Erasmus for All
Talking about Bullism
Building Learning Power
Indigenous Education
Art Workshops
e-twinning is the European on-line community for schools. E-twinning is part of the Lifelong Learning strategy (Comenius). It is an important, but also an exciting way to improve the quality of education in schools: learning and teaching. The net: www.etwinning.net. “offers opportunities for teachers to meet and interact with each other in school projects, special interest groups and online forums. It also offers teachers many opportunities to develop their professional skills via online learning events.”

For teachers, the net provides many education packages and (short) modules and invites you to step beyond your daily routine. The information and suggestions encourage renewal and innovation. Suggestions and ideas are in your own language and focus on national and European education situations. Teachers are invited to become members of a professional chat-room, to share activities they think are important for European colleagues and share information within their subject etc. etc. Activities are already offered in relation to the education of students aged 4 to 18. The e-twinning net is a tool which enables you to learn what is happening in education in lots of countries. It provides many examples of good practice in your own country as well as in others.

The Magazine would like to promote the use of this tool as a way to cross borders, to get ideas for solutions for common European problems in schools and to get in contact with colleagues.

And for those who are ambitious and have creative ideas, there is always the “quality prices festival” on the site.

Gerard de Kruif
Editor

Front page photo
Front page photo: Own source
‘Erasmus for All’
- The new EU Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport from 2014

Covering the programme period of 2014 to 2020, the fourth generation of European programmes is on its way.

The well-known and current Lifelong Learning Programme - with its Comenius, Erasmus, Grundtvig and Leonardo da Vinci sub-programmes - and the Youth programme will be replaced by the new programme “Erasmus for All”.

Erasmus for All is to become the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport proposed by the European Commission on 23 November 2011.

The proposal is now under discussion by the Council (27 Member States) and the European Parliament who will take the final decision. It is due to start in 2014.

Erasmus for All would bring together all the current EU and international schemes for education, training, youth and sport, replacing seven existing programmes with one.

According to the Commission, this will increase efficiency, make it easier to apply for grants, as well as reducing duplication and fragmentation.

Background
The evaluations show that the 2007-2013 EU programmes have already achieved significant systemic impact, far beyond the benefits to individual participants.

International cooperation in higher education has shown that the EU has become a world reference and a source of inspiration in terms of higher education reforms. Moreover, they have been instrumental in promoting the use of innovative approaches inter alia to curriculum development and transparency.

The current complexity of multiple programmes and actions shall give way to a simpler, streamlined architecture, one which strikes a better balance between harmonisation and flexibility, the Commission argues. For example, the Lifelong Learning Programme has six subprogrammes, more than 50 objectives and over 60 actions.

To simplify and streamline, the Programme will reduce the number of activities supported in the 2007-2013 programmes from 75 to 11 (4 mobility activities, 4 cooperation activities, 3 policy support activities). It will use more flat-rate grants to increase efficiency.

Erasmus for All will:
- increase coherence and strengthen the lifelong learning approach, by linking support to formal and non-formal learning throughout the education and training spectrum;
- broaden the scope for structured partnerships, both between different sectors of education and with business and other relevant actors;
- provide flexibility and incentives, so that budget allocation between activities, beneficiaries and countries better reflects performance and impact.

A streamlined architecture
The architecture of the proposed Programme will support three types of key action, which are complementary and mutually reinforcing:

**Key Action 1 - Learning mobility of individuals:**
Mobility, with a focus on the quality, will represent a significant share of the increased overall budget. (Approx 66% of the entire budget).

**Key Action 2 - Cooperation for innovation and good practices:**
There will be a stronger focus on strengthening innovative partnerships between educational institutions and business. For higher education, the emphasis will be on capacity building, concentrating on neighbourhood countries as well as strategic partnerships with developed and emerging economies. (Approx. 26% of the total budget).

**Key Action 3 - Support for policy reform:**
Policy reform will be targeted at: strengthening the tools and impact of the open methods of coordination in education, training and youth; implementing the Europe 2020 strategy and promoting the policy dialogue with third countries and international organisations. (Approx. 5 % of the total budget).

... and two additional, specific actions
In the light of its specific efforts to promote excellence in education and research on EU integration, the Jean Monnet Initiative will continue as a separate activity within the Programme and will share its delivery mechanisms.

Similarly, in order to exploit the potential for simplification and streamlining of the Multiannual Financial Framework architecture, EU level cooperation in the field of Sport will be treated as a separate activity within the Programme.

Why the name Erasmus?
The ‘Erasmus’ name is widely recognised among the general public in EU and non-EU participating countries as a synonym of EU learner mobility but also European values such as multiculturalism and multilingualism.

Rather than preserve an increasingly complex multiplicity of brand names, the programme will be named ‘Erasmus for All’. Public and private bodies within the main education sectors covered by the Programme may use this brand name.

Main education sectors
Furthermore, for the purpose of communication and dissemination, the brand name will be associated with the main education sectors as follows:
- ‘Erasmus Higher Education’, associated with all types of higher education in Europe and internationally;
- ‘Erasmus Training’, associated with vocational education and training as well as Adult learning;
- ‘Erasmus Schools’, associated with school education; and
- ‘Erasmus Youth Participation’, associated with non-formal learning among young people.

