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Democracy in schools and in classrooms



What is there to say about that? Leaving out what it is, many of us have a notion about what democracy in schools and classrooms could be and/or should be.

But some are cynical about that and say: in the end it is always an adult's idea that takes precedence over the children's. Others are more positive and will immediately think about opportunities in their class or classes. And really, there are a lot of possibilities to have children/pupils thinking and deciding with you about almost everything: e.g. behavioural rules, about the curriculum, about tasks etc.

Some see democracy in their classroom more as a (role) play for later.... and it is restricted. However, that is different from looking at democracy in the classroom as a tool for educating young people. I think - in this way - it is taking children,

pupils, students seriously as (young) persons who are developing their opinions, on life strategies etc. Teachers are needed to shape these opinions and strategies.

An open attitude to this also means that teachers explain why learners need to learn what they (have to) learn. Acting in such a way means that teachers take their children, pupils, students seriously. Teachers should be prepared for that. That means, that teachers themselves have thought about all kind of opinions of their own, e.g. regarding classroom behaviour, regarding content, regarding aims of education and regarding life. They will realise that their classroom and school is a mirror of what is happening at home and in society.

What is happening in school is a result of their national and local culture. It also means that classroom/school democracy will differ greatly in several parts of Europe. Cultural frameworks mean that the format for democracy in school classrooms will be different in all these locations, but in the end will have regard for the basic human rights of children and adults.

Gerard de Kruiif
Editor

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Authors in this edition

Gerhild Bachmann, Astrid de Leeuw, Rosa Doran, Jeanette Gravina, Ahmet Göçen, Ulrich Hammerschmidt, Heike Hurlin, John E. Kesner, Edina Malkić, Rita V. Oliveira, Irena Przybylska, Sarah Jane Pulis, Stephan Rinke, Charmaine Sammut, Sofia Santos, Nataša Simić, Magdalena Szewczyk, Pierre Valois, Claire Vella.

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EDITOR

Gerard de Kruiif
Badhoevedorp, the Netherlands
editor with legal responsibility

EDITORIAL BOARD

Charlotte Tüxen, Naestved, Denmark
Angela Gooch, Bexhill, England UK
Magnus Persson, Karlstad, Sweden

GRAPHIC PRODUCTION

The Learning Teacher Network
Admin Team

AUTHORS IN THIS EDITION

The authors are listed in the middle column of this page

ADDRESS

The Learning Teacher Magazine
c/o The Learning Teacher Network
Tegnersgatan 1 D, SE-65218 Karlstad
SWEDEN

E-MAIL

magazine@learningteacher.eu

ADVERTISEMENT

E-mail info@learningteacher.eu
Tel +46 730 856 640

GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS AND AUTHORS

www.learningteacher.eu/magazine

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The Scientific Method in the Classroom of Tomorrow



All generations in our planet are walking their learning path in the days of the "Information Age". All of us, well, at least the ones born before the information at your fingertips revolution, even being raised without it, cannot imagine our lives without information flowing at the speed of light through our fingertips.

I am not really young, but I can say that if information does not flow through my brain fast enough and in an appealing format, I can rapidly get bored. Now imagine if you were born with smartphones or tablets as everyday toys, watching science outreach programs on TV and finding information anywhere and at any time.

Imagine further, that you have the possibility of using this information for new science discoveries, for cutting edge social studies, for exploring unimaginable places and simulating unattainable situations.



Well, these are the times that are given to new generations.

Are they handling this properly? Easy answer: NO. The reason? Simple! We, as tutors of the new generations, are not preparing them properly for this mission. Remember the wise man say that we only miss valuable things once you lose them. Well, you cannot miss what you do not know is out there. This is our task - to prepare new generations to use wisely the amazing possibilities they have nowadays in their hands, and this preparation has to start in school.

Now the challenge: How can we do this if the school is a place where most of the students feel like travelling to the past? One way to walk the path towards a more modern approach for science learning is training teachers on the use of modern tools and resources and by introducing them to the Inquiry Based Science Education Methodology (Rocard, 2009).

In an interesting report, in this magazine (Pools, 2012) the authors explain the steps needed to introduce teachers to this powerful methodology. In the article, a nice experience, where teachers assume the role of tutors and colleagues of the students, we can see clearly the challenges faced by educators when this method is compared to the traditional teaching.

Tools and resources to embrace this format of teaching and learning are available at the speed of a click. Training efforts are being implemented worldwide to help educators deliver science topics in a very innovative format. In the field of astronomy, several tools are being developed and it is possible nowadays to have students engage in real discoveries while learning

curriculum content.

The astrophysicist lab is our starry sky, available to everyone, for free. Big telescopes are scrutinizing the universe and the result of their quest is that images are available online to anyone, for free, in some cases, almost immediately after they are taken. The task in hand now is to prepare educators to open this possibility to their students and make the learning journey more appealing and more meaningful for the inquisitive young minds.

The Galileo Teacher Training Program has such a mission, to empower teachers from all over the world, by training them face-to-face or by e-learning, on the use of such tools and resources. By partnering with European Commission funded programmes such as Open Discovery Space*, Go-lab** and Inspire Science Education, we hope to reach hundreds of teachers in the coming years and help them change classrooms to embrace the future.

Rosa Doran
 rosa.doran@nuclio.pt
 NUCLIO - Núcleo Interativo de Astronomia
 (www.nuclio.org)
 Galileo Teacher Training Program
 (www.galileoteachers.org)

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 * Open Discovery Space
 (www.opendiscovery.space.eu)
 **Go-lab Project (www.go-lab-project.eu)

Why do schools rarely jump?

- School development like an evolutionary process

How we can understand school like a social system?

Teachers, headteachers and other school development professionals, especially those with high professional ambitions, are often irritated and sometimes angry about the slowness of development processes in schools. RICHARD GROSS from Stanford University said in the late eighties that "schools change slower than churches". Why is that? Is it based on the unwillingness of people or by the sluggish nature of the school administration?

School isn't an administration, school isn't a factory, school is a... living thing!

Describing school as an organization we often find models coming from economics and administration. But school is different from those in three characteristics: the high complexity of its structures, high value of self organizational processes and the loose coupling of the stakeholders¹.

