TIME-OUT

Time-out for a teacher? Many teachers will agree and say: “Yes, please!”

Why is that? We know the answer: the task of a teacher to educate is so complicated that sometimes you need time-out. Stress, pressure of work, school concerns and maybe private ones as well make the job of a teacher a hard one.

Teaching is more than just teaching in a strict technical sense. It is – we all know it – looking after so many aspects of a child’s/youngster’s life. And it is about more than one person.

Do we also use time-out to think about the questions: “What am I doing? Who is the other one? Do I have contact with the other? What space is there for each other?”

It is on purpose that I avoid here the word ‘learner’. Learner is only referring to a certain restricted activity of only one person in this relation. That pedagogical process needs time-out sometimes, a time of sitting at your teacher’s desk in an empty classroom to think of nothing, to reflect on the pedagogical process and consider questions such as: “What am I doing? What person am I in relation to each individual with whom I have a pedagogical relationship? Who am I in this pedagogical community?”

Gerard de Kruif
Editor

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Emotional Literacy in the Maltese Educational System

Self-empowerment, emotional literacy (EL) and the freedom to make informed decisions are crucial for a good quality of life. In Malta, these are fostered through a compulsory subject taught at primary and secondary level – Personal Social and Career Development (PSCD).

This subject nests in an academic and exam-oriented educational system and culture. Although the pedagogical skills used promote the concept that students arrive at their own value system, the inherent philosophy and implementation of the subject promote universally regarded positive values and attitudes such as respect for self and others, acceptance of diversity, self-awareness, critical thinking and problem solving.

The subject uses a pedagogy based on psychological research and educational strategies, skills and techniques, utilising a technique borrowed from the counselling field – processing, that is using open-ended strategies, skills and techniques, utilising a technique borrowed from the counselling field – processing, that is using open-ended questions to elicit learning from students EL develops within a social context, in this case, the classroom. Therefore importance must be given to the student–student interaction, the teacher–student interaction and the social process that is taking place during learning.

People learn about themselves through the interactions with others and through self knowledge that emerges through group work. For example, an activity that can be easily processed is a role play about bullying. EL is addressed by processing feelings of the bully and the person bullied, by providing the space for students to discuss personal and vicarious experiences of bullying and to come up with possible plans of action through reframing possible strategies. In order for such learning to take place effectively, professionals must facilitate not teach. In order to create the necessary safe and participative environment which promotes experiential learning, sessions are held in groups of not more than 16 students.

Classrooms are arranged in a circle/ horse-shoe formation. This allows participants to view each other and professionals can implement equity in time and attention to individual students.

The ability to listen, to empathise, to monitor emotions within oneself and of others and to consciously choose behaviour is skills that lead to EL. These skills can be modelled and reinforced inside and outside the classrooms in a context where EL should be given as much importance as literacy and numeracy. Historically, Maslow and Bowlby conclude that children can only focus on learning and a better quality of life if basic physical and emotional needs are met.

As one student in a local research project noted: “I hope we can do it next year and the year after. It is a very useful subject. It helps people get in touch with themselves and with others.”

A student centred methodology which allows for active participation by students enhances EL, especially when teachers are regarded as facilitators of learning and motivators for change. The emphasis is on the principle of learning by ‘doing’ through experiential learning and problem-solving education. This interaction implies that there is a lot of emotional work taking place within the classroom community because students are constantly and directly being engaged in the learning process.

Emotions are an integral part of human nature since they influence our thoughts and actions, affect our bodies and impact on our relationships. In EL, it is important to acknowledge that cognitive, success and personal identity and self-esteem influence and are influenced by the social situation.


The next issue of The Learning Teacher Magazine will be published in June. Articles may be submitted no later than 15th May 2016.
Ask any adult what they remember most about their childhood, and the answer will probably include early experiences in the great outdoors: making an igloo after a huge winter storm; turning over rocks to see what creatures lurked underneath; collecting fiddleheads and berries in the forest; pulling carrots; picking wildflowers; jumping in piles of autumn leaves; and so forth.