Full information
The content of each key action and the division of budget between the key actions are described on the Commission’s website http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/index_en.htm

The European Commission’s full proposal is unusually well designed and of major interest to read. The easy-to-read, 20-page document can be downloaded from the above mentioned website.
The issue of school violence is very topical at present. Nowadays this question arises with particularly high acuity. Society is shocked by the sharp increase in aggressive acts of pupils which in some cases end in extremes.

Unfortunately aggression at schools is increasing more and more. The media constantly floods us with information on bullying and cyber-bullying. School violence has several manifestations. It may be bullying and abuse, physical abuse, beatings, sexual violence, even aggression, with the use of weapons.

In 2009 through the framework of the LLP of the EC, the "Stop@Bullism" project was initiated- LdV PTS project (2009-2011).

The partnership consisted of organizations from four countries: Italy-Phromos Association, Estonia-Estonian Survival Society, Bulgaria-Dia-Sport Association and Turkey-Menderes İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü.

The main aims of the project were connected with the exchange of experience, opinions, points of view and best practices regarding the different educational approaches which could be used by teachers and parents to prevent bullying among youngsters both in their everyday life and in the cyber-net.

In the course of the project the partners examined the situation and the level of bullying at schools in their countries, as well as the methods used by other organizations to overcome this problem. International small scale research on the subject was carried out and a series of workshops was organized.

Regarding the results of the questionnaire “Bullism” could be called any kind of bullying behavior with physical and emotional attack.

The majority of those interviewed answered that the typical characteristics of the bullying aggressor are arrogance and aggression. In these answers there is a mixture of concepts of bullying: some countries define bullying as the physical and psychological violence while others define this violence as just psychical or just psychological.

The impression is that some countries such as Italy and Bulgaria have a conception of bullying more centered on the moral and verbal misbehavior, while some other countries like Turkey and Estonia have a conception of bullying centered more on physical misbehavior.

These results correspond to the form of misbehaviors that teachers meet with great frequency in each country. In Italy, Bulgaria and Estonia it seems that bullying misbehaviors happen partly at schools and partly out of schools.

On the other hand in Turkey there is a clear idea that bullying takes place out of school. In all the four countries a clear symptom of the victim of bullying is shyness, introversion, silence, fear, quietness, while the characteristic of a typical bullying aggressor is mainly arrogance and aggression.

In all countries teachers stated that they were personally concerned about the cases of bullying they came across. To resolve the problem different solutions are proposed; engaging the class in more dialogue; family training and organization of seminars/trainings; more control from pa-
rents and specialists; support of teachers, etc.. For teachers the dialogue with the students seems to be the best solution to face the problem and involving the students’ parents seems to be crucial in most of the countries.

Cyber-Bullying is a problem that concerns most of the teachers in all countries. The point of view of the teachers in relation to resolving this problem is: “to make students more aware of it” and “involve the parents of bullying students more in this phenomenon”.

The reason why Cyber-Bullying takes place on the net is mostly because youngsters tend to use the internet in an almost unconscious way. When compared with traditional bullying it is more anonymous and implicates more violence.

As a final product of this project a Common Curriculum (in EN and the national languages) was developed - to make teachers, parents, educators and operators more skilled to face the problems of Bullying and Cyber-Bullying in the course of their professional activity and to help the young victims overcome possible aggressions.

The full content of this Common Curriculum can be found on: www.prhomos.org; www.dia-sport.org

In conclusion
What students can do?
• Help others understand that name-calling, teasing is unacceptable behavior and know that they have the right to be treated with respect;
• Refuse to go along with bullying or harassment and watch out for those being bullied. Tell a teacher or adult if it is happening;
• Gather their friends to help speak out against bullying and harassment.

Parents should:
• Discuss examples of bullying with their children and help them understand the consequences of bullying;
• Model appropriate behavior;
• Watch the child for signs of changed behavior.

Tatiana Veltchikova
The DIA-SPORT Association

The DIA-SPORT Association (DS) was established in 1995 in Sofia, Bulgaria as a widely represented non-governmental organization. The main activity areas are vocational training/adult education; social integration of disadvantaged groups; youth and civil society.

The main goal of the Association is to perform a socially rewarding activity for: conducting research and studies; human resources development; promoting the moral and cultural values; youth volunteering and civil society; improving the accessibility, quality and efficiency of education; and supporting the social integration and realisation of each individual.

The DIA-SPORT Association has over 15 years of experience in the field of consultancy, education and training on national and international level (seminars, pilot studies), VET, ICT, work with disadvantaged groups (socially disadvantaged, gender equality, disabled, minorities, migrants), positive solving of conflicts and differences, intercultural dialogue.

Members of DIA-sport are professionals in the field of education, research, economics, ICT, health, etc., highly qualified and experienced teachers and professors.

The Association is working in collaboration with many educational institutions in Bulgaria, such as schools, universities, the Ministry of education and science, the Ministry of labour and social affairs, other NGOs, etc.

The DIA-SPORT has a wide range of experience in over 26 centralised and decentralised European projects under different programs. The DIA-SPORT is a member of 6 EU networks.

Members of the association have managed nine Socrates/Comenius and Lingua school projects from 2000 to 2008. The DS has been the initiator and organizer of many consulting services, sport and rehabilitation activities, fests/sport events for young people/children with socially-significant disabilities as well.

Considering our organizational skills and proven abilities for team work we would like to become a partner in future projects under the LLL (Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig, Comenius, Transversal KA) and other EU programmes.