School develops itself - every time and everywhere - but we often don't perceive it
Schools constantly engage in thousands of micro - processes of interaction between persons and between persons and structures and environmental influences. Processes taking part in schools are mostly processes of optimization but more rarely of innovation.

Schools like organization and its members try to stabilize its position and the conditions of the existence in the context of changing environmental conditions. This is the sense of *evolution*, no more and no less². The most important question for leaders is 'How to we lead and manage processes which are basically evolutionary and self organized?'

How to lead school development like a sustainable evolutionary process?

1. Try to understand, what happens in your school!

By using tools of analysis try to identify facts and results and value them in relation to the background of your school and try to integrate external feedback into your own imagination. Analyze the external influences and conditions and try to **use them for your own development**. Try

¹ See more by MATURANA, WEICK, WILLKE, ROSENBUSCH

² Coaching schools the author identified three special situations which push up the innovative potential. At first it is an existential threat of the school (schools in crisis) which empowers to go basically new ways. The second it is a fundamental change of the social conditions for schools (like in the time after 1990 in the eastern part of Germany) and the third the foundation of (mostly private) schools with special pedagogic mission.



to understand what people think and what gives them impetus and drive.

2. Be clear in your basics!

Confidence leads! Everybody has the right to be confident, and people who feel the leader's confidence, will try to fulfill it. People will only be open to develop schools if they personally feel safe. Give high regards to everybody everywhere and every time! Concentrate activities on students learning! Never forget the fundamental purpose of school. Try to minimize administration output.

Give feedback to your staff and try to get it as well. Be clear in your instructions. Try to have clear regulations and be clear in your absolute no-goes.

3. Try to find the right playground for everybody on your staff - and let them play!

Somebody needs a well cut and small lawn with clear borders. The second needs a highway to expand him/herself. The third will only be lucky in a jungle to find an untrodden path. Try to understand what gives everybody the motivation and talk with them about the possibilities. Don't forget to pay attention to everybody's needs as well as the teacher on the well cut lawn, but empower the best. And then let them play!

4. Hold the balance!

Try to hold the balance between innovation and stabilization. Decide to give resources to the most important things. Be enthusiastic (and show it!), but don't forget the risks. Focus activities on those things

what represent the "heart" of your school.

5. Let evolution jump: catch the chance of the moment!

First trust in your intuition! Risk before calculating the risk³! Promote the stakeholders! Support the "leap" with your authority! Try to establish the highest level of the leap as the new level for normal walking! For that use the classical tools of change and project management!

Conclusion

School development is a continuous process. You must be sensitive to people's impetus and system dynamics. Don't lose yourself in strategies, conceptions and administration.

The best school is not identified by description but in action! Be open to the impulses from inside and outside! Catch the chances. They will never come back so give them the opportunity to embed themselves. Give the chance the opportunity to become great and let your school take a leap ...

*Ulrich Hammerschmidt
Waldblick - Oberschule
Freital - Niederhäslich, Freital, Germany
hammerschmidt.ulrich@t-online.de*

The author works as the headmaster of the Waldblick - Oberschule in Freital, furthermore as trainer for leaders in the educational system and consultant for school development.

³ But never forget: school is an experiment on living people! Your students have got only one chance!



Introducing environmental education in science classes through a multidisciplinary perspective

When in Portugal, like in other countries, environmental education has always been intimately related to science teaching, especially since there is not a specific national program regarding this issue. This situation gives the chance to both teachers and schools to develop their own projects and actions.

According to Portugal's natural sciences program for basic school, the 8th grade is devoted to ecology. It includes basic notions and concepts of this discipline and also the analysis of environmental problems and solutions. Since this curriculum is part of science education, all the themes are focused strictly on a scientific perspective.

Building a multidisciplinary project

In a school at the heart of Lisbon, a project started aimed to introduce (at a basic level) environmental education in a science class context. The particularity of this project was that, on the contrary to many others, the original idea came from the class students and not from the teacher herself.

An 8th grade class of 23 students (age 13-14), from Escola Secundária Gil Vicente, Lisbon, Portugal, set in motion a project regarding environmental education because the natural science curriculum for that year did not meet their expectations. They felt that knowing (all) scientific facts about several ecological problems was

not enough to overcome them. Moreover, they thought that science could not alone, respond effectively to mitigate or resolve several of the ecological problems that their lessons focused on.

"Environmental Team: the 3 worlds" was a project included in natural science class activities in order to meet these students' worries. It was born out of pupil's will to: (1) deepen their knowledge of ecological problems; (2) analyze environmental challenges and solutions in a broader and articulate way; (3) to search for answers in the technological and ethical spheres (4) have their perspectives disseminated and to (5) receive contributions, comments about their work and products.

According to students' opinion, the project products should include as many perspectives about an environmental challenge as possible. Therefore ethics, history and other sciences were also taken into consideration, like economics and politics. The goal was to have a multidisciplinary view over the themes.

The project included the production of (1) written bibliographic research works, (2) oral presentations, (3) leaflets, (4) debates and (5) role plays.

The topics covered not only all ecological problems that were part of natural science curriculum for their school year (e.g. pollution, global warming, ozone layer depletion, biodiversity decrease) but also the other themes that are not included in

8th grade natural science curriculum but seemed highly important to them.

Many students were concerned that, because of choosing other educational paths, some of them would not be acquainted with relevant ecological themes and therefore not be good/responsible citizens.

They recognized as being highly important for their education the following topics: (1) fair trade, (2) sustainable resource management, (3) green economy, and (4) poverty eradication. During the final stage of the project there were debates and contributions from other classes and school teachers which enriched the content of the products. At the end of the year, it was presented to the school community (Open school day). After this event, and in a final reflection about "Environmental Team: the 3 worlds" project, students reflected upon the difficulties in doing a multidisciplinary approach.

They also raised questions about the effectiveness of information dissemination in the school milieu and mentioned that they felt better prepared for conscious and active citizenship because this project gave them an integrative perspective of nature and human action towards the environment.

*Rita Vasconcelos Oliveira
Escola Secundária Gil Vicente, Lisbon
ritataoliveira@campus.ul.pt*

Quality Programming for Gifted Children in the US

- Extracurricular Academic Enrichment



The previous article highlighted issues related to gifted education in the U.S. Compared with remedial programs, there is relatively little money available for programming to serve those students who are gifted and talented.