It is challenging to provide children with experiences like these when one is living in the city and facing stiff competition from the fascinating world of games, social media, mobile phones and television. But in our children’s workshop programmes we have found that once the kids are unplugged and surrounded by nature, a magical transformation occurs. Time stops, senses become activated, and creativity and cooperation take over.

Over the past few years, we have provided gardening and nature workshops for children in a number of community gardens in Amsterdam. Here is what has been learned from these experiences:

1) **Observe.** At the start of the workshop, we ask the children to stand in a circle and ask them a few questions. What does the weather feel like on our skin? What sounds do we hear? What do we smell? What is interesting to touch and take a closer look at in our immediate surroundings? Children have keen powers of observation, and if their senses are given the space to take over this will set up a stimulating framework for the remainder of the workshop.

2) **Get dirty.** Not only does the bacteria in soil release serotonin and make us feel happy, it also just feels good to play in the dirt. Some children are initially anxious about soiled clothes, squirming worms, or buzzing insects. We help to break down the barriers to nature by providing spare boots and overalls, by explaining how essential all creatures are in the overall scheme of things, and by communicating how unique they are.

   Every child will end up holding one of our red worms when we explain how apple cores and banana peels will travel through its translucent body and be pooped out as rich compost.

3) **Sketch.** In our workshop series we provide each child with a sketchbook for observations and drawings of plants. This activity provides rest, concentration, focus, and an introduction to botany.

4) **Sow.** Perhaps the most miraculous and accessible transformation in nature is that from seed to plant. We sow pea shoots, spinach, cress and other fast-growing crops with children so that they can experience the germination and plant development process.

   But we also encourage them to follow (and sketch) the life cycle of one plant from seed to seed – a tomato or bean or sunflower for example – giving them an understanding of the intelligence and perfection of natural systems.

5) **Connect.** Children will grow up to protect nature only if they appreciate it. We make sure to help them make connections: why is it better to eat a local bean than one that has been grown in Africa? Why is it important to make our own compost? Why do we need pollinators and other beneficial insects in the garden?

6) **Hunt.** Children love to run, to find, and to collect. We organize seasonal ‘treasure hunts’ in which the prizes include pine cones, shells, acorns, flowers, seeds, stones, and feathers.

   Our children’s workshops are popular not only with the kids, but also with their parents and the workshop leaders. Looking at the garden through the children’s eyes is refreshing, rewarding, and often surprising: it allows us to time travel back to our own childhood experiences in nature.

Ann Doherty works with Cityplot (www.cityplot), an urban farming collective, and runs workshops at the Curious Finch Educational Garden in Amsterdam among others (www.luistervink-amsterdam.org). ann@cityplot.org
The use of GIS (Geographic Information System) in Dutch Education

Adapting ArcGIS Online to Course Requirements

Dennis Hunink began teaching geography eight years ago at Develstein College at Zwijndrecht, a town located in the suburbs of the port city of Rotterdam. Initially, I just used the same materials that my fellow geography teachers were using for my topography classes,” said Hunink. After a few years, though, I began to wonder if there were better materials available on the web to help my students master the designated worldwide locations for their exams. He soon discovered that despite the vast resources available on the internet, he was unable to find the exact materials his students needed.

“I found some websites that provided good information, but they weren’t particularly easy for the students to use because the displayed maps were not the same as those they used in their exams. More importantly though, I found that the vast majority of the educational mapping materials available on the web lacked a real didactic vision, nor were they cartographically correct.”

Since Hunink had taken several courses on GIS and cartography while studying social geography at Utrecht University, he decided to explore the possibility of creating more appropriate web-based course materials for his students. He spoke with some experts in the field of geography education in the Netherlands and determined that there was a need for an integrated method to teach topography that was not being met by the commercial publishers of educational materials.

“I have some web development skills and thought it would be useful for my students if I created a website that allowed them to easily find the materials they needed for my topography course and prepare for their examination,” said Hunink. “I got in contact with Esri Nederland and they were enthusiastic about my project. They provided me with an ArcGIS Online hosting account, which allowed me to use the available APIs to develop the website for the students in their topography coursework. Students pick specific features, such as rivers or cities and then engage in a series of questions about them. Results are reviewed by the instructor online and all materials can be saved by the student for future reference. Students can also share their results with friends via Facebook.

