



IPLE's 21st International Seminar

Hilversum / Netherlands
October 5 - 9, 2009



The German projects of *Productive Learning* are sponsored by the European Social Fund.
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SUMMARY OF THE SEMINAR

by Heike Borkenhagen



IPLE's 21st International Seminar took place from October 5 to 9, 2009, in Hilversum (Netherlands). There were 50 participants from 7 different European countries: from Bulgaria, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Holland and Portugal.

The seminar was organised in co-operation with the Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum (ROC van Amsterdam). In spring ROC van Amsterdam started the new project of *Productive Learning in the Netherlands* with 30 students. The participants of the seminar had the opportunity to visit the project in Kerkelanden.

The seminar focused on the question "How to get back young people to learning?" Referring to this question, participants exchanged and created new ideas in which ways *Productive Learning* in different countries supports young people, who left school too early, by developing learning motivation and a different attitude towards learning and challenges waiting in future.

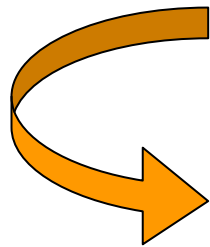
During this week a small group was concerned with the development of the program of the next INEPS congress.



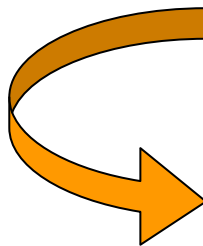
INTRODUCTION INTO THE TOPIC

by Heike Borkenhagen

HOW TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE BACK INTO LEARNING?



Why did these young people turn away from learning?

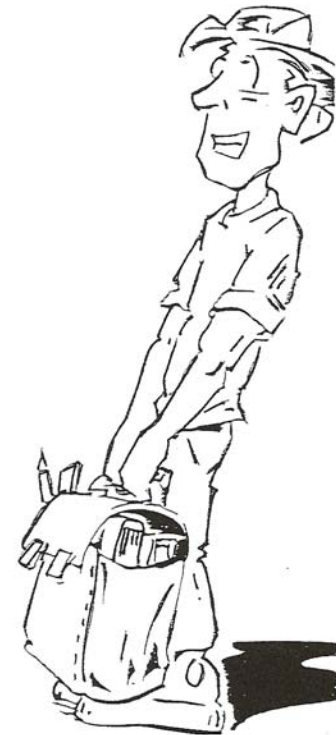


Why did they turn their backs to school?

SCHOOL VITA OF PUPILS UP UNTIL THEY ENTERED INTO PL




- two thirds retaking at least one year in school
- no prospect of a school leaving certificate
- withdrawal and absence from school



TRUANCY - A PHENOMENON LINKED TO PUBERTY

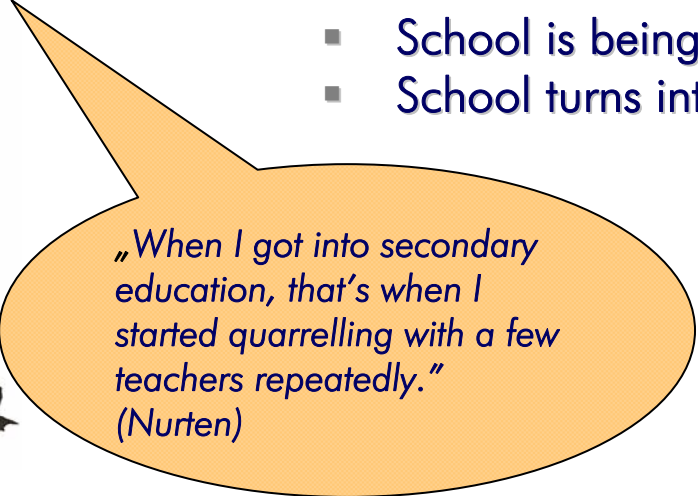
- emotional connection with school decrease significantly during puberty
- willingness to make an effort in school decrease significantly during puberty
- importance of peer groups increases



*„We smoked joints day in and day out. And, in the end, I eventually stopped going to school altogether.”
(Steffen)*

UNSUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES BEFORE TRUANCY

- School is being put up with
- School turns into the 'enemy'



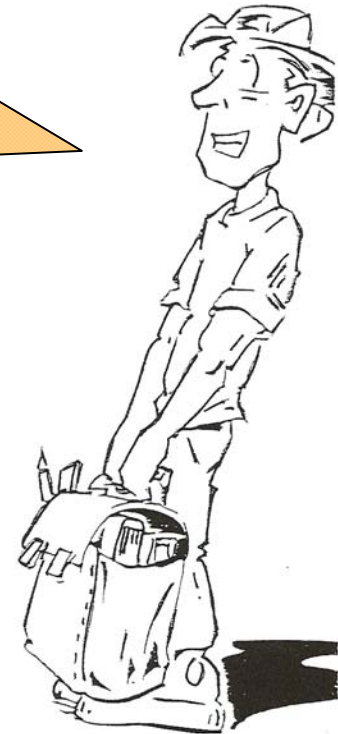
*„When I got into secondary education, that's when I started quarrelling with a few teachers repeatedly.”
(Nurten)*



SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

*„And then, there were more and more problems with school, with my parents, with everything. So, I simply dropped out of everything, and did next to nothing in school.“
(Steffen)*

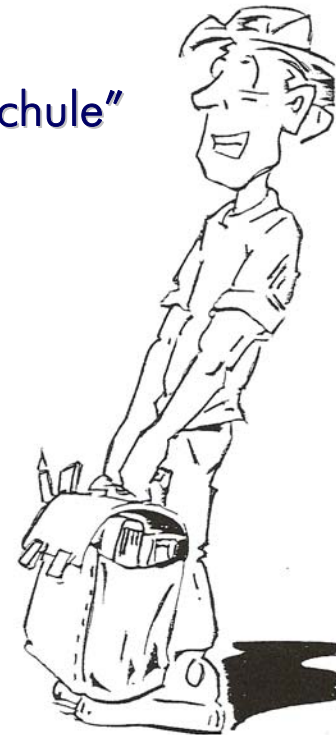
- recurring experiences of failure
- vicious circle
- problems in school and outside of school intensified in a co-related fashion



CONSEQUENCES



- pupils ended up in “Hauptschule” or “Sonderschule”
- feeling of failure
- conflicts between young people and parents
- feeling of resignation



NOTHING VENTURED – NOTHING GAINED



- Pupils generally regarded achievement as something positive
- Pupils had no fundamental problem with the principle of achievement at school



! Problem for these pupils occurred when their performance was assessed on the basis of marks!