In fact, the U.S. government currently does not provide any federal funding for gifted programs. Instead, it is left up to the individual states and local school districts to provide this funding. When parents are not satisfied with the level of challenge presented to their gifted children, they turn to alternative ways of providing enrichment activities for their children. The Saturday School for Scholars and Leaders (Saturday School) program begun in 1975 by the faculty in the Department of Early Childhood Education at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, is one such alternative program.

School districts in the area do provide gifted programming. However parents are often unsatisfied with the quality and type of programming available through their local schools and are looking for enrichment for their gifted and talented children.

The Saturday School program offers 3 hour academic enrichment classes for

gifted and talented children in a variety of academic areas throughout the year. The program offers classes in the morning and afternoon during 4 5-week Saturday sessions each year. Although most students take only one class per session (morning or afternoon), there are a few students who stay for the entire day.

Not all Saturday School teachers are professionally trained educators, but rather have a specific area of expertise,

which they share with their students. Teachers receive a small stipend for each 3-hour course they teach and are reimbursed for materials. The Saturday School program receives limited support from the university, thus students participating in the program must pay \$175 tuition per class. Each session, the program registers approximately 200 students; many are returning students but an equal number are first timers.





The Saturday School students are a racially and ethnically diverse group. Certain racial and ethnic minority groups are underrepresented in the U.S. gifted population. About half of the students participating in the Saturday School program are a part of this underrepresented group. Unfortunately, due to the need to charge tuition, the Saturday School students are not as socioeconomically diverse.

Although we can offer a limited number of scholarships, the majority of our students come from more affluent homes. There are certain criteria that students must meet in order to participate in the Saturday School program. The program will accept students who are in their schools gifted program (meet the state criteria), score in the 90th percentile or above on a standardized achievement test, or have a tested IQ of 120 or above.

More recently, in an attempt to be more inclusive and less exclusive, we have established a two-tiered admission process. Provisional admission is offered to all students for 1 year. During that year, students must provide evidence of meeting the admission criteria in order to be granted full admission status. In addition to giving parents more time to get the necessary documentation for full admission, this two-tiered process also enables the program to provide intellectual stimulation to students not officially identified as gifted.

In addition to the challenges of providing a program for children in a large urban area, parents of children in the program can present quite a challenge as well. The typical Saturday School parent is well

educated, passionate about their child or children and vocal. This can either be a joy or a real challenge. Saturday School parents are genuine advocates for their children in an environment where the needs of gifted and talented children are often overlooked.

Despite these challenges, the Saturday School for Scholars and Leaders represents a unique academic enrichment opportunity for children. The longevity of the program is a testament to its importance in the educational environment of children in the area. These children will be the problem solvers of tomorrow. It is critical to provide them with the appropriate intellectual stimulation today so they can become the leaders of tomorrow.



*John E. Kesner, Ph.D.
College of Education
Georgia State University
Atlanta, Georgia, USA
jkesner@gsu.edu*



K-Evolution: Sustainable Development through Education

- A Portuguese NGO that aims to contribute to a new generation of leaders



K-Evolution
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

In a world that is changing so much and in a small European country such as Portugal that sees its third IMF intervention in 36 years, it becomes clear that education is the only possible way to promote a development that is good for all.

We live in a world where environmental issues have impacts on people; where most of the consumers in the occidental world do not care about the use of child labour on the production of their daily consumption, nor about the waste generated and the consequent impacts on health. In fact, today, the world population is living on credit; over the next year the capacity of the earth to produce the biodiversity we need to survive is diminishing.

Scientists from the WWF say that if the demand over the planet continues to increase at the same rate, by the mid-2030s we would need the equivalent of two planets to maintain our lifestyles. We live in a world where bankers do not care about the social and environmental impacts of the money they lend and where businesses are done regardless of the humanitarian consequences.

We live in a world where the population perceives politicians and managers as corrupt, which means that the population does not trust anyone.

Nevertheless, there is some very good news.

Never before have we seen so many people and so many organizations demanding better social and environmental conditions. Never before have we had so many written official papers about the importance of creating a new economy

where people are able to be happy. Never before have we had a European Strategy that aimed to reach a smart, sustainable, inclusive growth.

Never before have we had so many economists able to reach big audiences on the topics of a new prosperity without growth, on a green economy, on degrowth and happiness. Never before have we seen so many top ranking universities developing some kind of activity on sustainability.

Basically, the ecosystem in which we are living is changing, and we already are seeing some of the new human species. At the moment the new and the old human species are fighting for power to act. But we have all the conditions to have a better world in the next 40 years ...and to have a better Portugal in the next 20 years.

That is why the K-Evolution was created in May 2013. This Portuguese based NGO aims to empower a new generation of leaders with multidisciplinary skills about sustainability, citizenship and entrepreneurship. The K-Evolution will promote a humanistic, intercultural, creative and practical knowledge amongst children, teenagers, young managers, teachers and parents.

We aim to become an active voice in Portugal on these issues so that we can help to build an innovative, inclusive and fair society able to promote the sustainable development of Portugal and to have a better Portugal in the next 20 years.

Our first year of activities, 2014, will focus on providing training and workshops for teenage students and for secondary

school teachers. We are now establishing partnerships with a few schools in order to test different approaches, to be able to identify the curricula that best suits students from different backgrounds and ages.

During this year, we will be able to identify the types of materials that schools need in order to spread the word on the issues of sustainability. During 2014, we also aim to become a Portuguese accredited training organization specialised in the sustainable development themes.

Website: www.kevolution.org



Sofia Santos
A founder of the K-Evolution Association and Director of the Sustainability Knowledge Lab at INDEG - ISCTE Executive School
sofia.santos2050@gmail.com

The next issue of The Learning Teacher Magazine will be published in December. Articles may be submitted no later than November 15th 2013.

Conference Report in the next Magazine

The next issue of the Magazine (no 4/2013) will include a comprehensive report from the Learning Teacher Network's 9th International Conference, which is held in

Lisbon Portugal on 26-28 September and titled "Education for Sustainable Development". Delegates from 24 countries in Europe and beyond participate at the event.