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I am Hector Ancelmo, I teach in the rural Primary School Benito Juárez in Los Reyes municipality in the state of Michoacan, Mexico.

This is a bilingual primary school with 146 children, 47% are girls and 53% boys. Their mother tongue is mainly P’urhépecha. Outside the community they speak Spanish. I have been a teacher for 13 years.

Currently, I teach 4th and 5th grades. I continued to study and participate in training programs to develop myself as an educator of indigenous children. I like to apply what I learned.

In the past year I had great results with my students when we organized a vegetable garden which provides an opportunity for them to use their learning in sciences as well as in agricultural practices of their rural community.

The children became engaged and enthusiastic about working together and curious about their experiment.

How could Hector share these results with other teachers in Mexico working in other states with indigenous children?

He wanted to share with others indigenous educators the results and impact of the vegetable garden on his students’ learning across several classes.

For the first time in his professional life, last October he was able to meet with others in Mexican indigenous bilingual educators in the Second Conference of Professionals in Indigenous Educators, organized by the General Directorate of Indigenous Education (known in Spanish as DGEI). At the Conference he made a presentation about his project.

For Hector, talking about his experience and hearing about other teachers’ accomplishments was a way to identify best practices to improve the quality of bilingual teaching to Mexican indigenous children.

Mexico has over 112 million people, about 10% are indigenous. Over 50% of the indigenous population is poor. Education provides a venue to overcome poverty. There are some 68 linguistics groups and over 300 varieties of indigenous languages. For bilingual teachers the great challenge is to transform the education and make it pluralistic, flexible and inclusive of the children’s indigenous heritage with the quality to meet national standards of other children nationwide.

How does networking among indigenous educators transform education in Mexico?

Since 2007, the DGEI has been working with bilingual teachers in indigenous schools at two levels.

At one level, the DGEI’s director, Dr. Rosalinda Morales-Garza, an example of a networker, has been linking with multiple federal and state public education counterparts to integrate indigenous education to policy and programs nationwide.

On another level, she is promoting networking among bilingual educators themselves at the community, state and national levels to create opportunities for
teachers to exchange information on best practices among peers. For Dr. Morales-Garza, transforming education means starting by transforming the educators.

Networking among teachers so that they learn from each other has been a key strategy to improve the quality of indigenous children’s education.

**Network of Professionals of Indigenous Education**

DGEI created the Network of Professionals of Indigenous Education (NPIE). Yesid Sierra, Director of Training and Development of the DGEI, refers to the NPIE as a means to unleash the potential of the intellectual capital and experience of indigenous teachers as a group, as a way to value their practical knowledge.

Networking in person has been a major strategy to achieve this goal. Many of indigenous teachers work in isolated rural areas in multigrade classes. The network is a venue for these teachers to gather and share knowledge, to disseminate it, to address common problems and share accomplishments.

The DGEI has organized among other activities, two major annual conferences in 2010 and most recently in October 2011 in Quintana Roo, Mexico (http://basica.sep.gob.mx/dgei/start.php?act=notapp257).

For teacher Hector Ancelmo, as for the hundreds who participated, the Conference was an opportunity to have a personal voice and learn from other teachers who are committed to quality of indigenous children’s education.

The Network seeks to transform indigenous education and make it culturally and linguistically pertinent to all indigenous children. The Network brings together educators who are committed to provide quality to indigenous education.

The NPIE has a website and a virtual network (http://www.educacionindigena.com/WEB/Inicio.html).

However, it is the personal networking that has proved to be most valuable for teachers in enabling them to access other ways to network through internet. Teachers in indigenous education did not have a professional association, now they do. Those teachers who were asked what they liked best about networking and the conference stated that the personal interaction, getting to know each other and laying the foundation to leap forward to virtual networking were the most valuable aspects.

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*Teacher Hector Ancelmo and his students create a vegetable garden*
The conference programme is composed of 25 sessions with more than 35 presenters from 14 countries, who will contribute with their knowledge and experience in presentations at high quality workshops and lectures.

In addition, we are delighted to welcome six distinguished, internationally recognized keynote and plenary speakers to the network’s 8th International Conference:

* Dr. Edward de Bono (Malta), regarded by many as the leading authority in the field of creative thinking, innovation and the direct teaching of thinking as a skill. He is equally renowned for his development of the Six Thinking Hats® technique and is the originator of the concept of Lateral Thinking;
* Prof. Ursula Staudinger (Germany), Vice President of Jacobs University Bremen and Founding Dean of the Jacobs Center on Lifelong Learning and Institutional Development;
* Prof. Joan Freeman (England UK), Founding President of the European Council for High Ability (ECHA);
* Mr Brian Holmes (the EU), Head of the European Commission’s EACEA (Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency) which manages parts of the EU’s programmes, such as the Lifelong Learning Programme ( LLP);
* Prof. Charles Hopkins (Canada), United Nations University (UNU) Chair on Education for Sustainable Development, developing Regional Centers of Expertise in (ESD) globally.
* Prof.em. Harm Paschen (Germany), professor of Systematics of Educational Science at Bielefeld University.

The 8th International Conference in Nice, France on 10-12 May 2012

The Learning Teacher Network’s 8th International Conference, with the title ‘Creating Knowledge and Wisdom in Education and Training’, will be held on 10-12 May 2012 in the elegant environment at the four star Boscolo Hotel Plaza in Nice, France.