CONCLUSIONS



In the past, I wanted to become class representative - but then my teachers started saying to me that that was not possible because of my poor German. (Nice)

- School marks, self-image and enjoyment found in learning are closely related
- Adjustment of self-assessment in line with performance assessment from teachers
- If failure in school and social failure coincide, then a negative self-assessment becomes inevitable

REASONS FOR SCHOOL FAILURE FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLES' POINT OF VIEW

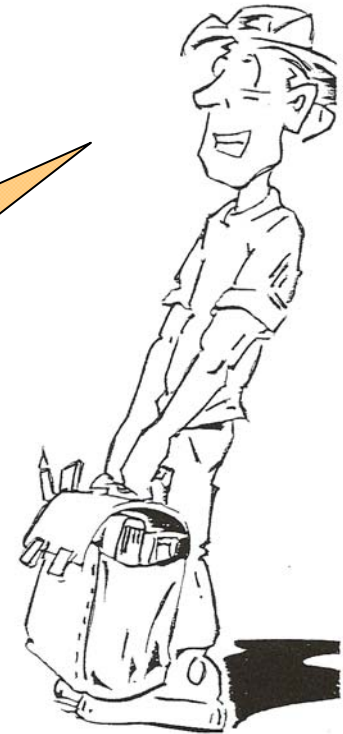


"When the teacher asked who wanted to write on the black board, then I did not even raise my arm. I was simply too lazy for that. I rather kept talking with my classmate." (Susi)

- Personal behaviour

- Individual dispositions and problems

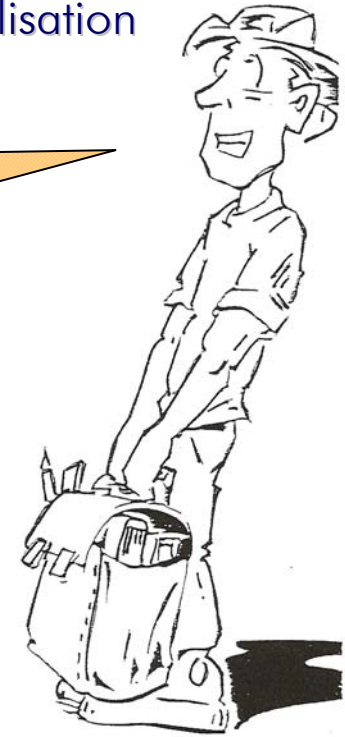
"At that time, I was badly ridiculed and mocked because I was so fat. And that meant that my performance in school took a turn for the worse too." (Thomas)



- 'Structure' School

- ▶ Lack of Individualisation

"It was really extreme in Grammar School. Teachers rattled quickly through new material and if somebody did not get it or did not pay attention, well, then he or she was fucked. Teachers did not approach you and explained anything again. The only chance was to ask your classmates to have it explained to you afterwards." (Jim)



- ▶ Asymmetrical Structure of Interaction between Teachers and Pupils

"Somehow, the teachers are the gurus. You must be subservient to them. They put total pressure on you. They don't let you decide anything." (Miss Sophie)



SCHOOL AND FAMILY



"My mom drinks a lot of beer. And often she did not wake me up in time for school, or she wanted me to stay at home because she wanted to sleep while I was looking after my younger brother." (Samanta)

- co-relation between failure in school and conflicts within the family
- children were without mentor or guidance whilst important decisions about their future were being made
- family support facilitates overcoming of vicious circle
- raising children in a way that avoids conflict reinforces the vicious circle