Portuguese and Luxembourgish students' pro-environmental beliefs

The United Nations (2002) declared the period from 2005 to 2014 the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. For effective teaching and learning, teachers worldwide need to recognise that simply transmitting knowledge is not enough.

Studies have shown that having accurate information is not a guarantee of wise judgment, and it may often be quite irrelevant to decision making. More precisely, researchers found that students' attitudes towards sustainable development are significantly more determinant for the adoption of sustainable behaviours than sustainability knowledge, age, and education level.

Consequently, from 2012 to 2013, we conducted a longitudinal study in Luxembourgish schools with the aim of understanding students' behaviours and attitudes about sustainable development. The participants were 883 primary school students aged from 9 to 12 years. One of the specific study objectives was to explore the similarities and differences between Portuguese (n=341) and Luxembourgish (n=149) students' intentions and beliefs regarding the adoption of environmentally sustainable behaviours (e.g., recycling, turning off the tap while brushing their teeth, turning off the lights when leaving a room).

We decided to compare Luxembourgish and Portuguese children because Luxembourg's population includes a large proportion (16%) of people who are either Portuguese or have Portuguese origins. It therefore appeared relevant to examine whether it might be more effective for Luxembourg's schools to adopt a culturally tailored approach rather than a general approach.

This study focuses on attitudes defined by the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). According to the theory, intention to adopt pro-environmental behaviours (PEB) should increase with increasingly favourable attitudes towards PEB. Attitudes in turn are assumed to be based on behavioural beliefs, or individual beliefs about the likely consequences of performing a given behaviour.

Students who believe that behaving in an environmentally friendly manner is mainly associated with positive outcomes will have a favourable attitude towards this behaviour. Conversely, if they believe



Picture drawn by two primary school participants: Anna Garlinskas & Vanessa Wagner (2011)

that this behaviour has mainly negative consequences, their attitude will be unfavourable. Once students' beliefs have been assessed, they can be fostered or challenged, and students can be provided with information that promotes the development of beliefs that foster PEB.

Our results on the intentions of primary school students to adopt PEB indicate that the most determinant belief in the Portuguese group is, "I would help to keep our planet clean."

Accordingly, the more convinced they are that adopting environmentally friendly behaviours will help keep the planet clean, the greater their intention to adopt these behaviours. Whereas for the Luxembourgish group, two other beliefs are predominant: "I would save energy", and "I would help protect nature". One belief that is predominant in both groups is, "It would be boring for me". Thus, the more boring the children think the behaviour, the lower their intention to adopt that behaviour.

Teachers could therefore involve their students in developing and modelling interesting, stimulating, or fun sustainable practices that make them less boring. An example would be introducing new recycling bins that students could design and build themselves. For the behavioural beliefs of a specific group, teachers could assign situational exercises, for example,

how we use paper in our daily life. They could get students to think about the issue and come up with different ideas for taking action (e.g., "How could you use less paper or recycled paper in your daily life?"). In subsequent sessions, teachers could encourage students to reflect on what happened when they took these actions (e.g., "By using less paper or recycled paper, how much would that help 1) keep the planet clean? or 2) preserve nature? or 3) save energy?").

This study has some limitations that should be taken into account. For instance, it is entirely based on self-reports, which may have affected the results. For instance, the participants may have been too ready to conform to the researchers' expectations, and their beliefs and intentions may not have reflected their actual behaviour. Further studies are needed to test the effectiveness of interventions based on the present results.

Note. This research was supported by a grant from the University of Luxembourg.

Astrid de Leeuw
University of Luxembourg
astrid.deleeuw@uni.lu

Pierre Valois
Université Laval
pierre.valois@fse.ulaval.ca



Nature conservation and schools

- a Comenius project

The Private Salesian High School, Wrocław, Poland, coordinated the Comenius Project: National Parks of Europe in 2011 -2013.

This theme was chosen because it fits perfectly into the environmental activities of the school. The school received the title of Local Environmental Center and certified Green Flag, which obliges us to recognise broad activities in the field of ecology.

The goal of the project was to compare the flora and fauna of the national parks of Poland, Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, and two parks in Croatia, by students from each school, promoting their regions, mountain tourism and raising environmental awareness amongst pupils. Teachers wanted to engage their students about activities in the local community and stimulate their interest in nature conservation.

International contacts are always an opportunity for students to expand their knowledge about the world, traditions, and cultures, and offer an opportunity to cross language barriers, overcome shyness and become closer to other people.

One of the objectives was to better motivate students to learn foreign languages and to create the opportunity to work in the field, and thus increase interest in

natural objects. The aim was to popularize among the students and youth new technologies and new ways of working.

During the project, we were able to overcome many obstacles in students and teachers. Students faced the challenges of making their presentations in English during visits to partner countries, were not afraid to communicate in English, were open to new cultures and to meeting with the youth of other traditions. By participating in the project, high school

students, parents and teachers learned about new technologies, strategies for science teaching in European countries, the education system, and about new trends in teaching. All our achievements have been placed on the website: <http://nationalparks-comenius.eu>.

The result of trips to national parks is to map an inventory of plants and animals. The map is developed in English and will be useful in classroom ecology, English, and biology.





Photos by Jerzy Babiak

The Comenius project has enabled a deeper study of plants and animals. The map developed by the partner schools reveals the richness and diversity of nature in different regions of the world. Numerous interesting facts and great photographs give a broad look at the flora and fauna of European countries. You can link with the map on the following web address: http://www.nationalparks-comenius.eu/dictionary_of_fauna_and_flora/

On June 9th 2013 Private Salesian High School organized the Salez Comenius festival in the city centre of Wroclaw. The aim of the festival was to share the joy of success due to the completion of a school project 'Comenius National Parks Europy'. Our project was promoted by the production of an exhibition of eight national parks and postcards.

During the festival there were many activities for children, such as a wheel of fortune and an art competition. In addition, high school students had the chance to test their skills in face painting for children. Many people visited our booth and learned about the project and its objectives. With an exhibition of posters for a long time after the end of the project in the city and the surrounding area, residents will find out about our project, because we are going to present our exhibition in other schools and places in Wroclaw.

Magdalena Szewczyk, Ph. D.
Private Salesian High School, Wroclaw, Poland
magda.szewczyk@slo-wroc.pl



A Constructivist Path for School Leaders

- A Paradigm Defined on Constructivist Principles

Schools are dynamic institutions that are affected by the changes in education. These learning organizations cannot be constrained to a single way of learning or of teaching systems.

