talk. We started with the PowerPoint, and what was nice this time, is that Theresa also joined the talk, she could express some things about Sweden that were not only new for us, but also for the students. This way, the students seemed even more interested, because I think they felt a little "privileged" to have this new person to join them.

Maybe that was also caused by the fact that after Rosa's talk about Spanish food, I handed out some typical Belgian food, chocolate. After this, Rosa and I both talked a bit more about our countries, and the students an Theresa learned us some new things about Sweden.

At the end of the lesson, we listened to music, both Spanish and Belgian. time unfortunately, has the nasty habit of going fast when you're enjoying yourself, so we couldn't listen to all the music, and we all had the feeling that we had to stop too early.

After this lesson, Rosa and I were pleased that the students had been very interested, and we felt good about that. What we did notice, was that in our enthusiasm, we both spoke a bit more about our countries than the last time. This way the students spoke a bit less English. But on the other hand, being able to listen and understand is also an important thing in learning a language.

I very much look forward to another talk with the students, and hope to find out more about them, and by doing that, get them to speak even more English.

#### Liselot:

##### First talk

When we were asked to talk about our country in small groups, I was enthusiastic from the beginning. When we teach during our teaching practice in Belgium, we never get the opportunity to have face-to-face talks, because we have to make sure that the whole class is involved. This time we only had four pupils for two student-teachers. This is a luxury, certainly for a language teacher, because the most important thing to learn a foreign language is hearing it and speaking it. Of course the other two language skills, reading and writing cannot be neglected during the traditional lessons, but this time the focus would be on the active use of a language that is not the mother tongue.

An ideal situation if you ask me, because the pupils didn't understand our mother tongue so they were forced to speak English to make themselves clear.

For this assignment I worked together with Linna, my Lithuanian MOST-colleague. I asked her how we were going to do this task, together or by taking parts. She suggested to go first, because she was a little bit nervous and she didn't want this nervousity for another week. This was fine by me. Because she didn't feel at ease from the start, I helped her a little by introducing us briefly to the pupils. I asked for their names as well, because I wanted them to feel involved in this conversation and because I prefer addressing people by their name.

Linna decided that she didn't want to tell things herself. She wanted to be sure that the pupils were interested, so after having asked for the knowledge they already have about Lithuania, she suggested that they could ask questions. In this situation I thought it was a good idea. Normally I think it can be asked to much from pupils that you don't really know, because you let them take the initiative when they still have to conquer their shyness. In this case it was okay, cause the pupils got exemplary questions they could ask. You could even feel that after a while they got into it, because they started to ask for more details on the questions and to take notes, without Linna mentioning it. I can say that my Lithuanian friend did a good job. I could see that she made a big effort to get over her timidity and to look open and enthusiastic. Of course the pupils didn't really know her, so sometimes they reacted a little bit strange or quiet to her. I think this had to do with the fact that Linna was a little bit afraid of the new situation; it made her look serious.

After the talk we told the pupils that I was going to speak about Belgium the next week. They said they were looking forward to it, so I think they enjoyed our talk.

##### Second talk

One week later Linna and I switched roles. I was happy, because sometimes I have the teacher-disease. It's hard to be quiet and listen the whole time while I want to tell a lot of things. It was also good that we didn't have to swap groups. First of all because then you could have the bad luck that your new group heard already the most important things about your country and nothing about a new country. But to me the second and also the main reason would be that I couldn't speak anymore to the pupils I got to know a little better and to whom I promised to tell more about Belgium the next lesson.

What the pupils are concerned the second talk went already smoother than the first one.

They got to know us as well and they figured out that they didn't had to be afraid to speak English. During the previous talk they realised that their English was better than they had expected and that they could really express their selves, if not on their own, with the help of friends. So they were more talkative than the other time.

I prepared a few things I could tell them about our small country, but I didn't want to play a tour guide, so I didn't prepare the different themes too detailed. As an introduction I took an atlas that I saw at that moment and asked Adam to point out where Belgium and Sweden are situated. He could do this without too much trouble. This broke the ice. I started to give a little bit of general information about Belgium. In the beginning I sometimes asked if they understood or made them paraphrase to check. At the same time it started raining outside. I said they had the luck to see the real Belgian weather I brought. They laughed and asked if it was really that bad. I liked this, because we left the instruction-information path and started walking on the conversation path. I asked the pupils about their country as well. I knew already some things about Sweden, and I could see that they were surprised and eager to tell me more. Because of my curious nature I also asked for their daily life. I asked for their habits, their favourite food and their hobbies. What started as small talk, went on as a more personal conversation. The good thing about this is that the pupils didn't need to search for content. They also wanted to tell a lot about their own life, so they really were looking for English words to make sure that we understood everything.