By the end of 2012, more than 100 schools were using the Topografie in de Klas website, which is about 15% of all secondary schools in the Netherlands. Today, more than half of the students taking topography classes use the website for their work.

Hunink indicates that it is difficult to say with absolute certainty that Topografie in de Klas has increased learning outcomes, however he has a wealth of anecdotal evidence that indicates this is the preferred method to study topography by his students.

“I found indications suggesting that the website makes a positive impact on the students’ work,” says Hunink. “But more importantly, the students keep telling me that learning topography is much more effective and supportive using the website. Many of them became very frustrated when they had to learn the course materials with low-quality printed maps and some even felt like giving up.”

Summary by Dennis Hunink
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An efficient education system must ensure acquisition of knowledge, skills and values to every pupil and student, which is necessary for a successful life in modern society. Exactly one year ago, an expert team for implementing a comprehensive curriculum reform for early, primary and secondary education started their work. The reform is one of the measures of The Strategy of Education, Science and Technology which was adopted by the Croatian Parliament in October 2014.

The goal of the curriculum reform is to establish a coherent and efficient education system through comprehensive content and structural changes which include the following:

• transition from eight-year to nine-year primary school
• developing a new, modern curriculum for each school subject, which will ensure that the focus is on the learner
• introduction of optional modules (sets of several subjects) in gymnasiums, allowing students to choose and focus learning on their specific interests
• strengthening work-based learning in vocational education and training to ease students’ transition from education to work
• giving more autonomy to teachers and schools in delivering the curriculum according to specific interests and needs of their learners, school and local community.

430 experts from all levels of education and different parts of the country participated in the work on curricular documents in September 2015. Amongst them were 300 teachers engaged to work full-time on the curriculum reform. The entire work was organized in the cloud; there were around 500 in person and 300 online meetings. Although we were at first a little concerned whether this complex, comprehensive and demanding job could be done in such a short period, here we are, four and a half months later, and the documents are ready for publication on the web in February.

The move from a prescriptive content-based curriculum towards a learning outcomes approach will impact all programmes in schools. Subject learning outcomes set out what a learner is expected to know, understand or be able to do as a result of the learning process.

Learning activities will be geared to stimulate creativity and imagination, develop learners’ investigative and constructive skills as well as their ability to think and reason logically, reflect on outcomes and consequences and apply interesting and realistic contexts that are personally meaningful to them.

Great changes are to be introduced in the assessment and report area. Learners and others involved in their learning need timely, accurate feedback about what they have learned and how much and how well they have learned it. All learners should be involved in planning and reflecting on their own learning, through formative assessment, self and peer evaluation and personal learning planning.

As a member of the expert working group for developing Computer Science curriculum, I was well aware of our very challenging job: creating a curriculum for the subject that is currently compulsory for only one year in secondary schools and is taught based on the curriculum dating as far back as 1994.

The new Computer Science curriculum has four learning areas:

• Information and digital technologies,
• Computational thinking and programming,
• Digital literacy and communication,
• e-Society,

which will ensure that pupils become confident and competent users of technology and active participants in a digital world. Its learning outcomes are defined from the first grade of primary education till the last grade of secondary education, ensuring that students are able to create programs and a range of digital content as well as build a positive digital footprint.

Experimental implementation in 60 schools is planned for the school year 2016/17, while full implementation will start in 2017/18. I am proud to have been a part of this challenging yet rewarding experience.
We know that students learn best through doing. Experiential learning is particularly important when it comes to global issues education. Phrases such as 'improve the world', 'make a difference', and 'find the solutions' adorn our mission statements and are often viewed as “untraditional” for women. However, before taking action, there is considerable investigation and planning and preparation that need to take place in order to ensure that a community need is authentic.

Service learning leads students through five stages, each of which guides them in their thinking and doing to ensure that a) the need that they are addressing is authenticated, b) the service they ultimately carry out is beneficial to all those involved and c) they enjoy their learning. However, if a school is struggling to prioritize service learning and dedicate the necessary support to promoting this pedagogy amongst its staff, why wait?

Students themselves can drive the change. In fact, if ownership over learning and intrinsic motivation is the highly sought after goal many schools claim to prioritize service learning and dedicate the necessary support to promoting this pedagogy amongst its staff, why wait?