Significantly, some educational developments focusing on students and their way of learning, or processing new information, have helped constructivism to be a strong guide in constructing education programs. These programs have brought many changes ranging from the teaching-learning environment to the roles of principals, teachers and students. Classes began to be formed in a way to help better personal and group learning experiences. Teachers began to be facilitators and leading persons in helping students to construct what they learn and see.

Constructivist programs have increased the variety of teaching methods and highlighted process-oriented examinations and applications. Notably, after the implementation of constructivist programs, a new leadership understanding that includes constructive principles has come to the fore as it is not possible to manage constructivist school programs with the traditional leadership approaches. A school leadership that is built around the principles of constructivism will pave the way for better learning in schools.

Constructivist Leadership

Constructivist leadership is composed of "reciprocal learning processes that enable participants in a community to construct meaning towards a shared purpose" (Lambert, 1998, p. 17). This notion of leadership recognizes that leadership is about reciprocal, purposeful learning that allows participants in a community to construct meaning and knowledge together.

In this sense, social processes are vital in an education environment as people use their personal learning in the interpretation of new experiences. Moreover, students learn better when they



share their opinions, discuss in a dynamic and synergic atmosphere and question together by widening their viewpoints (Walker, 2002).

All learners learn through reflection, participation, interrogation and a bonding between information and meaning. Constructivist leadership can be described as the effective employment of these processes for a shared purpose in the education environment. Teachers, parents and principals have a vital role in achieving the goals of the constructivist program.

In particular, the attitudes of principals as leaders play an important role as they are mediators among the stakeholders and can help the constructivist paradigm attain a solid place in school settings. So, it is expected that principals will have adequate knowledge or information about constructivism and competence to prepare functional settings where constructivist principles are maintained.

The main attributes ascribed to teachers in constructivist school settings could be applied to school principals, too. Zimmerman (2002) stated that constructive leaders listen to other voices and are in search of new ideas as they involve all stakeholders in listening, discussing and establishing meaning together.

So, constructivist leaders should be flexible and open to change and they should welcome different opinions. They are expected to fulfil their facilitator role,



as teachers have towards their students, and encourage school stakeholders in order that managerial and educational activities are carried out according to constructivist understanding.

Ahmet Göçen
Harran University, Turkey
ahmet135@gmail.com

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e³coach

- EU-funded professional development

Report about a Grundtvig project for teachers and managers in Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Denmark from 2011 to 2013.

All European countries have the same common problem with early school leaving and high dropout rates. Institutions for Second Chance Education all over Europe offer courses for integrating this target group into the educational system and into the work market. (Strategy 2020/http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/leaving_de.htm)

The main thrust of our Learning Partnership was to improve the quality of instruction in 2nd Chance Education in the participating institutions, to reduce the drop-out rate and increase the level of qualification of the learners, thereby in turn contributing to the fulfilment of the Europe wide education aims.

The first meeting at Volkshochschule Essen was used to ensure an effective and purposeful working atmosphere within the group and to establish trust as a prerequisite for later cooperation. All partners introduced their institutions with their respective specialisms and idiosyncracies as well as their main focus within 2nd Chance Education.

We developed a "Codes for Communication" using methods that were sensitive to intercultural online teamwork and were aimed at minimising possible intercultural conflict. The methods employed are also transferrable to teaching methods in our institutions. As a communication and dissemination platform Moodle is set up according to the Learning Partnership's needs.

The second meeting in Copenhagen focused on intercultural aspects of 2nd Chance Education - a truly vital topic for our international learner groups. We discussed how one can have focus groups with participants from international crisis areas on the same learning objectives - especially when these learners do not have the right of residence and are working together with people from ethnic backgrounds which were involved in political or armed conflicts in their home countries.

The realisation of a shared teaching situation has been a special moment for the teachers involved and has led to a lively exchange of methods which train



respectful communication.

In Asturias/Spain, a former coal mining region, the focus has been on job orientation. We visited several education providers who have the aim to reintroduce young unemployed to the labour market through practical training on the job as well as teaching the key skills needed for the local job market.

We found that educational success is very strongly linked to addressing young adults on a personal level and letting them become responsible stakeholders in their development process. The intensive discussion on how to keep the young disadvantaged in education, in order to integrate them into the labour market leads to the project "Essen bildet" at the Volkshochschule Essen.

The result of this was an international cook book written by participants in the 2nd Chance Education courses.

In Sopot/Poland we put the focus on "creativity" and tried several methods for finding creative approaches to teaching and learning. During visits to several cooperation partners we saw how approaches from theatre pedagogy increases motivation and learning ability.



After a comparative analysis of the participating institutions with regard to their position in the respective national education systems as well as the aims and provisions for participants, the meeting in Utrecht, Netherlands, disseminated a very effective lesson observation form for use in other institutions.

The form works on the basis of five different roles a teacher performs in lessons. The discussion about those roles has not only changed the professional view of ourselves but has also been introduced to the different staff in the participating institutions.

The 2nd meeting in Copenhagen, this time at Copenhagen Youth School (Ungdomskolen), dealt with the question of how coaching processes can be instigated successfully with the aim of achieving integration into the job market.

For all institutions it is surprising to see that the target group in the respective countries is so similar and that at the same time the possibilities for targeted intervention are so different in the different countries. Surely Denmark has the best system with a plethora of possibilities for young adults to be prepared for the labour market.

We have also used various Social Media channels (YouTube, Facebook and Twitter) to distribute videos of our meetings which give a clear impression of how we worked: <http://bit.ly/e3coachvideos>

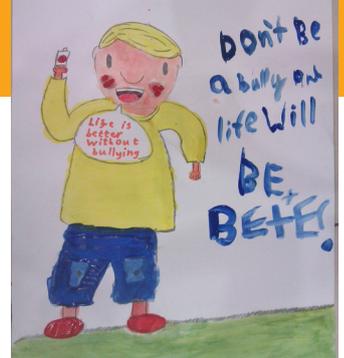


Heike Hurlin
Head of 2nd Chance Education at VHS Essen
heike.hurlin@vhs.essen.de

Stephan Rinke
eLearning Coordinator at VHS Essen
stephan.rinke@vhs.essen.de

Anti-Bullying

- A Seminar at St Thomas More College, Marsaxlokk



The seminar

On Thursday, 18th April, 2013, the P.S.D. primary school teachers at St Thomas More College in Malta organized an Anti-Bullying Seminar at Marsaxlokk Primary school for the Marsaxlokk and MarsaScala year 5 students.