I think we all had a nice talk. The pupils asked for our e-mail addresses to stay in touch. Time really flew. Before we knew all the other international students were back in the class as well and we sang a song together to end this transnational conversation.

*Elisa:*

First talk

I remembered that on Monday I was a little bit nervous because it was the first class that I took in the Älvboda School. But it was a good idea to do it with another colleague; in my case she was Jurgita.

The first idea was that one of us started to explain different topics about our country and ourselves to the students, while the other saw the lesson and took some notes. However, we decided to change the suggested idea and to personalize it little bit more. We did this by doing the talk together on the same day.

We introduced ourselves and we asked for the students' names. Then we started speaking about our countries and we used a map to show them where they are. We asked them to point out Lithuania and Spain and the students had more problems to point Lithuania. After that we explained some history about our countries and some topics the students were interested in.

On the one hand we have the positive things that the students, Jurgita and I did. The students were interested in the conversation, they looked as if they wanted to know more things about us.

Jurgita and I were so happy explaining our countries and life so the students could feel our passion and in my opinion we got them motivated. We were patient and we spoke slowly, repeating the most important things and asking them to see if they understood it.

On the other hand we have the negatives ones, but I prefer to say aspects that we can improve. As I said before, we were so delighted to speak about our countries that we forgot that the best way to learn a language is speaking and not only listening. So the problem was that Jurgita and I were speaking a lot (almost fighting to speak). However we tried that the students spoke but the problem was that they were so shy, and they didn't want to speak.

What we decided to change in the second talk was to create a bi-directional conversation where the students feel comfortable to speak with us and explain to us their country. So we also believed that the best way to do this was to repeat the experience with the same group.

#### Second talk

When we spoke to each other about how the first talk was, we realized that we needed to find the way to allow the students to talk with us. So we tried that they explained something about Sweden to us because we didn't know so much and we want to learn as much as possible.

We invented a game to play with our students. All of us were players and we created two teams. One team were the students and they represent Sweden and the other team were Jurgita and me, who represent Lithuania and Spain. The rule of the game was that the students had to say something that they learned about Lithuania or Spain to win a point. Then Jurgita and I said something about Sweden and they told us if it is correct or not and why.

During the game appeared a lot of information that we told them in the first talk, so they demonstrated that they were paying attention. We got our objective because they spoke much more and they explained to us different interesting things about Sweden.

Furthermore the students took a dictionary for themselves without us saying anything and they used it together when they didn't understand an English word. For me it was a surprise because in Spain the students don't use it so much and sometimes they are lazy to take it.

Nevertheless something that could be improved is to have more activities planned. Because when we finished the game we didn't know what to do for a moment. Sometimes you plan some activities but they become longer or shorter depending on the situation.

To summarize this experience was positive and useful for the students and for us.

#### *Obstacles for learning noticed or suggested:*

Shyness

Missing some words

Insecure in the new situation

Passivity according to more initiative from others

Spokesperson take over the English, translates from Swedish

#### *Special qualities observed:*

Willingness to and good cooperate with each other and visiting teachers

Took initiative in the talks

Fetches books and other things needed without hesitation, in a natural way – no need for instruction on this

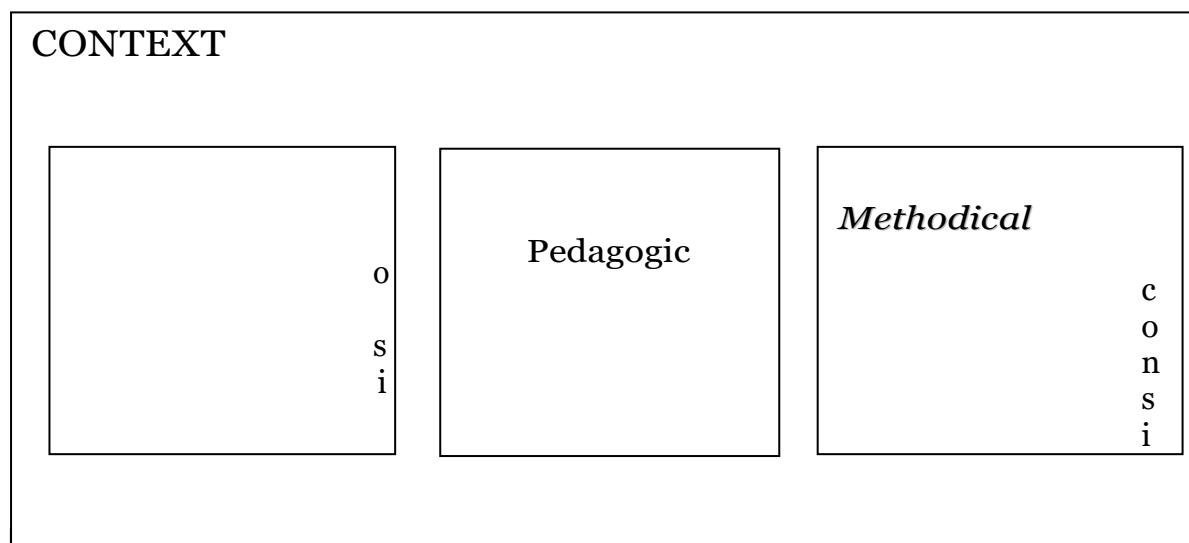
High motivation obvious in the groups

Good self confidence

a)