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WITH SCHOOL

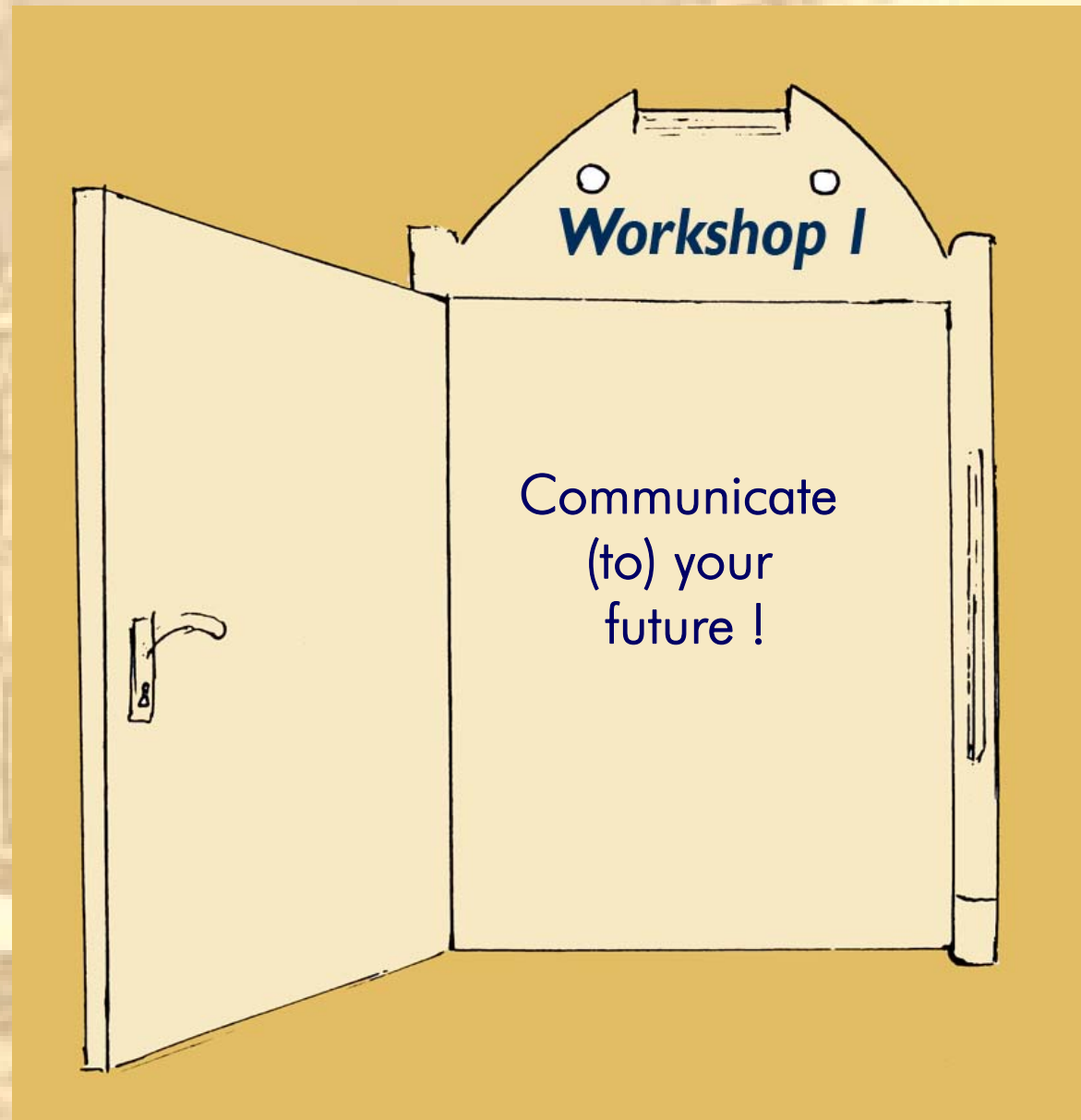


- link to the learning person
- room for manoeuvre and the opportunity to make decisions themselves
- relationships in school



A sepia-toned illustration of a canal scene. In the foreground, two boats are on the water. The background is filled with multi-story buildings with many windows, typical of a European city. The overall style is that of a woodcut or engraving.

RESULTS OF THE WORKSHOPS



Facilitators: Egbert Jahn, Friederike Jungtow

Summary of Workshop 1

“Communicate (to) your future” was meant to meet the interests of those educators who feel like facing problems with the use of English and especially with the ways to motivate their students to learn this foreign language. It was surprising to see the participants being lovers and professionals of English language. This was the main reason why we decided to skip the planned program in order to try an experiment which we called “The Talking Shirts”. What happened in communication when we tried to fulfil our plan to get t-shirts printed and a movie of our experiment recorded, cut and ready made within the two workshop days and only with the help of the staff and students of the ROC is shown in the PowerPoint presentation.

The heart warming and encouraging resume was, that you only have to communicate to organise. Sounds not so easy but in fact we figured out that using our hand, feet and charm to describe was more important to communicate and to show what we wanted (who knows the correct words for topics like tailoring, textile printing etc.?) But sometimes it happens that misunderstandings lead you to new perspectives, stories and may even help to solve problems.

We want to thank all supporters of our project!



At first our communication was full of confusion.

We started with the basics.

There are so many things to talk about ...



We wanted to

- explore our new environment
- check the possibilities in Hilversum
- try out how communication works with a speaker and if needed the help of a language mediator and a language supervisor
- be productive
- have fun
- get everyone involved
- have a satisfying result



We decided to make a film – for technical communication we needed a fire wire. We asked in the computer and media department for help.

It was difficult to explain the details as a layman.
There are so many technical terms.
But all together we succeeded.



Anyhow – we were able to say or show what exactly we meant.



The media department could help us. By the way we got involved in the production of a horror movie and hypothesis about the fact why Dutch know English better than Germans (they were traders and watch only subtitled movies).

Some more people were involved. These two nice guys promised to help us with the film.



.. and more people were involved. This time in the fashion department.

Maraikje was VERY friendly and promised us all needed support.



Then we rushed off to buy the material we needed.

Next morning we wrote down what communication means for us and what it needs. These statements should be printed on our t-shirts.

Name	Comm. is	Comm. needs
Egbert	essential	patience
Zhecdora	existence	needs
Petra	art	common interest
Sylvia	understanding	common ground
CARISTAN	to act	people
JEREMIE	the essence of life	Curiosity
Uwe	everything	wishes tolerance