The programme began with a short video clip in which different types of bullying were portrayed. Students were then grouped into four different workshops where they discussed various issues such as: why bullying happens, how do the bully and the victim feel, being assertive and 'fighting' bullying and most importantly how to say NO TO BULLYING.

Different workshops then used different media to tackle the topic, such as art, drama, music, media discussions and public speaking. The teachers worked in collaboration with the Art teacher.

To conclude the programme for this special day, all students and teachers gathered in the school hall where the day's learning was celebrated with the sharing of the different creative contributions. These included short plays, puppet shows, paintings and finally, he singing of the anthem of the day:

"Minn bully ... għal ħabib." ("From a bully ... to a buddy.")

It was an educational and entertaining morning for both teachers and students alike!

The workshops

The first workshop was the "Poster Making" workshop. After the introductory session pupils were taken to the Art Room. The pupils were divided into groups and shown ready-made posters which were discussed. Then the Art teacher showed the pupils different techniques for the creation of special effects with paints, shadows and pencils. After a lot of 'scratching'; 'drawing' and painting, four incredible Works of Art



were produced.

The second workshop was the "Puppet Shows" workshop. Previously, the teacher in charge collected as many puppets as he could find in different materials and, out of a cardboard box, made a 'box theatre'. Students were divided into four groups and told what their task would be. They were then given the name of the place where their 'story about bullying' was to take place. These were: in the school yard / at home / in class and at the playground. Then each group had to build up a short scene where the bullying took place and show how the issue was resolved peacefully and assertively.

The "Anti-Bullying Song" workshop was the third workshop. The teacher in charge of this workshop collaborated with the Music teacher, who composed the music to the lyrics in hand. The mascot of this Anti-Bullying anthem was Zelu. So a big poster of Zelu was made. Once the lyrics were read and discussed, the pupils were assigned their tasks. Musical instruments were distributed and rehearsals began in earnest. This "Anti-Bullying" song was chosen as the anthem for this special day and after the presentations of the three other workshops, the song was sung to bring this seminar to a happy conclusion.

The final workshop was the 'Drama Workshop'. The whole group first discussed the various forms of bullying, what causes it, and the different ways of dealing with bullying. The focus was mainly on the motto: STOP, WALK and TALK promoted by a film called 'Mc Gruff The Crime Dog: Samantha's Choice', which the children had been shown earlier in the morning.

Children were then divided into three groups. They were told to create short plays showing how to deal with bullying assertively. One group opted to be creative and wrote an original script. Their play was about how children should confide in their family and ask for help when they are bullied at school. The other two groups chose situations from different prompts which had been prepared by the teacher.

These plays demonstrated how children who are considered 'different' are most of the time the target of bullying. Children performed their short plays on the stage in front of everyone. This was an exciting experience which also boosted their confidence!

Jeanette Gravina, Sarah Jane Pulis, Charmaine Sammut, Claire Vella
St Thomas More College, Malta
stthomasmore.college@gov.mt



Making Conflict Resolution Easy

- Perceiver Element Grid (PEG) as a Path toward Conflict Resolution in Schools

All over the world a lot of conflicts appear in schools. These could be among different actors and about many topics, e.g. about marks, relationship between students, school absenteeism, discipline problems, violence between students. In this contribution we present a technique which can help teachers resolve the conflicts.

Perceiver Element Grid (PEG) has its origins in the work of Harry Procter. Finding support in the personal construct psychology, Procter developed this qualitative grid technique while doing family psychotherapy. However, PEG has become popular in organizational and educational setting, as well.

PEG in School Context

It is important for teachers to have competencies to reflect their work, and the classroom and school dynamics in order to improve their performances and job satisfaction. Sometimes they write diaries, they talk with colleagues, use some online forums and they get supervision. Additionally, as very helpful, we propose PEG.

It can be used by teachers if they want to structure and reflect their thoughts, emotions and acts connected with the conflict, or it can be used as a "mediation tool", when parties involved in the conflict want to discuss it. In both situations, the key "ingredient" is the effort to understand the perspectives of other people and to "be in their shoes", so as to better understand potential causes of their actions.

How to Use PEG-Technique?

In PEG the persons as perceivers are listed on the left-hand side of the grid and persons as elements, construed by the others, are listed along the top.

The PEG is designed to select the most



crucial material in the dyad's or group's discourse - the way they construe each other. It allows emotionally laden material to be viewed dispassionately and comparisons to be made. It emphasizes to the dyad or group that these are personal views and not "objective reality" and that these views can be changed in order to reduce tension and resolve the conflict.

Leading questions for the actors in the conflict are: "What do I think of ...?" and "What is my message to ...?" Personal views and the assumptions of the views of other actors and then comparisons of these views and assumptions serve as a basis for further discussion.

Example

In this contribution we present an example of a conflict between a teacher and a student, which escalated due to the teacher

complaining to the school principal because of the student's disruptive behaviour during the classes.

Our example of the PEG reflects the views of the teacher and the student regarding this conflict situation, marked with blue and green, respectively.

Outcome

As can be seen from the PEG, persons enter the discussion with different ideas of what other persons think of themselves. They take, for the first time, the position of the other person (e.g. student had to assume what his teacher thinks of himself), which is the first step toward empathy and mutual understanding.

Step by step, the parties involved in the conflict become able to better and comprehensively understand needs, emotions and thoughts of the others and to realize why the conflict arose. That is the first step towards finding a solution that could satisfy all of them. We can conclude that PEG could be useful for teachers working in different contexts, willing to improve their reflexion and conflict resolution skills.