Didactic construction

A tiny little model



We argue /.../ that there is a need for qualitative intensive studies within the complex didactic domain of research, where it constantly is shown impossible or problematic to make generalizing conclusions.

Didactic approaches to problems concerning teaching – learning are always *complex, contextually bound* and furthermore *historically formed*, which make intensive studies necessary.

Gerhard Arfwedson (ed) (2002) *Mellan praktik och teori*, Stockholm p 7

c)

ON A SCALE...

learning ----- teaching  
 assessing -----generating  
 right----- more  
 discursive -----intuitive  
 encyclopedic -----exemplary  
 -----criticism-----  
 declaring and confirming----- questioning and talking  
 individual/*intrapersonal*----- collective/*interpersonal*  
 instruction -----construction  
 static -----dynamic

education ----- *Bildung*  
 qualified-----qualifying  
 -----relation-----  
 -----communication-----  
 general----- unique

I wrote a little letter to the ten visiting teachers in late May, asking of them to write down some words about what they thought about the Two Small Talks in retrospective. Knowing that their schedules were more than full, due to exams, practice and work on papers, I got three comments as follows:

*Maarten:*

Teaching in Sweden, looking back

After a very busy period here in Belgium, it feels good to think back at the time in spent in Gävle. Sometimes it feels as if it all was just a dream, a reverie, it all went by so fast, and now only memories remain. Very nice memories however. The time I was in Sweden definitely was the greatest experience during my teacher training. Not only because it was in Sweden, but also, maybe especially because of the people I met there. During the short time in Sweden I also learned a lot about teaching, more than I could have learned by staying in Belgium.

One of the things that contributed to that learning-experience, was the experiment in Kristina's class in Älvboda. What started out as an experiment turned out to be the key-teaching experiment of the MOSTers. Most of the time we were all teaching different subjects, but this was something we all did together.

The object of those little moments was to have a talk with a small number of students and two teachers. We had a few of those talks, and this way we got to know more about the students, and they got to know more about us. Another good thing about teaching the same little group, is that the students felt more at ease with us. Because of this, they dared to speak more English, and really communicate with us. We could feel the children's confidence grow, and they could certainly feel it as well.

At the time it felt as a nice way to talk to the children, and to get them to talk English. But when I look back at it, after having thought more English here in Belgium as well, I feel that we might have reached even more. Compared to the classic way of teaching, we were able to reach the children on a much better level. We talked English, because there simply wasn't another way for us to communicate. This way, the Swedish students could feel the practical use of the English language. They could also feel that their knowledge of English already was fairly well. Because, after all, they learned a lot about us during those small moments.

I can say that this changed my ideas of teaching English. I experienced the importance of real communication, and not just simple exercises. I really tried to use this during my lessons in Belgium. Something else that has changed, is that I try to make the children feel that they are able to speak and understand English, often more than they realise. By experiencing success, they are motivated to learn more English.

As a conclusion, I might say that something that started out as a small experiment turned out to leave a huge impression both on myself, and most likely on the students as well. The experiment in Älvboda, and the time in Sweden has become a source of inspiration for what I do here in Belgium. It has helped me not only during my teacher training in Belgium, but also was a help in other decisions I had to make.

*Lieselot:*

Nice to hear from you again. On one hand it looks like it has been ages, on the other hand it looks like it was just yesterday. The weather in Belgium is not that splendid either, it has been raining for several days, but the Belgian students are so busy for school (again :-)) that we don't have the time to sunbathe or complain about that anyway.