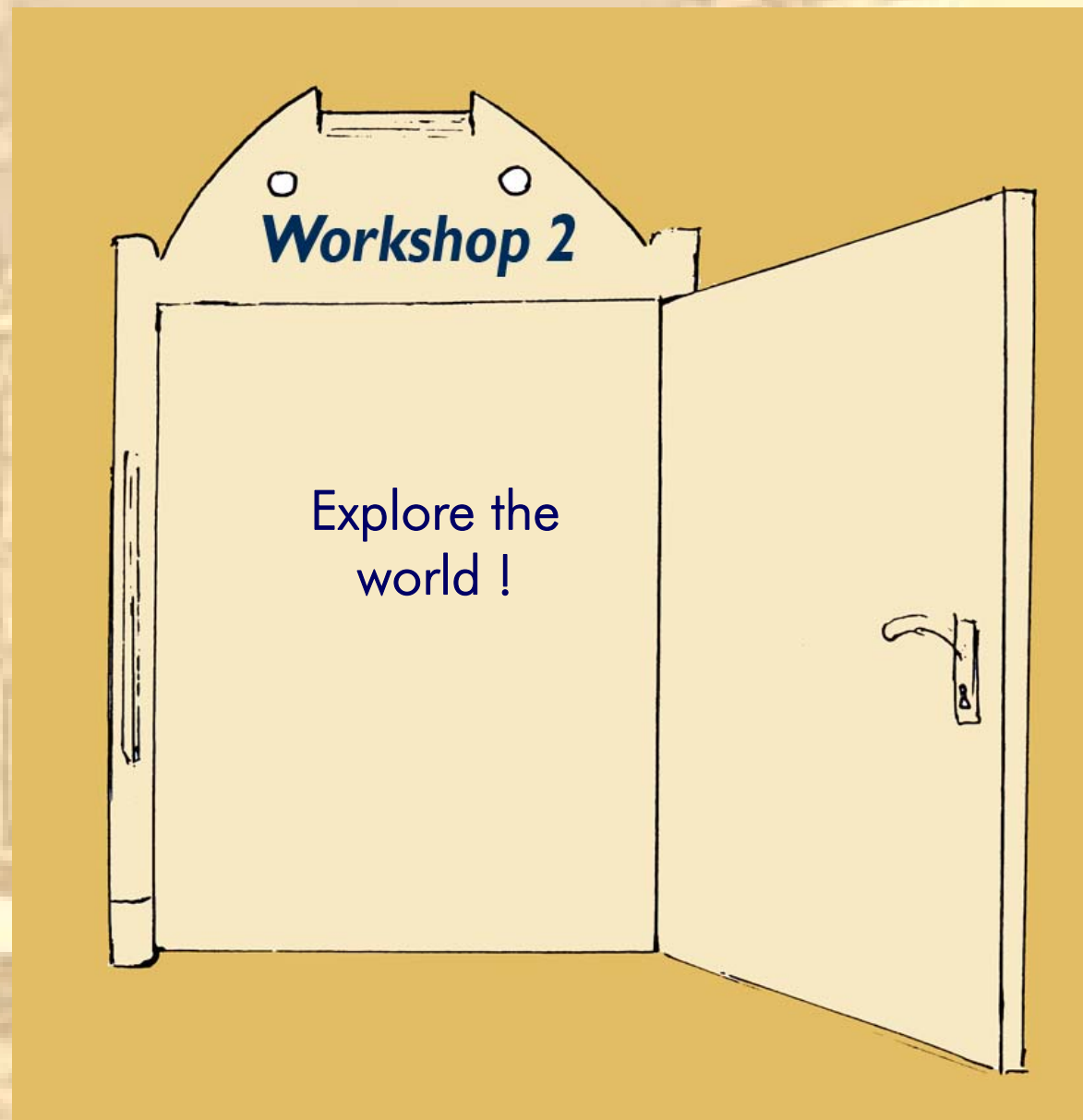


Theodora and Uwe went to cut the film.

Christian, Petya and Friederike tried to print the papers for the t-shirts.



Sylvia and Egbert prepared the Power Point presentation.



Facilitator: Sabine Liedtke

Summary of Workshop 2

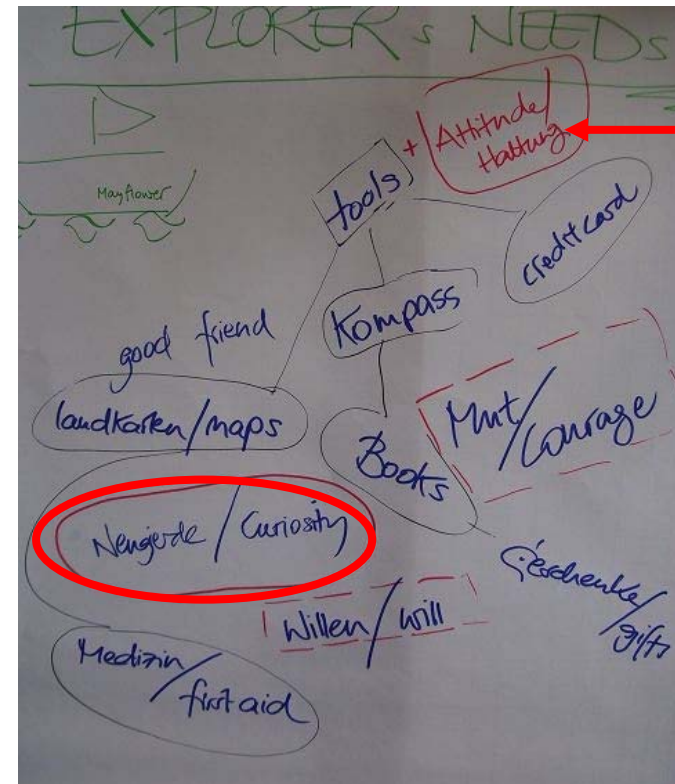
In workshop 2 “Explore the world” we worked out how we can initiate the discovery and the exploration of practical places and how learning in this real life situations can be started, how it can be continued and lead to individual learning processes. We did this with the help of the metaphor “Explorers” and defined in a first step their needs: which are a certain *attitude* – namely curiosity - and special tools.

Educators in *Productive Learning* – especially when they start with a new group – often make the experience, that most of the young people have lost the ability to be curious. The participants have the chance to learn in real life situations but are mostly unable to discover interesting things and questions about their practical places.