Nataša Simić
nsimic@f.bg.ac.rs
University of Belgrade

Gerhild Bachmann
gerhild.bachmann@uni-graz.at
University of Graz

		Element	
		Teacher	Student
Perceiver	Teacher	Without classroom discipline students can't learn. I am responsible for their learning. I should find some way to make him behave properly.	His behaviour destroys every single class! He is so rude! He must learn how to control his impulses!
	Student	He must think that he is the smartest person ever. He would say to himself to continue his practice in the same way.	He thinks that I am rude and mean person. He would tell me to behave like a mature person and to show more respect for the older people.
Perceiver	Teacher	He must think that I am too strict and not relaxed at all! He thinks that I should be cooler!	He must think that he is so cool and a macho. He believes that he should always try to make fun of everything.
	Student	He is too strict and boring and I don't know what to do during his classes. He should be more interesting and spontaneously!	I just want to have fun at school. I can't sit still. I should probably find some other ways to survive these boring lectures.



Service learning

- A possible strategy for improving a student's activity and active learning

The development of teaching strategies and innovations in the educational sector is an important task of the International Association "Interactive Open Schools" (hereinafter MIOS). Bosnia and Herzegovina are engaged in educational reform that involves several segments of education but, for the purpose of this article, teacher's competencies and the teaching process according to the student's needs are the important segments to emphasize.

MIOS introduced service learning or learning through the engagement in elementary and secondary schools in 2009 in Osijek/Croatia, Novi Sad/Serbia and Tuzla/Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support and professional guidance of the Service Learning Network- Lernen durch Engagement Netzwerk of the Freudenberg Stiftung from Germany.

Service learning basically ensures a strong link and balance between cognitive learning (that is happening in the schools) and civic engagement of the students within the community (that is happening in the community where students live and spend leisure time). Through the implementation of the methodology, teachers have learned how to combine schools learning and civic engagement of students in the community.

For example, students in 7th or 8th grade of elementary school learn English language and the development of pre-school children, create picture books on

how to learn the alphabet in a pre-school institution and provide classes/workshops on learning the alphabet for pre-school children in co-operation with kindergarten teachers.

Through the Service learning, all students can be involved regardless of their differences. We had an especially good response from the "youth at risk". This means that when a Service learning project is properly organized and implemented, it can involve passive students and those who are hard to reach within the ordinary classes, because it gives them the opportunity to show their "hidden" competencies.

In addition, this methodology ensures that students have a good knowledge and the skills needed to provide quality service in the community. This ensures good quality service within the community and reduces the potentially bad experiences of students while performing the service. Another great benefit for the students is that they use the knowledge immediately. They can see the purpose and usefulness of school knowledge which generally enhances their motivation to learn in school.

A good Service learning project can be ensured through quality standards for the Service learning. Standards help to guide the teachers in creating the environment for the students to define, implement and evaluate the project. The main quality

standards are:

1. meaningful service - addressing real community needs.
 2. link with the curriculum - structurally integrated into schools with the clear link with the curriculum content.
 3. partnership with outside partners - service is taking place outside the school and must have partners that will assist and help.
 4. reflection - that will take place through the whole of the service learning project.
 5. youth voice - student's must participate and have clear role in every step of the project.
- Throughout our work, schools and teachers involved students of all ages, from elementary and secondary schools, into service-learning projects.

For example:

- (i) In one vocational high school students worked on improving the condition of a local art gallery: they learned how to renovate the walls after a flood, how to white-wash the walls, paint, and make some art work on the walls. After researching they found that the local art gallery had a flood problem and the walls were destroyed, so they redecorated the premises. A celebration has been held in these rooms jointly with the partners.
- (ii) In one elementary school students



identified that a local dairy factory did not have chocolate milk to offer as a product, and they started to learn in mathematics classes what the components of the milk were, and calculate the proportions by using mathematical formulas. In art classes they designed the possible look of a Tetra Pack for the chocolate milk. The students offered their ideas to the dairy factory who have agreed to use it when they produce this product.

(iii) In another elementary school students noticed a lack of cultural events for the children and youth. At the same time they learned how to make theatrical plays, how to act and tell stories and have organized the New Year's cultural event for all children and youth of the community - the New Year's Fairy Tale Story. They performed and provided presents for every child who attended the event. They established a partnership with the municipality, a theatre from another city, local stores, and a local business - a tailor's shop.

(iv) In one inter-school project (two elementary schools from different cities) schools have organized two Service learning projects. One school has identified the problem of land sliding in populated areas which can be dangerous for people. They were learning about this problem in biology and about what solutions could be found to prevent future landslips.

In mathematics, different calculations can show how to plan trees on a bigger area of land in order to reduce landslips, how deep the whole area for the plans must be, and what would happen if the trees were planted in the most risky area (a recommendation of the municipality department in charge of this problem).



The other partner school has a big yard and a lot of trees that produce a lot of leaves and in order to make something useful with these, students were learning about composting processes in biology classes, and as a service were producing the compost for the trees that are planted by the partner school.

MIOS has educated 26 schools in how to conduct the service learning project from Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and

Herzegovina. Service learning is a relatively new methodology that needs to be properly incorporated into the school curriculum. If we want to have a quality experience within this totally new venture in the teaching process, the support of school management is vital.

That support can contribute to the quality learning of students and to develop their sense of civic engagement and responsibility for community challenges.

*Edina Malkić
muios@bih.net.ba
Međunarodno udruženje
"Interaktivne otvorene škole" (MIOS)
Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina*





Short News

For a Credible, Growing and Open Europe

In the second semester of 2013, Lithuania assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union (hereinafter the EU) for the first time. The Presidency places a great responsibility on Lithuania and its public service. It is also an opportunity to present the country, strengthen links to Europe, and contribute to the well-being of all European citizens.

"Lithuania will focus her efforts on enhancing the EU's abilities to provide adequate response to economic, financial, social and energy challenges. For this purpose, Lithuania will first of all seek to carry out the obligations already undertaken vis-a-vis the EU citizens. The primary focus will be on further strengthening the financial stability and competitiveness of Europe, as well as the implementation of the Growth Agenda. Further EU integration and strengthening of the Single Market, including energy, will bring new opportunities to combat unemployment, in particular youth unemployment, and will make the European economic and social model more solid. The openness of the EU to new members, neighbours and trade partners will not only advance the EU economy, but will also reaffirm the aims of the EU, i.e. to develop a prosperous, peaceful, democratic, free and open Europe.