A few weeks after we came home from Sweden, we had our five week teacher training period here in Belgium. From friends and teachers in Belgium I heard that they could feel our experience abroad. They all said that they felt new energy, a lot of enthusiasm and a broader view on things. For myself I felt that my energy level was totally reloaded and that I really felt like teaching again. The yellow book and the classes at Kristina really contributed to this. What that last is concerned I tried to work in the same direction during my teacher training practice. But it wasn't always possible. I could sense that the pupils enjoy this fresh way of dialogue, instead of having one leader in the class. They are enthusiastic and without realising it hundred per cent, using a language that is not their mother tongue didn't seem to be a problem anymore. Nevertheless, this casual talk wasn't always possible. Actually it was only at rare opportunities that I could try it. I taught in a multicultural school in Antwerp that suffers from a lot of (negative) tensions. Most of the pupils have psychological problems and need a strict, structured and disciplined way of teaching. We also need to work with a curriculum in Belgium. This is so strict that you don't have much free time to experiment, how sad that may be. And on top of that all, you are the trainee, so we needed to stick to some rules, in order to give all the lesson material that our mentors provided. Although I could feel the positive vibes in Kristina's class those days, I think putting it in to practice here in Belgium will have to wait until we have our 'own' class groups. To be continued, I would say. That's all for now, back to studying for exams.

*Lina:*

Hello the eleventh MOSTer under the Northern sky :)

In Lithuania it is already a middle of the spring and the trees are blossoming everywhere - beautiful and fragrant...

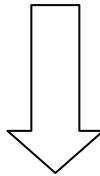
As for me and I am trying to graduate my University... passing exam after exam... therefore absent-minded for the rest of the world :)

If speaking truly, I could not acclimatise to my University's atmosphere after I had seen your school system. Chaos in my mind. I am a bit confused about what should I do in future, so I decided to continue studying. I hope to enrol to another University to widen my scope of thinking.

Anyway, I remember those classes - they were a great boost in my foreign teacher career :) There I cooperated with children, we did some thinking together to achieve our own goals. The tips - those lists - were helpful, indeed, to break the walls of silence between us and children and eventually we became a team. I liked that.

During those weeks I understood, that the learning goals are the same as the teaching goals and to reach them not the separate sides are needed, but a team - a teacher and his/her children. Then the results will be maximums or even more

## CHECKLIST: TASKS and DOCUMENTS for MOST PARTICIPANTS

LESSON OBSERVATION	ASSESSMENT	LESSON PREPARATION	OTHER EXERCISES	COMPARATIVE EXERCISES AND ANALYSIS
<p><b>OBSERVATIONS BY MOST- STUDENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>PEER OBSERVATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Students will observe each other during the practice period (lessons and/or micro-teaching)</li> <li>⇒ For these observation sessions they use the template "classroom observation sheet"</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>OBSERVATION OF LOCAL TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Students will observe lessons of teachers in the local schools</li> <li>⇒ For these observation sessions they also use the template "classroom observation sheet"</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>ASSESSMENT BY MENTOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students will be assessed by mentors or teacher educators on their work during the five weeks, on the basis of the criteria mentioned in the European standard.</li> <li>• For this issue assessing mentors or teacher educators will use the <b>assessment document</b>, as developed within the Most Project.</li> <li>• This document is presented within the Most handbook and can be found on the Dokeos platform.</li> </ul>	<p><b>BY MOST STUDENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students prepare all lessons <b>using the Lesson Template</b>, as proposed within the Most Project</li> <li>• This template can be found within the Most Handbook and on Dokeos.</li> <li>• All lesson preparations need to be delivered digitally on the Dokeos-Platform</li> <li>• The guidelines to fill in these lesson templates are to be found in the article of Sara Figueras (as presented in the handbook).</li> </ul>	<p><b>VISUALISATION EXERCISE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>BY STUDENTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ Same as last year, students in the programme will make the visualisation exercise</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ <b>BY PUPILS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇒ This exercise can be found on the observation sheets for pupils</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>OF</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NATIONAL STANDARDS</b></li> <li>• <b>DIFFERENT OBSERVATIONS</b></li> <li>• <b>STREET INTERVIEWS</b></li> <li>• <b>VISUALISATION EXERCISES</b></li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN STANDARD</b></p>

<b>OBSERVATION BY PUPILS</b>  ⇒ Pupils will observe lessons of MOST-students teaching in the local school  ⇒ Pupils full in the fixed observation sheet  ⇒ (IF THE PUPILS ARE VERY YOUNG, PLEASE LET THE MOST STUDENTS TRANSLATE IN THE NATIVE LANGUAGE OF PUPILS!)	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>  • Students in the Most exchange programme each week fill in their personal portfolio.		<b>STREET INTERVIEWS</b>  ⇒ (not obligated, but recommended)	
<b>LESSON SUPERVISION BY MENTORS OR TEACHER EDUCATORS</b>  ⇒ To give students feedback on a lesson, supervisors fill in the fixed lesson supervision form				
<b>SELF-OBSERVATION</b>  ⇒ Trough exercises mentioned in the portfolio				
<b>DELIVERY ON DOKEOS</b>				
THE WEEK AFTER THE PROGRAMME ALL DOCUMENTS, listed above, SHOUL BE DELIVERED DIGITALLY ON DOKEOS. MORE PRACTICAL DETAILS FOLLOW LATER.				

