



CEDEFOP

European Centre for the Development
of Vocational Training



Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

Study visit group report

Group No 105

Title of the visit Innovation and creative approaches - Precondition for qualitative education

Topic Learning mathematics and science

City, country Ventspils, Latvia

Type of visit General education

Dates of visit 3-7 October 2011

Group reporter Karen Newby Jones

I FINDINGS

This section summarises the findings of the group while visiting host institutions, discussing issues with the hosts and within the group. You will be reflecting on what you learnt every day. But to put them together and give an overall picture, you need to devote a special session to prepare the final report on the last day of the visit.

In this section, it is important that you describe not only things you learnt about the host country but also what you learnt about the countries represented by group members.

1. One of the objectives of the study visits programme is to exchange examples of good practice among hosts and participants. Cedefop will select well-described projects/programmes/initiatives and disseminate them to former participants and a wider public, including potential partners for future projects. Therefore it is important that you identify and describe all aspects that, in your view, make these projects/programmes/initiatives successful and worth exploring.

Describe each of the good practices you learnt about during the visit (both from the hosts and from one another) indicating the following:

title of the project/programme /initiative	country	name of the institution that implements it (if possible, provide a website)	contact person (if possible) who presented the programme to the group	whom the project/ programme/ initiative addresses	what features of the project/programme/initiative make it an example of good practice
Project 'Science and Mathematics'	Latvia	State Education Centre www.dzm.lv and Ventspils Gym #1	Dace Namsone (project Director) and Parsla Kopmane (Headteacher)	Students grades 7-12 Teachers of science and mathematics Senior leaders in schools HE institutions Employers/Entrepreneurs	The project represents a change in philosophy and the introduction of a contemporary teaching and learning process in schools The project has been planned to impact on all aspects of the teaching of science and mathematics with materials produced for students and teachers. A supporting programme of professional development activities has also been put in place and, in addition, there is a determination to forge links between schools, universities and employers, industry and entrepreneurs.
Assessment for Learning	England, UK	SRC Bede Sixth Form College, Billingham http://www.stockton.ac.uk/bede/	Richard Spencer	Students age 16-19	All students have an entitlement to be assessed, and the approaches used should be chosen to meet the needs of each pupil and the nature of the learning. Assessment should take account of the whole child and not focus only on academic achievement. Assessment should support the development of pupils as independent learners who have ownership of their learning. Assessment should be a positive experience for pupils, motivating them and contributing to their self-esteem. All staff have a responsibility for assessment and should be involved in the

					development of practice across the school and the interpretation and use of the information generated by assessment
Integrated Learning	France	Felix Faure 31 Boulevard Assaut 60000 Beauvais, France http://sadjiro.info/felix-faure/nk/	Caroline Grandpre	Students age 16-19	Students learn Physics and Chemistry through the medium of English (in a French language school). The teaching is student centred so focuses on themes and 'big questions'. This problem based learning, or enquiry led approach leads to students developing deeper understanding and taking greater responsibility for their learning.
Assessment for Learning and Developing Thinking	Wales	Welsh Assembly Government http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/thinkingandassessmentforlearning/?lang=en	Karen Newby Jones	Students age 3-19	This is a programme for developing thinking and assessment for learning working in partnership with school clusters and Local Authority (LA) advisers. The programme focuses on the development, implementation and dissemination of good practice in the teaching of developing thinking and assessment for learning strategies. The main aims of the programme are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve pupil performance • increase engagement with learning • change classroom practice, thereby improving pedagogy • increase the frequency of creative lessons.

* You can describe as many good practices as you find necessary. You can add rows to the table.

2. The study visits programme aims to promote and support policy development and cooperation in lifelong learning. That is why it is important to know what you learnt about such policies and their implementation during your visit. You are invited to describe your findings concerning the following:

2.1 APPROACHES TAKEN BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS') REGARDING THE THEME OF THE VISIT. ARE THERE ANY SIMILAR APPROACHES/MEASURES IN PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES? WHAT ASPECTS ARE SIMILAR AND WHY? WHAT ASPECTS ARE DIFFERENT AND WHY?

The approaches taken to improving the teaching of science and mathematics are similar to those taken in the UK for students from 11-16, but Latvia focused first on older students aged 16-18. The programmes of student and teacher materials and the cpd programme are similar but Latvia is not as far into the journey. Impact measures have been decided and measured in the UK, but the programme in Latvia is considering impact currently.

The other participating countries have improvement programmes but not solely focused on science and mathematics

2.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (INCLUDING HOST) IN THEIR EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT POLICIES RELATED TO THE THEME OF THE VISIT. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES? ARE THEY COMMON CHALLENGES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

There are many common challenges in all participating countries. These include, in these difficult economic times, reduction in finance and difficulty in recruiting high calibre teachers of science and mathematics subjects. Reforms are sometimes considered to be too slow (in Latvia for example) or too fast and with too frequent changes in policy in other countries.

In some countries changing populations and increasing additional and special needs make these reforms more difficult for teachers to implement at school level.

2.3 NAME AND DESCRIBE EFFECTIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED THAT PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES (BOTH HOST AND PARTICIPANTS) APPLY TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES MENTIONED IN QUESTION 2.2. PLEASE MENTION SPECIFIC COUNTRY EXAMPLES.

Making education a priority has to be the most effective solution and Latvia has demonstrated it's intent. Consistent implementation of policy is also a factor and participants from Austria and the UK cited this as an important facet.

Ensuring school leaders are on board and are ready to ensure the programmes become embedded in their schools is also highly important.

2.4 ASSESSMENT OF THE TRANSFERABILITY OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES. COULD ANY EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE PRESENTED IN THIS REPORT BE APPLIED AND TRANSFERRED TO OTHER COUNTRIES? IF SO, WHY? IF NOT, WHY NOT?

All participants felt they had learnt from each other and, at school or local authority level, could apply this learning, for example using eclass or ways of involving parents in the life of the school. There are many small things that make a big difference.

3. Creating networks of experts, building partnerships for future projects is another important objective of the study visit programme.

Please state whether and which ideas for future cooperation have evolved during meetings and discussions.

The group have agreed to continue to network and share ideas using the following tools:

- Email communication
- Using a shared folder for documents; dropbox
- Using a shared bookmarking site for useful websites; diigo

TO SUM UP

4. What is the most interesting/useful information that the group believes should be communicated to others? To whom, do you think, this information will be of most interest?

The key findings are that;

- To be most effective you must have your values and beliefs at the heart of all you do and translate these into meaningful outcomes; review often
- Change and reform is necessary but you must consider what is vital to keep and what needs to be changed
- Change needs to be led; a clear focus and determination is what enables effective implementation

THANK YOU!