Registration for the conference

Hereby we invite teachers, leaders, trainers, researchers, and policymakers in education and training to the Nice Conference 2012. The registration period is open.

Registration can be made either on-line on www.learningteacher.eu/nice-conference-registration or by submitting the hard copy registration form by e-mail or fax.
A number of approaches bring basic numeracy and literacy skills to Malian children (over 50% of the population of 15.5 million) whose school enrolment rate has quadrupled in the past twenty years.

There are community-based schools and centres for education for development, all teaching in national languages (there are about one dozen major languages with developed transcription systems), systems using local radio stations to encourage reading, teacher-focused improvements including self-organized continuous pedagogical development groups, and capacity building for the staff of formal teacher training institutes.

Among them is an as yet little known programme called Aflatoun, originating in India. It has been working in Mali for four years, so far in three regions and with selected schools.

The originality of Aflatoun is that it hinges on a virtual person, Aflatoun. This key character, with no defined age, sex or national origin, is immediately accepted by children regardless of their age. Programme materials include a games manual that is another innovation in Mali where limited education funding does not run to many books or materials other than the strict minimum.

Both academic material and ethics teaching are easily linked to the programme: sometimes as proposed by grades 1 through 8 programme manuals, and sometimes as suggested by the children themselves.

The concept has also been used in Mali for counseling children with specific difficulties. We believe that personalizing an approach working with abstract concepts of responsibility and rights, in this case through an unlikely ancient Greek philosopher, shows great promise in equipping even very young children with the rudiments of life skills.

One teacher was faced with the problem of having 30 second-graders learn the alphabet as a precursor to reading. He confessed to us that he is totally untrained for this task and usually after two weeks, he is so frustrated that he resorts to threatening children with a whip that he keeps on his desk (common practice although forbidden by Ministry of Education regulations).

Last year he drew the Aflatoun image on the blackboard, with letters of the alphabet in a balloon coming from his mouth. The children learned with a speed that amazed the teacher, so that he told us Aflatoun was responsible for banishing the whip! Now the children are introducing Aflatoun into mathematics exercises instead of anonymous persons who need to do calculations concerning articles on sale in the market.

Other teachers have spotted that Aflatoun can be used as a trigger for such basic attitudes as deciding to participate in class. Again the pervasive adult/child barrier intimidates children, particularly girls, and the notion of Aflatoun can encourage them to risk making comments on what is happening in class.

One woman teacher told us she encouraged very shy girls to become members of the Aflatoun committee, and their voices were heard in class for the first time. A talented woman teacher who had been teaching Aflatoun to receptive sixth graders, was disturbed to find her new assignment was a class of 60 first graders (none had been to pre-school) who had no special teaching materials in a bare classroom and simply cried to go home.

Our teacher used Aflatoun to attract their attention and interest and she succeeded in teaching them the alphabet before they left her for the second grade. The programme is so familiar that when a traditional local masquerade costume is given an Aflatoun “look”, the children show no surprise, but just make way for him to take part in their activities. In contrast, a teacher who “zooms” in class causes a sensation.

In one small private school opened to cater for the children of particularly poor families, one child was identified as the source of disappearances at break time of small items from other children’s school bags. Despite previous unsuccessful interventions, she finally managed to overcome this temptation after a conversation with her teacher about Aflatoun’s recommendation to respect other children’s property.

Group savings are common in Mali, but like informal initiatives everywhere, they are fragile. In Aflatoun schools, after observing the way children save and spend their group’s money (generally entrusted to an adult), the subject is discussed with children in fourth grade onwards, introducing use of writing and calculating skills to keep records, fixing an objective for saving, and budgeting how the money will be used.

Aflatoun manuals reinforce these principles and again act as the anchor for teaching skills that are not taught elsewhere in Mali. Formal savings group rules involve a partner microfinance organization in one region, and include safeguards such as limits on deposits without parental knowledge. In a country with low literacy levels, this is not just a way of teaching life skills but also an introduction to financial ethics.

Child centred education has become a reality for young teachers and not just something the student read about in textbooks as a way of engaging and educating children.

Violet Diallo
Aflatoun Mali team
The Olympic games will kick off in August next year. There will be many athletes in London from all over the world participating and competing at the highest level. Every muscle has been trained for many years, in the best circumstances with the best teammates and trainer-coaches in order for the athletes to perform at the highest level.

What can education learn from this? Can we train pupils and students to learn well (nurture) or are they ‘pre set’ and good learners by ‘heritage’ (nature)? Can we train the learning muscles and create a learning culture in such way that the outcome will be very satisfying for pupils, parents and teachers?

Lumius, the consultancy department of Stenden University in the Netherlands, was triggered by the concepts of Building Learning Power, developed by an English organization called TLO and inspired by Prof. Guy Claxton.

Building learning power is about helping young people to become better learners. It is about creating a culture in classrooms - and in the school more widely - that systematically cultivates habits and attitudes that enable young people to face difficulty and uncertainty calmly, confidently and creatively.

Students who are more confident of their own learning ability learn faster and learn better. They concentrate more, think harder and find learning more enjoyable. They do better in their tests and external examinations.