So, how do we nurture empowered learners, ones that willingly dedicate time and energy to self-initiated projects that are not assessed as part of the formal curriculum?

Here are some starting points:

- Know your students and ensure they know themselves and each other. Conduct a personal inventory; their passions, interests and talents are valuable. Take time to recognize them.
- Nurture and promote connections. This could be a common interest two students have, issues they care about, communities they are interested in, places they love.
- Inspire through storytelling. Share stories of change involving people and places that students can relate to.
- Guide students through the five stages of service learning. Emphasize the importance of each and every stage. Ensure they carefully consider which type of action would be best to address the community need they have authenticated (direct service, indirect service, advocacy or research).
- Use engaging instructional practices at each and every stage of the process. Ensure that learning is always at the core.

Examples

Two examples of student action from IB Diploma students at the International School of Tanganyika (aged 16-18) that have arisen from this approach this year are:
- Teen Girls Organization (T Go) hosted a Career Fair for over 100 High School girls from across Dar es Salaam. The goal of this career fair was to expose and introduce participants to careers that are often viewed as “untraditional” for women.
- Blessing Bags for the Burnt - Teen Girls Organization (T Go) hosted a Career Fair for over 100 High School girls from across Dar es Salaam. The goal of this career fair was to expose and introduce participants to careers that are often viewed as “untraditional” for women.
Changing the students’ attitudes toward natural sciences and mathematics

Understanding the world, nature, human relations and how to use these to make the best of our lives are some of the elements of what formal education should develop in students.

Often this is not the case due to different factors and, as a tool to overcome barriers, we present the Starter Experiment Approach (SEA) - a teaching method that ensures greater student participation in natural sciences and mathematics lessons.

Since the beginning of 2015, the International association "Interactive Open Schools" (MIOS) is actively educating teachers about SEA. The "Starter Experiment Approach" offers a comprehensive method to SEA training developed and offers a reverse process (than is usual in schools) of understanding of concepts within the natural sciences and mathematics. The process starts from an introductory experiment called the "Starter Experiment" while students are observing and confirming the observations with repeated experiments and then defining the hypothesis. Then they think and develop new experiments that will either confirm or disprove the hypothesis and from that will lead students to create hypotheses and new experiments and this step is determining the final outcome of the lesson.

Teachers also demonstrated satisfaction with SEA and effects on students’ active participation. They noticed changes in the process of preparation since now they have to think more about the process and how this will lead to the final concept. One of the challenges is to make questions that will lead students to create hypotheses and new experiments and this step is determining the final outcome of the lesson. The SEA method also told them they need to prepare for experiments more, and follow students’ work since their observation and experiments can lead in opposite directions. This changes the teacher’s role which goes more into the direction of moderator and experiments can lead in opposite directions. This changes the teacher’s role which goes more into the direction of moderator of the process and “... to work with the perceptions, questions and proposals of the students.” (ibid 10). Beside the moderator’s role, the method promotes mutual monitoring and peer education among teachers as a mechanism for mutual learning and composing quality teaching scenarios.

"The materials used for a Starter Experiment should be taken - if ever possible - from the environment of the students. Special science equipment will be used later in the course of the lesson when students conduct their verification/falsification experiments.” (ibid, 4).


In case you are interested in this method and effects, you can contact: Međunarodno udruženje “Interaktivne otvorene škole” (MIOS), Tuzla Edina Malkić miusb@bih.net.ba

Author of SEA method from Germany Mr. Juergen Schoenherr j.schoenherr@gmx.net

Teachers who understand the world, nature, human relations and how to use these to make the best of our lives are some of the elements of what formal education should develop in students. Especially girls, who normally suffer from the “natural dominance of their male peers in science.” (Schoenherr, Mueller, 1998:3)

The method consists of several steps and offers a reverse process (than is usually present in schools) of understanding of concepts within the natural sciences and mathematics. The process starts from an introductory experiment called the “Starter Experiment” while students are observing and confirming the observations with repeated experiments and then defining the hypothesis. Then they think and develop new experiments that will either confirm or disprove the hypothesis and from that will lead students to create hypotheses.