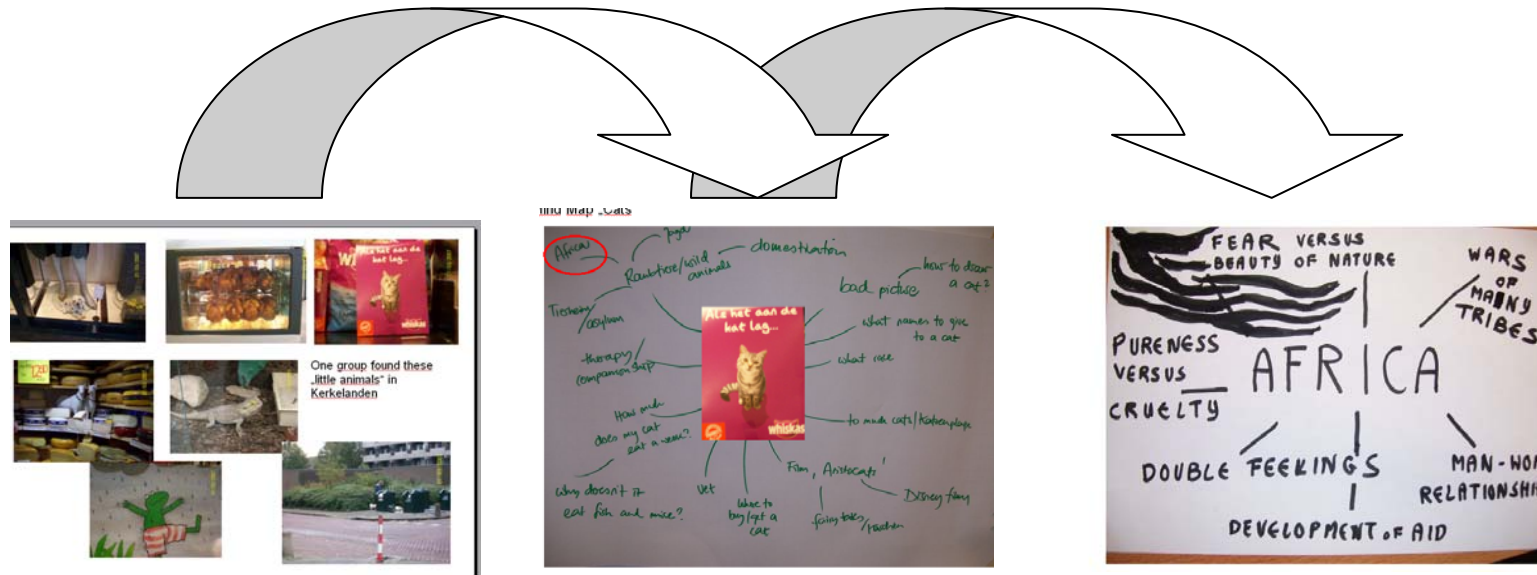
Productive Learning gives young people the chance to start learning (again) in real life situations but the participants have to learn how to “profit” by the surrounding of their practical places – which provide a lot:

- things such as equipment, products, materials, tools, machines...,
- operations
and of course
- adults in different positions and professions

One possible strategy to help young people to open up their practical places is to focus the attention on one special aspect.



This strategy was put to the test by the educators in the workshop. In different groups they spread out and discovered the surrounding of Kerkelanden under different aspects. Their tasks were: find red things, find little animals, find English words, find rooms and their functions – and take a picture. We then took one example and worked out, how to develop mind maps out of a pool of discoveries.



The most persuasive aspect in this workshop was the experience the educators made by themselves by exploring the surrounding of Kerkelanden. As a result of the common work on the challenge to explore the world the educators want "to take it easier", that means to allow more "extensive" perspectives and questions, and even work with irritations.