Building Learning Power prepares youngsters better for an uncertain future. Pupils need to have learnt how to be tenacious and resourceful, imaginative and logical, self disciplined and self-aware, collaborative and inquisitive.

Framework
Within this context, BLP provides two frameworks, created by Professor Guy Claxton. In this article we describe the first framework: the learning power mind.

The image of the powerful learner does not claim to be a comprehensive theory of learning power. Rather it aims to be a pragmatic tool that illustrates some of the ingredients of learning power and provides a basis for discussion.

Many schools that have made use of this framework have developed and customised it in a host of creative ways.

This framework is essential if teachers are going to think precisely and creatively about how they can become more effective ‘learning power coaches’. Just as fitness is a basic springboard for all kinds of more specific physical skills, so too is learning power a general-purpose launch-pad for all kinds of more specific learning activities - both in school and out. So the first framework provides a design template for that launch-pad which schools can then extend in their own ways.

“BLP has stimulated us teachers to discuss our views on education and to share ideas about what we actually do in the classroom.

And it has also made us aware that we need to support the pupils in taking responsibility not only for what they learn, but above all how they learn. BLP provides us with the tools to make the pupils realise what steps to take next.”

Annemieke van der Linden, teacher of English, Willem Lodewijk Gymnasium Groningen
**Examples**

**Working on ‘perseverance’:**

- See Three Before Me
- ‘Imagining’
  - Draw me the answer

**Children’s learning language**

The most important thing about BLP is about the children having a language to talk about learning. By understanding when they persist and what makes them give up, or when imagining might be helpful in solving a problem, they come to understand their role and responsibility in learning.

**High achievements**

We at Lumius are now ‘learning’ with 4 schools (primary and secondary) and are enthusiastic about BLP. Teachers acknowledge that it is not simple; you have to let go of some of your ‘mental concepts’, but working on the 17 dispositions (see picture, the natural talents which pupils and teachers embody), is very satisfying.

By the way: research and experience in England has shown that in the end school results are significantly higher at all levels!

So can we train ‘good learning’ by pupils and students? It is our belief that it is possible to learn and train our natural talents and be prepared and ready for the near and more complex future in which we and our pupils will perform.

On to the next ‘Building Learning Olympics’!

**Drs. Anton de Vries**

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**Lumius**

More information:

www.buildinglearningpower.co.uk/

Read about it:

The Learning Powered School - Pioneering 21st Century Education - by Guy Claxton, Maryl Chambers, Graham Powell, and Bill Lucas

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‘Train the Trainer’ session at Lumius, March 2011
In 2004 the Turkish National Science Curriculum was revised and renewed in line with the constructivist movement. The name of the curriculum has been changed to “Science and Technology Curriculum”. The aim of Science and Technology education is to enable students to use and understand scientific and technological literacy through the development of scientific and technological knowledge and understanding, making connections between science and technology, understanding and developing awareness of the relationship between science, technology and society.

With the new revised science curriculum a student centered approach was implemented. The emphasis is on the importance of design and technology. Not only is teaching scientific concepts important but teachers are expected to develop pupils’ knowledge of scientific methods. It is stressed that by using both conceptual and procedural knowledge students will be able to design technological products.

With this development new attempts have been made. Project based science education has also been emphasised in the curriculum. In order to encourage teachers to use project based education, they were given in-service training.

Additionally, the Ministry of National Education organizes ‘Science Fairs’ countrywide throughout the school year. Primary and secondary students undertake projects with their adviser teachers and present them at the fair.

The arrival of the new curriculum saw teachers trained in other concepts such as ‘nature of science’, ‘inquiry based learning’, ‘real life learning’ and ‘learning in informal settings’.

The Turkish Higher Education Council has also been very supportive in funding projects about the concepts mentioned above. For example a number of projects have been carried out under the frame of ‘Science for Society-Nature and Science Schools’. Such schools are organized for students, student teachers and teachers. Being in this developmental process makes it possible for students to become better researchers.

Then ‘Children’s Universities’ were established to provide more students with opportunities to join science schools. Some of the children’s universities have become members of EUCU.NET (European Children’s Universities Network) project which is supported by the European Union FP7.

The projects (Science for Society) and the philosophy of children’s universities helped to promote the idea of outdoor education which is the area that teachers need to be trained in at present. The number of ‘Science Museums’ and centers of ‘Science and Art’ for gifted students has increased throughout the country.

The developments have not been confined to schools but are also evident in other faculties of education. The government has supported the project for accrediting the Faculties of Education.

One of the activities associated with this project was encouraging a huge number of academic staff, who were funded by the Higher Education Council, to conduct research in different countries in Europe and the USA.

This provided researchers with the opportunity to share information data from different projects in various countries. All of the developments in science education and the changes mentioned above were a result of the success of this project.

Currently, most of the research carried out is about real life learning and outdoor science education. It is hoped to continue researching this area to achieve even greater improvements in science education.

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Famous and Favourite Learning Proverbs

I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn. Albert Einstein

Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself. Chinese Proverb

I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand. Chinese Proverb

Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime.
Some time ago, Robert Fulghum wrote a poem titled All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten. It speaks of the basic life skills and assets that we all gain at that early age, such as playing fair, sharing, not hitting, cleaning up after yourself, and to "learn some and think some."

Simple in its message, but profound in meaning, it has become a primer for thought and unknowingly highlights the most pivotal barriers to child development and global education -- the lack of school structure as well as access to and quality of learning.