The method incorporates: experiential learning (senses, thinking and reasoning process, skills for team work, communication), a student’s active participation, through a sequence of individual, pair, group and plenary work. Teachers who participated in SEA training developed and trialled diverse lesson plans like: Surface of the cube, Types of fractions, Asymptote of f, π- circumference of a circle, Absorption, Diffusion, Resistance of the environment, Hydrostatic pressure, Chemical reactions and energy, Release of CO₂ gas, Receptors, Introduction to respiratory system, Introduction to the nervous system – reflexes.

The application of SEA in elementary and secondary schools in city like Tuzla demonstrated students’ great satisfaction. Students loved the chance to conduct experiments, or to explain and write what they saw, to work together in a groups equally, to be able to understand how they make a parallelogram and calculate its surface, to be able to express their own opinions, to have a clear explanation of the lesson by teacher and to be in position to create an experiment by themselves. We have asked students to evaluate/grade the understanding of a lesson, their involvement and active participation, their discussion with colleagues/peers and how clearly the teacher explained the content; the scale showed high marks in positive outcomes – demonstrating great satisfaction.

The materials used for a Starter Experiment should be taken - if ever possible - from the environment of the students. Special science equipment will be used later in the course of the lesson when students conduct their verification/falsification experiments.” (ibid, 4).
The role of an NGO in modern education

The Association of Friends of School “Pro Europa” (Polish NGO) was established in 2009 (www.pro-europa.edu.pl). The members are mainly retired teachers of local secondary schools in Tychy. Our city of Tychy (Poland) is situated twenty kilometers from Auschwitz, so naturally a lot of our activities are connected with the Holocaust. Every year we participate with a group of around forty students in the March of the Living in Auschwitz. This is not only a great history lesson, but it also makes students think about what discrimination, anti-Semitism or racism can lead to. It makes students aware that evil can be in each of us. The march also enables young people to enter into personal contact with Jewish students from all over the world. This is one of the greatest benefits of participating in this event.

The association co-operates with the Galicia Jewish Museum in Krakow. This allows us to organize cultural activities (exhibitions, workshops, films) related to the Holocaust. Another one of our partnerships is with the American Consulate in Cracow. We bring students to their educational centre the American Embassy in Cracow. We also offer seminars on the dangers of alcohol abuse (with a psychologist) and on the danger of drinking and driving. Currently the association is also engaged in educational activities for senior citizens.

The association co-operates closely with the school “Primary Education for Adults” (my translation). This school allows students who have dropped out of the standard educational system to complete primary education, giving them the opportunity to acquire skills for the job-market. What we do is to teach the students how to spend free time productively and we use public funds to organize trips, extra classes, as well as drug and alcohol prevention workshops.

Our work with young people at risk of social exclusion made us aware that everything should be done to make them come to school and to let them pursue their education. Knowledge becomes a less important matter.

The association also supports cultural education such as trips to the theatre, or international exchange programmes for students. We support blood donation campaigns and First Aid courses organized every year. We also offer seminars on the dangers of alcohol abuse (with a psychologist) and on the danger of drinking and driving. Currently the association is also engaged in educational activities for senior citizens.

The association’s main aim is to support the educational system of schools and non-formal education. Teachers (at least at secondary schools) are much more concentrated on teaching (which means implementing the national curriculum) than on education understood more broadly. For instance, there is little time for discussion on different topics such as discrimination, racism, nationalism, violence and exclusion, human rights and on fostering the development of values that can form a young person’s personality. This is understandable, as teachers are responsible first of all for their students’ results, especially in their final examinations. Given these time constraints, there is a relative lack of open discussion. Our association’s mission is to compensate for this by engaging students in exploring topics that are important to them as future citizens.

This reflects our views on non-formal education, where the value of education goes far beyond the value of mere transmission of knowledge. Working as a teacher for more than twenty years I was able to notice the problems of standard education – problems that cannot be solved by the educational authorities (the Ministry of Education in Poland). Our schools focus mainly on teaching, while the number of drop-outs increases, as is easily noticed in vocational schools.