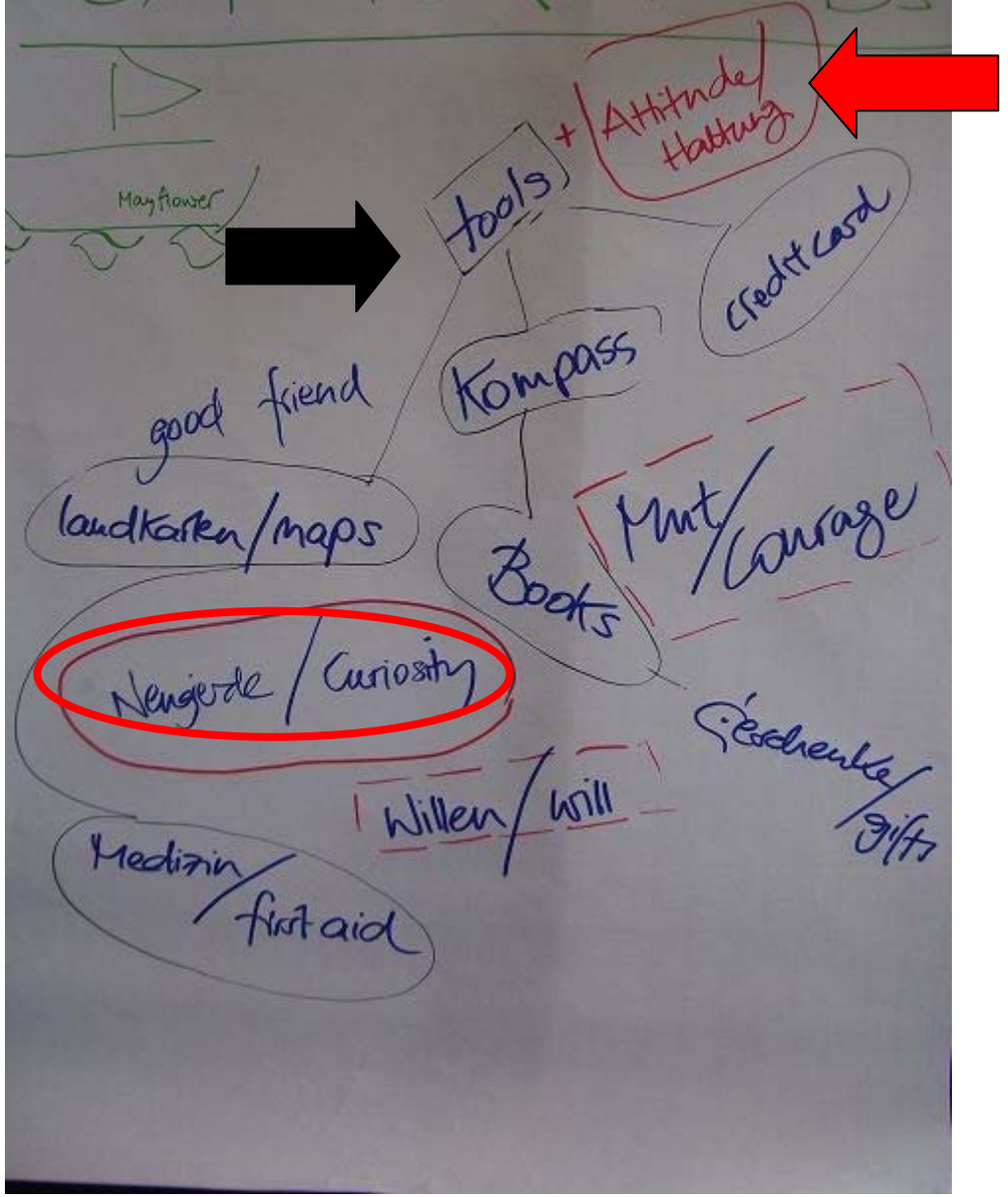


doris petramartina hines carmen boaze keronaaltjen mariannet wan hellen

*We explored the world
(of KerkeLanden)*



EXPLORER'S NEEDS



Mayflower

good friend

landkarten/maps

Negerde / Curiosity

Medizin / first aid

Willen / will

Kompass

Books

tools

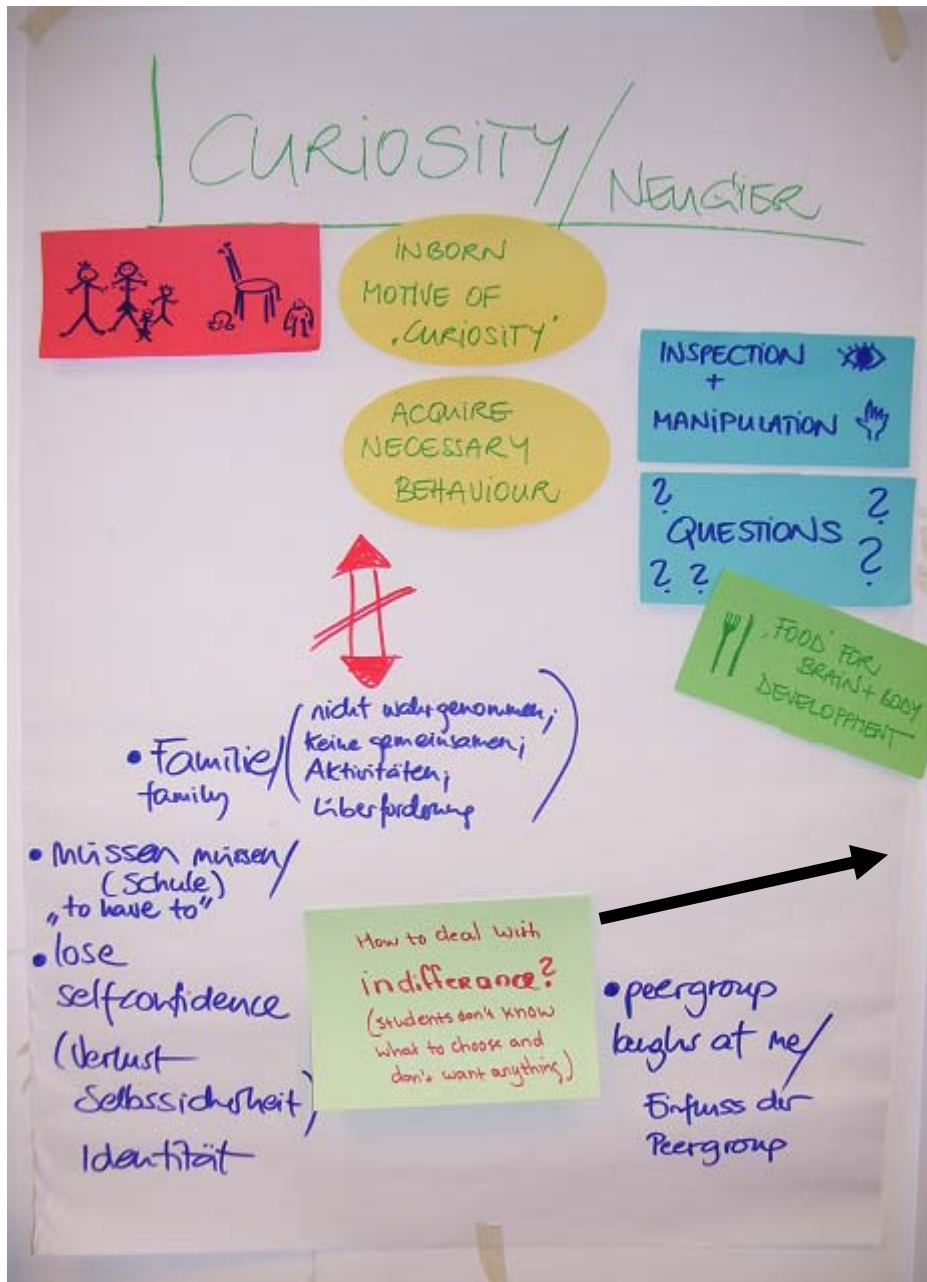
Attitude / Haltung

credit card

Mut / courage

Geschenke / gifts

Millions saw the
apple fall, but
Newton asked why
!



Explore!