The stark reality is that many children, especially in the developing countries where Children International works, may not have the opportunity to attend school, much less kindergarten. Even in those instances when children have access to education, several factors keep them far below their learning potential. After teaching for many years, and now working to support international education programs and policies with a humanitarian organization, it is clear to me that the need has never been greater for educators, policy makers, communities, and families to unify and challenge the current educational systems in order to improve the lives of our children.

At Children International we recognize this need and work to align our program strategies with global initiatives at a local, national, and international level to help address and eliminate some of these barriers to a quality education. Our mission is to provide children and youth in poverty with opportunities to develop into healthy, educated, and self-reliant adults who give back to their communities and ultimately break their cycle of poverty.

Our goals are to increase age-appropriate enrollment and school completion, provide the skills necessary for job readiness, and to supplement local educational systems in providing additional programming that teaches positive social practices. We help meet the health, nutrition, and basic material needs for these marginalized, at-risk children and youth so they can focus on school, be active, and learn. This is the primary step in any child readiness quotient – for, as every good educator knows, a hungry and sick child is not a child who is ready or prepared to learn.

The second step in accomplishing these objectives requires an integrated footprint of programs which promote early childhood stimulation and alleviate the barriers to accessing education.

Such barriers include the payment of school fees, school supplies, textbooks, transportation fees, and uniforms. Additionally, we assist in providing necessary resources to schools and teachers, build libraries and computer centers, and offer math, computer, financial and reading literacy programs.

And yet, even with all of these supplemental programs, we understand that pure academics are not enough for well-rounded development. Conflict resolution, communication skills, problem solving and project management techniques, and many more healthy life assets and skills are addressed through the use of sports, leadership and health activities, and other youth programs.

What does Children International expect in return? Hope. Hope that, as professionals and communities, we can bring about change. Hope that kids will have the right to just be a kid and will dream again. Hope that teachers will continue to show up every day with the same love and passion for their students and teaching, but be better equipped.

And ultimately, hope that someday children all around the world will be able to echo the words of Robert Fulghum and say, "All I really need to know I learned in kindergarten," because they were given the opportunity to attend.

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A new service for the Education community in Europe

Eurypedia: A European Encyclopedia on National Education Systems

Eurypedia is a new Eurydice product and aims at presenting the most accurate picture of national education systems across Europe.

Eurypedia offers comprehensive descriptions of 38 European education systems, usually at national level, but sometimes also at regional level. All information is available in English with some national information available in the language of the country or region concerned.

Aiming at providing the most accurate picture of education systems and latest reforms in Europe, Eurypedia is a resource tool which is regularly updated and completed by the Eurydice Network and its National Units. Powered by MediaWiki, it involves education experts and national ministries responsible for education from across Europe.

This first version is currently under completion. All articles will be finalised in December 2011.


Bounce n’ Boogie “Good Woods”
- a wonderful teaching resource

The Bounce n’ Boogie book “Good Woods” with CD is a valuable teaching resource for anyone involved in arts education for children aged 3-7 years.

The central concept of Bounce n’ Boogie is to develop rhythm and musical sense in children through fun and enjoyment. This book and CD explore various aspects of dance using a woodland theme. Birds, animals and plants are used to enhance aspects such as travelling and locomotion and to explore rhythmic dance patterns. Creativity and imagination are integral to the dance ideas presented in the book and educators are advised to encourage the children themselves come up with new dance ideas and movements.

The book introduces the sixteen tracks that are on the CD, initially outlining the aim and emphasis of each piece of music and then going on to explain each dance and the routines involved. Technical terms and the exact musical structures for each piece are also included.

Bounce n’ Boogie is the brainchild of German dance teacher, Nina Brunner who has been teaching dance for over ten years in both Hamburg and London, identifying creative dance work with young children as her passion. The music tracks have been developed by Bastian Eifeld aka Bassi along with the expertise of Nils Meissner. Bassi is a musician and kindergarten worker and has been working with young children for many years, developing creative dance music.

Brunner bases her teaching of dance on the philosophy of Rudolf van Laban who proposes that everyone is a dancer. Therefore all children are included in the dances, expressing themselves to the best of their own ability and creativity.

This book and CD is a wonderful resource for all those working with young children in nurseries, pre-schools, primary schools or dance classes, especially those who enjoy engaging in funky and creative movement with children. The book and CD can be purchased through the project’s own website www.bouncenboogie.info.
The successful Creativity training course in October 2011 had 39 participants. Review:

After travelling to Malta, for some of us it took more than 15 hours, for others only 5 hours, we all came to our hotel, the Victoria Hotel in Sliema, which for sure was a great place to stay. Accommodation and the meals were very good, hotel staff were always there to help, and the seminar room was big enough for all of us. God kept an eye on us, so we had wonderful weather most of the time, in contrast to many parts of Europe.

The group of participants was fantastic. We all got to know each other in a very short time. And we all felt like we knew each other for a long time, and we soon became used to working together.

So the framework (and not only Edward de Bono’s framework) for a successful seminar was in place, and for me with the experience of many, many teacher trainings, this was definitely the best one.

The content, creativity and learning was brought to us by three very professional teacher trainers, Susanne from Germany, Tania from Malta, and Magnus from Sweden.