Non-formal education enables us to address topics that are not included in the national curriculum or that are treated only in a cursory manner. What is more, we are able to present those topics in a more attractive way than during standard classes. I appreciate very much the value of non-formal education because education is often more important than just teaching.

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Souvenirs from Cambodia

Last October I was asked to be one of the keynote speakers in the 2nd Finnish Education Forum in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. I travelled there with two colleagues. One of us spoke about policy making in education, another about ICT and the 21st century learning skills. I spoke about the professional change of teachers in Finland right now. The conference was a success with the attendance of the Cambodian minister of Education, H.E. Dr. Hang Choun Naron.

I knew little about Cambodia or developing (or fragile) countries as a whole when preparing for my presentation. But two days in the conference with these enthusiastic educational professionals really changed my world a bit. I thought my ideas of phenomena based learning or new learning environments would be pretty distant for them, but how wrong I was! Yes, the first thing to do in Cambodian education is to make sure that children can come to school - for the whole school day - and to see that they can go through their basic studies without paying the teachers extra money for extra curricula activities in order to get the grades. But besides that, how different are the children from those in western countries?

When creating a new school system for developing countries, you do not have to build the school in the same way as they are built in Europe: classrooms along the corridor, with teacher in the front and desks in a row. No, like my guru Sugata Mitra showed in his ‘Hole in the wall’ experiments, you could just give them space to gather with an access to the web and let them learn. It does not mean the teachers are useless, but it means they have to learn new ways to mentor the students. But that is basically the thing to learn for the teachers anywhere in the world.

Developing school culture does not vary a lot from one place to another. On the second day of the conference I led a learning cafe for school leaders with a title “Empowering school management”. I had never before led one in a developing country nor in Khmer language! Still I decided to do so this time! I had an idea as to how the learning cafe would go: Start with school leaders work assignments, categorizing the work in leadership and management, pointing out what is important and what is time consuming etc. And they were doing the whole thing in Khmer.

I had no idea what they were discussing but I just led the process as I had planned it. And in the end they came out with a list that could have been created by Finnish principals: How to develop structure, a pedagogical approach, finance and networks. Visiting Cambodia as a keynote speaker was a great learning experience for me. This was also because of the sad history of the country. Visiting the genocide museum and the killing fields awakened new feelings when thinking of the refugees coming to Europe and to Finland. It also made me realize that education is the most powerful way to affect society.

So let us start thinking what the children of developing countries really need for their education instead of what we would like to import for them. I also started to believe that in next twenty years, the developing countries could really jump a long way ahead of us if they make the right decisions in the years ahead.

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Eurydice: National Sheets on Education Budgets in Europe - 2015

Investment in education is one of Europe 2020 strategy’s priority areas. However, the lack of up-to-date information in Europe on public funding in education makes it difficult to assess and discuss the current changes in public investment in the education sector, to pinpoint the reasons of these changes, and to analyse budget reforms launched by countries.

In this context, Eurydice publishes the report on Education Budgets in Europe for 2015 which provides the most recent data on planned education budgets by country. It makes it possible to identify variations in education budgets within a country between 2014 and 2015.


The “Language Platform”
- the largest free base of tests and exercises of French

Since 1987, the non-profit association “Interculturalis” organises a contest of French for Flemish (BE) youngsters between 14 and 18 years old, called nowadays “Olympiade Flamande du français” or “Olyfran”. Every year some 400 multiple choice questions (MCQ) about contemporary especially spoken French are written. This work of almost thirty years generated more than 10,000 MCQ, without any doubt the largest and richest base of this type existing today.

In 2009, “Interculturalis” signed a collaboration agreement with the French non-profit association “Olyfran, les olympiades de la Francophonie” and the Centre of Applied Linguistics of Hasselt University (BE). Its objective: the creation of an internet site to make this immense amount of material freely available, not only for testing but also for learning French by adding a set of useful tools.

www.linguacenter.org > Language Platform

The aforementioned collaboration has considerably enriched the material of the Flemish Olympiad. To the simple knowledge of the spoken language, the following have been added:
- 85 texts at four levels for reading comprehension
- The interactive approach for the often persistent interference mistakes due to the learner’s mother tongue. e.g. “combinatie” (Dutch) - “combination” (English), “téléphoner quelqu’un” for “téléphoner à quelqu’un” (Dutch)

The structure of the language, through semantic fields, idiomatic aspects in fixed expressions, derivatives and homonyms.
- In order to make all this material accessible for a maximum of “francophiles”, German and English are added to Dutch and French as source languages, Italian and Spanish are being developed.