BUT:

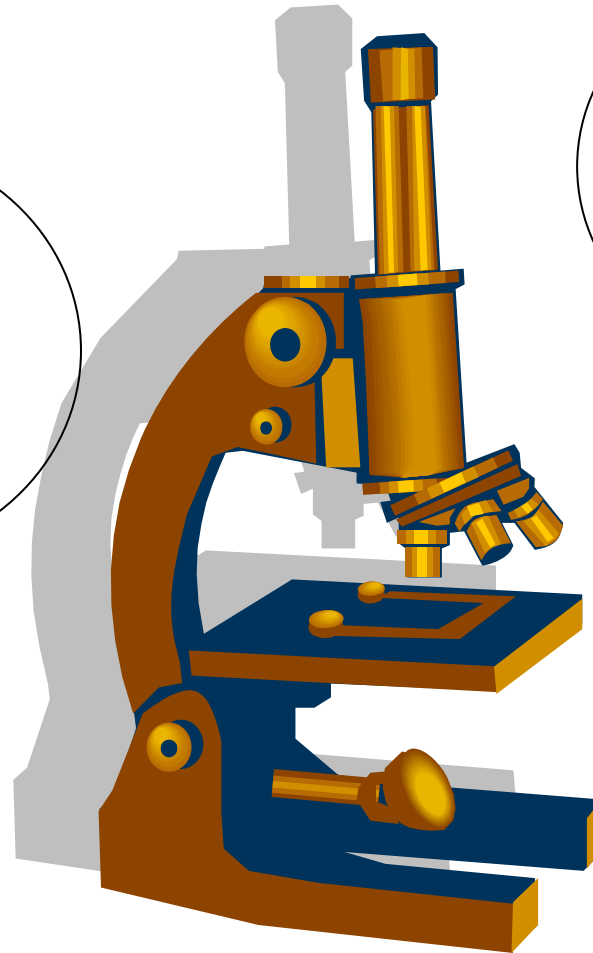
How to deal with indifference?

Important strategy: focussing...

... on english
words ... Look
for them at ...

... on red things
... Look for them
at ...

... on little
animals ... Look
for them at ...