We started to learn more about creativity and the importance of an adequate learning environment. We tried out many techniques for creativity, worked on our personal learning question and learned about experimental science and brain exercises.

We also had the opportunity to see some of the beautiful island of Malta with friends in the group, on our own or during the scheduled visits to such impressive places as Edward de Bono Institute (which included a very interesting lecture), our excursion to the medieval City of Medina (my favourite!!!) and the creativity center at St. James Cavalier.

We also heard a great lecture from our fellow participant, Kurt Teugels from Belgium, who opened our eyes to the ways of teaching to the multiple intelligences.

Besides the very impressive knowledge of all participants, which increased our own creativity through communicating about our personal lives and experiences in teaching, we all had a wonderful time thanks to the lovely surroundings, the very interesting programme with great lecturers and the nice hotel which offered more than just the elegance of its British past. There was a wonderful view from the terrace, directly from the pool.

And, it might sound a bit funny, but for those of you who were not so lucky to have been there with us, the spirit of Edward de Bono is still around us. And I bet all of us have already prepared something we have heard about...6 new hats in every classroom or enough material to find out about multiple intelligences.

I think, no, I am sure that I am not the only one who ordered a book of Edward de Bono’s and others, and for sure, all of us have brought the spirit of these wonderful days into our classrooms and into our homes.

As a participant of the course I have learned that creativity gives everybody a new chance to work on old themes by using new ways and methods that will bring new and better results, not only evident in assessment data but also in the immeasurable increased motivation of our students.

Thank you all so much,

Your friend and colleague,
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"Creativity gives everyone a second chance"
Art workshops
- opportunity for creative expressions of students

Arts education is very important for every human being, and its effects are visible in various areas of life. The independent execution of works of art develops creativity and initiative, stimulates the imagination, enhances sensitivity and teaches self-confidence. Art work is a bridge to understanding the arts, to stimulate public awareness of culture.

Schools often lack employers who can guide students in their creative explorations. Their teachers in art-like disciplines often focus on the quality of the artistic creations themselves, instead of focusing on the thought that provoked them. Also, the teachers are often not artists themselves, being more concerned with the pedagogical issues instead of creativity itself.

UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor launched an appeal for the Promotion of Arts Education and Creativity at School as part of the construction of a Culture of Peace "There is a lack of mediation and creativity everywhere, especially in schools. The arts are missing from our lives and we are giving way to violence".

Today we are clearly and strongly aware of the important influence of the creative spirit in shaping the human personality, bringing out the full potential of children and adolescents and maintaining their emotional balance - all factors which foster harmonious behaviour.

At a time when family and social structures are changing, with often adverse effects on children and adolescents, the school of the twenty-first century must be able to anticipate the new needs by according a special place to the teaching of artistic values and subjects in order to encourage creativity, which is a distinctive attribute of the human species. Creativity is our hope.

For the first time in the Private Salesian High School in Wroclaw in Poland, in response to the broad interests of students, art workshops were organized. This initiative also encouraged teachers to take an active part in it.

During the workshop, students learned the method of decoupage and created their own stained glass windows. Decoupage is the art of decorating an object by gluing colored paper cutouts onto it in combination with special paint effects such as gold leaf.

Currently, many students do not have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities and develop their artistic interests. The school program also does not help in this respect because there are no art lessons at secondary schools in Poland.

However high school students do prepare various posters, flyers, newsletters, and therefore have some opportunity for creative expression. Students design and perform their own Christmas cards, or cards presenting different ideas.

Students also participate in performances at the school under the guidance of teachers. Together with the teachers they go to the opera and theatre. A new creative activity was introduced during biology classes: making models of a cell. Students had the opportunity to make a cell model using different methods. The best ideas were awarded.

The best opportunities for European teachers to get to know how to stimulate their students’ creativity are courses organized by international network associations, for example the Learning Teacher Network.

This network organizes courses on cre-
ative educuon. The course programme inclu-des modules such as personal creativity biography; the concepts of creativity; the creative classroom - tools for pupils; creativity and the European framework; discover personal talents; multiple intelligences; how to organise creative learning environments; and how to develop creativity back home. Many courses are organized by national centers of teacher development.

The important role of schools is to develop students' artistic interests. If the educational work is carried out by the school in an interesting way, the students show interest in many areas.

Schools’ teaching resources increase and enrich students’ knowledge of diverse content, and thus create an opportunity to discover new interests. Information contained in the curriculum, both general and specific, is reflected in the interests of students.

An important factor influencing student interest is the working methods used by the teacher. If the teacher closely observes his students, he can see their interest in certain things and he gains a valuable insight into shaping and developing these interests.

Artistic interests develop intellect, enhance a better understanding of the phenomenon of the surrounding world, educate sensitivity, observation and assessment skills, and prepare for the reception of aesthetic experiences.

Artistic interests lead to the formation of artistic taste, which induce a state of emotion; learning and experiencing artistic beauty brings a feeling of pleasure, a value to the artistic elements and an active at-
titude to artistic phenomena.

It is important to shape the artistic interests and preferences of children for the general culture of society in the future.

It is necessary to shape artistic interests due to the fact that artistic heritage survival, which is so connected to the culture of society and humanity, is dependent on the audience. A development of art depends on the interest and appreciation of society.

All artistic extracurricular activities develop forms of artistic interests; arts, painting, sculpture, pottery bands, song and dance ensembles, theatre or film clubs. Extracurricular activities and clubs not only inspire creativity, but also promote a school environment and build a bond with the local community.