In the past, the mode “test” allowed in the entry, its translation in the source language, the most frequent morphological ends and heroes … This has been done in different ways.

First of all, a specific dictionary with approx. 15000 entries is available providing parts of speech, the most frequent morphological forms, a sentence illustrating the use of the entry, its translation in the source language and its pronunciation, sometimes even an illustration.
- A button “Help” explains each assignment.
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Finally, more specific linguistic selections are possible thanks to the parameter “aspect de la langue”.

Willy Clijsters, University Hasselt, Belgium “Olyfran, les olympiades du français et de la Francophonie” willy.clijsters@uhasselt.be www.uhasselt.be/ic www.linguacenter.org www.linguacluster.org www.olyfran.org
The Asia-Pacific Institute for Education for Sustainable Development (API-ESD) has had important training activities within the framework of the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) Partner Network 3 in 2015, with the next steps coming up in 2016.

1. National training: to conduct theoret- ical training for officials and principals in national ESD experimental districts

Date: 21-22 November 2015.
Location: Foshan (Guangdong province).
Content: 1) how to develop regional ESD policies and planning (speaker: Director of the Education Bureau of Foshan);
2) how primary and secondary schools develop lesson plans of ESD and experiments on teaching and learning methods (speakers: four principals and six teachers in secondary and primary school);
3) lesson observation and evaluation: there are six teachers teaching Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry, geografia and history, six lessons in total. Participants evaluate these six lessons after observation,
4) observe students’ technological innovation activities about energy conserva- tion and emission reduction.
5) The Ministry of Education and the experts group of Chinese National Working Committee on ESD (CNWCESD) evaluate the experiences in this district and suggest other provinces to learn from it.

Trainees: about 200 principals and teachers of ESD experimental schools in five southern provinces of China.

3. School-based training: the experts group guides 20 schools to conduct school training

From May to October in 2015. Location: Beijing. Trainees: more than 300 principals and teachers from Beijing, Inner Mongolia, Jiangsu, and more.
Content:
1) How to integrate ESD into school- running ideas? (speakers: Three principals of ESD schools)
2) How to design school-based curricul- um under the guidance of ESD? (Four vice presidents in curriculum and teaching de- liver speeches and the main special course are causes and solutions of haze, sustain- able development of urban traffic, green travel, reduction and recycling of school waste; climate change and the responsibil- ity of teenagers)
3) How to teach experimental classes in sustainable learning classrooms? (Eight teachers in subjects like Chinese, math- ematics, geography, biology and chemis- try, have the research and model lessons on ESD, explaining what they have gained by the use of ESD principles. Regional researchers and educational inspectors make comments according to the follow- ing evaluation criteria: students finish the learning and exploration homework before class; students do the oral learning and ex- ploration homework in class; groups and whole students evaluate, modify or sup- plement groups or individuals propose solu- tions of ESD problems. The experts make evaluations and propose the suggestions for improvement.)
4) How to organize students to have practical activity classes on sustainable development topics? (Four groups of stu- dents introduce the results of four the- matic surveys and the four themes are the causes of haze and suggestions for solu- tions, the present situation, causes and solutions of urban traffic jam, the causes of solutions of the pollution of rivers around schools, the survey of the present situation of energy reform from coal to electricity in communities).

4. The next steps of China’s expert team in 2016

1) Create five new national ESD experi- mental districts;
2) Guide five provinces to carry out the training on ESD theories and good prac- tices;
3) Prepare for the holding of The Fourth Asia-Pacific Expert Meeting on ESD and the Seventh International Forum on ESD in Beijing;
4) Create and develop the Chinese in- formation base on ESD and continue to issue the journal, Education for Sustain- able Development in China (six issues per year).
Register for the 11th International Conference Tallinn, Estonia 22-24 September 2016

Full conference information on www.learningteacher.eu/tallinn-conference-2016