In the course of its Presidency, Lithuania will act as an honest broker and will cooperate with Member States and the EU institutions. Active dialogue and close partnership with the European Parliament and the European Commission is essential in order to ensure the successful comple-



tion of the Presidency tasks. Lithuania, having tackled the economic and financial crisis with determination, will be guided by the same principles of efficiency and result-orientation during its Presidency. To ensure the continuity of the EU agenda Lithuania will, actively cooperate with her partners in the Trio (Ireland and Greece) and will rely on the 18-month programme of the Trio.

The objectives of the Lithuanian Presidency will be as follows:

- *Credible Europe* with a stable financial sector and public finance and effective growth oriented EU economic governance and stronger social dimension,

- *Growing Europe* through greater investment into research and technological development, deeper integration of the internal market, as well as better employment opportunities and sustainable social security,

- *Open Europe* able to tackle global challenges effectively, promoting democratic values, contributing to safe neighbourhood, and actively protecting the rights of EU citizens." (Quote from the official website)

World Conference

Preparations and information for the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to be held from 10-12 November 2014 in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan are now available on the Conference's website.

The Conference will mark the end of the United Nations Decade of ESD (2005-2014), celebrate its achievements and launch future ESD activities.

Stakeholders can contribute resources and data via the Conference's website, which will enrich the final assessment report of the Decade. The report will be launched at the Conference.

The website also illustrates UNESCO's development of a draft Global Action Programme on ESD as suggested follow-up to the Decade, in collaboration with countries and other stakeholders. In addition, key UNESCO ESD publications, videos and ESD success stories from around the world are accessible on the site. The UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development is organized by UNESCO and the Government of Japan.

The 2014 ESD World Conference is organized by UNESCO and the Government of Japan, advised by an International Steering Group of twelve ESD experts from around the world.

What should the future of ESD look like? What issues should be featured in a Global Action Programme on ESD? Which of the many successful ESD initiatives should be scaled up?

Upon request of its Executive Board, UNESCO is developing, in consultation with countries and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, a proposal for a Global Action Programme on ESD.

Website:
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco-world-conference-on-esd-2014/>

Read more news on
www.learningteacher.eu

Higher Education

In July 2013 the European Commission started the preparations for the ERASMUS+ program (2014-2020).

In the past, higher education institutions had to sign a bilateral agreement, i.e. between two institutions. "Inter-institutional agreements are no longer limited to bilateral arrangements and can be signed between more than two higher education institutions, so providing for mobility between groupings of institutions.

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/20130719-erasmus-plus-preparation_en.htm



The Learning Teacher Network on facebook
www.facebook.com/learningteachernetwork

Emotions at School

- Grasping the Elusive

The ancient philosopher Epicurus stated that emotions are the measure of truth. Contemporary scientists prove that they are at the core of human relationships and learning processes. With regard to much psychological and neuropsychological research, emotions play a role in cognitive, social and moral functioning (Lewis, Haviland-Jones, 2005). They help to envision goals and challenges and open the mind to thoughts and problem-solving.

Although very elusive, emotions are an incentive to act, to learn, to create attachments to significant others and finally to inspire moral behaviour. Within the context of the critique of intellectually dominated education, the alternative is emotional education.

Although many emotional education programs are being implemented and teachers at times support children with emotional problems, the nature of emotions provides much more intrapersonal and interpersonal promise.

There seem to be four areas for practical discussion that arise from scientific debate on emotions and these might be useful in education.

They concern:

1. the class climate
2. the teaching-learning process
3. a student's emotional development
4. a teacher's competences.

Therefore the emotional culture of a school (comp. Radford, 2003, p. 257) is constituted by much more than positive relationships and attitudes.

Class climate

Students' and teachers' positive relationships can be assumed central for attaining educational goals. Knowledge, didactical competence, substantive methodological strategies are merely the skeleton of professionalism in teaching - what underpins that frame are emotions and social bonds. This is what we know and try put into practice.

Teaching-learning

Not least, this considering of emotions at school is not just a matter of students' well-being, security or positive aptitude, however important. Emotions themselves are essential for quality school learning. Emotions do play a role in learning, remembering and acquiring intellectual, social, moral and emotional aptitudes.

Mutual emotional bonds, the emotional



climate, excitement, the "flow" involved in the learning processes and problem-solving are areas where the emotions, although so hard to grasp, are present. In the practice of education of any kind, good or bad, what happens is fortified by the emotional climate. Thus teaching is the emotional labour, and a school where emotions are marginalized, creates only the illusion of development.

Emotional development

School education should be the place of constructive emotional experiences, modelling and coaching behaviours that lead to emotional knowledge and reflexivity. Teachers responding and respecting emotions in the classroom by tact, empathy and the ability to recognize and deal with emotions, create a supportive and stimulating educational context.

Emerging emotions are natural triggers for learning in the here-and-now. Therefore, teachers who do not avoid emotionally difficult situations, and, what is more, incite emotional experiences are emotional coaches. Emotional education plays role in social adaptation and the process of individualization (Przybylska, 2011).

Teachers' competences

The cognitive scaffolding of curricula, teaching strategies and social education are held together by emotions. Given the nature of these processes, teachers must be emotionally competent. With regard to extensive research, Polish teachers pay attention mainly to the importance of emotions in social behaviour and discipline. They find themselves not prepared to work with emotions or include them in the teaching-learning process.

Although perceived as important, emotions are marginalized at school at

different stages. Overloaded programmes, test-orientated curricula and too many children in one class result in emotional ignorance. Our graduates from different degrees of education have a relatively wide knowledge of writing and calculating skills but they lack emotional and interpersonal competences. It is observable that the higher the level of education, the lower the attention to emotions in school education.

At the elementary level of education, the curricula concentrates on emotions, children's well-being, a positive emotional bond with teachers and learning emotional competences. Teachers are more open to children's emotional behaviours and their needs. Later, emotions are seen as private, not necessary, even disturbing in the teaching-learning process.

Without doubt, good teachers are those who are emotionally competent. They are motivated to address emerging emotions and the learning atmosphere. Integrating emotions would profit students not only emotionally and socially but also in their intellectual growth.

Thus emotions must be present at school if teaching should have any meaning.

Irena Przybylska PhD

Faculty of Education
Silesian University, Katowice, Poland
irenaprzybylska@poczta.onet.pl

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