They give students and teachers a fun opportunity to spend free time together, and thus establish relationships with each other.

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Lines Grow Long for Free School Meals in the US

Millions of American schoolchildren are receiving free or low-cost meals for the first time as their parents, many once solidly middle class, have lost jobs or homes during the economic crisis, qualifying their families for the decades-old safety-net program.

The number of students receiving subsidized lunches rose to 21 million last school year from 18 million in 2006-7, a 17 percent increase, according to an analysis by The New York Times of data from the Department of Agriculture, which administers the meals program.

Eleven states, including Florida, Nevada, New Jersey and Tennessee, had four-year increases of 25 percent or more, huge shifts in a vast program long characterized by incremental growth.

The Agriculture Department has not yet released data for September and October.

Students in families with incomes up to 130 percent of the poverty level — or $29,055 for a family of four — are eligible for free school meals. Children in a four-member household with income up to $41,348 qualify for a subsidized lunch priced at 40 cents.

Among the first to call attention to the increases were Department of Education officials, who use subsidized lunch rates as a poverty indicator in federal testing.

This month, in releasing results of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, they noted that the proportion of the nation’s fourth graders enrolled in the lunch program had climbed to 52 percent from 49 percent in 2009, crossing a symbolic watershed.


Welcome as network member

A platform for educational progress

The Learning Teacher Network is an international, educational and non-profit network and association.

As an international platform the network unites professionals in education in the ambition of sharing and creating front-line teaching and learning in order to develop education and training.

Trust, respect and fun

One main characteristic of the network is the welcoming and excellent atmosphere when people communicate and meet. The guiding words that illustrate the network are “trust, respect and fun”.

All professionals in education and training are welcome

The network embraces practitioners in school, trainers, researchers and other educational experts within the whole range of education from pre-school to universities.

The good atmosphere and the composition make the network unique. Membership is open to anyone who supports the objectives of the network.

Mission

The Learning Teacher Network embraces
* Education for all
* Education for lifelong learning
* Education for sustainable development (ESD)

www.learningteacher.eu

Membership

You and/or your institution are warmly welcome to become a member of the Learning Teacher Network.

Application for membership can be made on-line on the network website or by filling in and returning to us the registration form.

The next issue of The Learning Teacher Magazine will be published in March.
Articles may be submitted no later than February 15th 2012.
Pre-school Education in Albania (part 1)

Preschool education is the Cinderella of the Albanian education system. Approximately only 35% of the country has preschool education facilities for 3 to 6 year olds and most of these are situated in the higher populated cities and not in the rural areas.

Kindergartens and crèches used to be provided by the state but with the fall of the communist regime these also died due to a lack of finance, migration of skilled professionals and the reduction of the number of children living in rural areas.

Partnerë për Fëmijët in 2003 began to work in the north east districts of Diber, Kukes and Tropoje to provide early childhood care and development services where there was no kindergarten or the existing structure failed to meet the demand. Thus the educational and social community spaces known as the Gardens of Mothers and Children Centres were opened.

The Gardens of Mothers and Children Centres were set up in homes of respected members of the community who were willing to set aside a room each morning for the use of children aged from birth to 6 years old and their mothers.

The educators were respected mothers many of whom only had high school education but were trained by early childhood specialists from Northern Ireland with ongoing support and training from Partnerë për Fëmijët’s staff.

The centres offered children aged 3 to 6 years old the opportunity to learn through play, exploration, communication, choices and developed their skills and knowledge in the 7 domains of learning.

In addition the centres offered women, grandmothers and adolescent girls a safe space for them to gather and learn about childhood development, nutrition, vaccinations, stimulation for young children, family planning, communication and play with babies and young children.

Mothers came with their under three year olds, their infants and babies and were able to explore the toys and their skills. Health services were also provided to women, young children and expectant mothers, thus improving their knowledge of common childhood illnesses and how to prevent or treat them, the stages of pregnancy and how to care for newborn babies as well as providing medical check-ups of the children.

The centres became the hub for child centred activities, for parents’ informal training and information sharing, for the centres to develop Boards of Parents who work together towards improvements in the centres and to lobby for resources from the local government or to raise funds so the children can have an excursion or a large piece of equipment for the centre.

When the initial funding finished the centres needed to become sustainable and to secure resources. Many of the original 25 centres closed due to the communities’ lack of motivation to continue and to look for support from the local government and/or themselves. Many local governments and small project funding paid the salaries of the educators and enabled the provision of didactic materials.

The centres gradually moved from the private homes into schools or public buildings and this led to a change in the dynamics of the centres as well as the main sources of funding. The mothers, grandmothers and other adults stopped coming to the centres, perceiving that now the centres were in school that once more the education of their children was a state role and for professionals only and did not need their input.

Parents and families are not usually welcomed into schools and therefore this is a barrier to their involvement and participation in preschool activities.

So mothers and children under 3 years old once more remain in the home or in the fields without a stimulating play and learning environment.

If anyone would like more information about the work of Partnerë për Fëmijët they can contact the Director Ingrid Jones on ijones_ppf@yahoo.co.uk or www.partnerperfemijet.org

The article is to be continued in The Learning Teacher Magazine 1/2012
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www.learningteacher.eu/nice-conference-2012