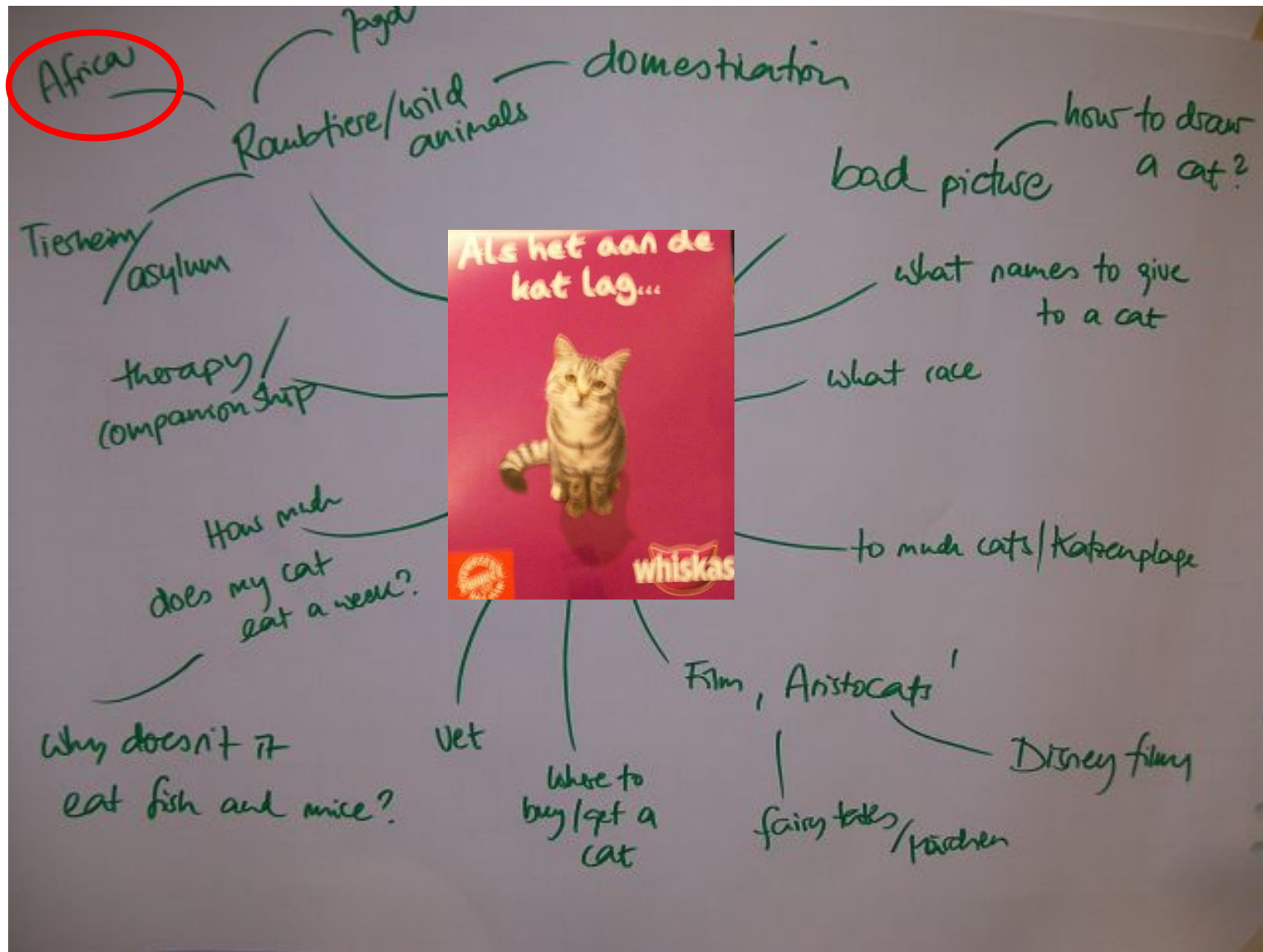




One group found these „little animals“ in Kerkelanden

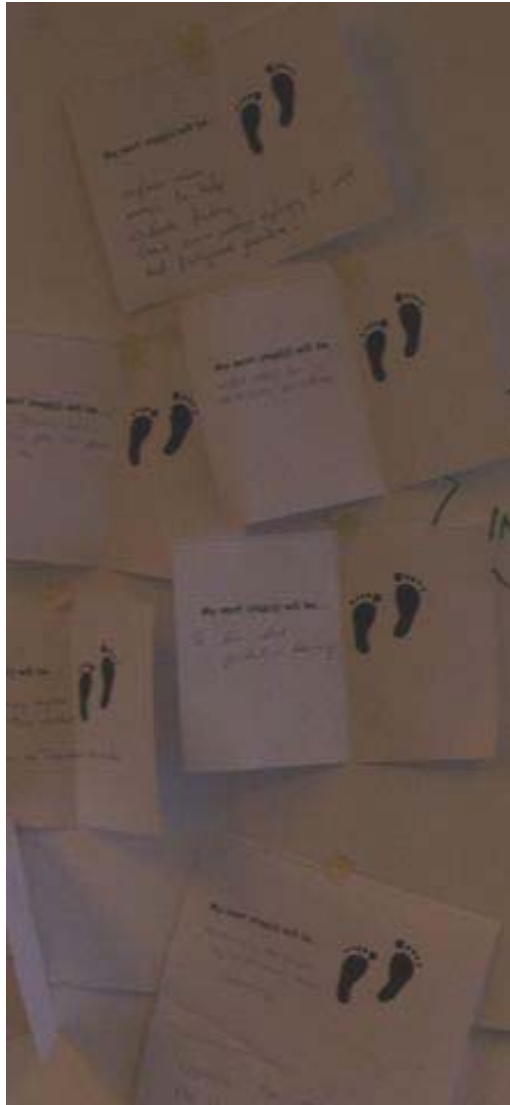


Mind Map „Cats“



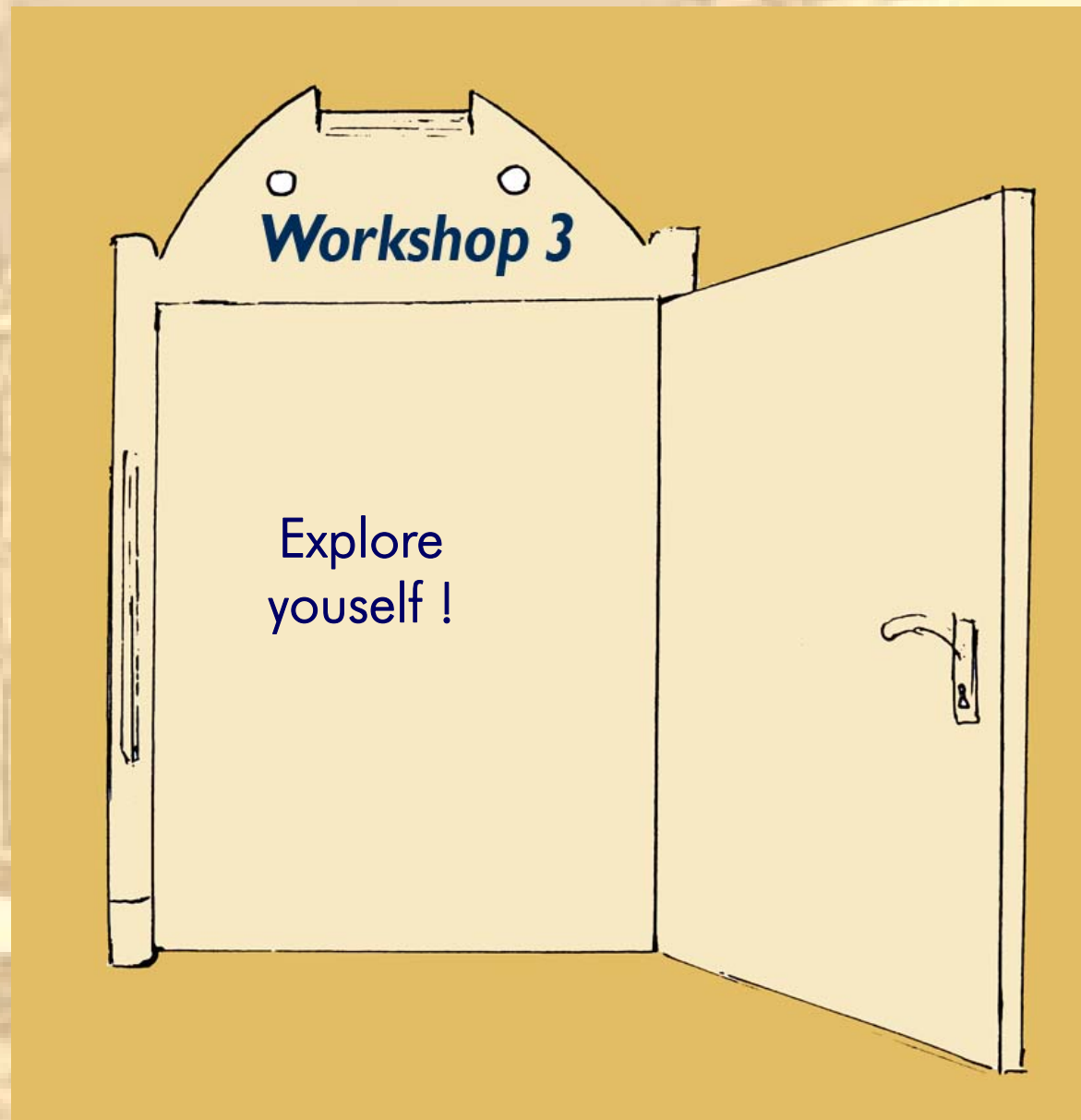
Mind Map „Africa“





Our next steps are:

- „Take it easier“
- Explore the motivation of parents
- Integration of parents
- Explore more ways to arouse curiosity and develop questions
- Educators and students exchange (with focus on work)



Facilitators: Gabriele Ansorge, Michaela Seifferth

„We keep in mind only that
what we did practically“
(J. W. Goethe)

- Do you really know how you learn?
- Are you sensible of your learning methods?



What a disorder!

- How can we come to a certain order?



What did we do?

- Talking about all kinds of experiences
- Exploring the surroundings



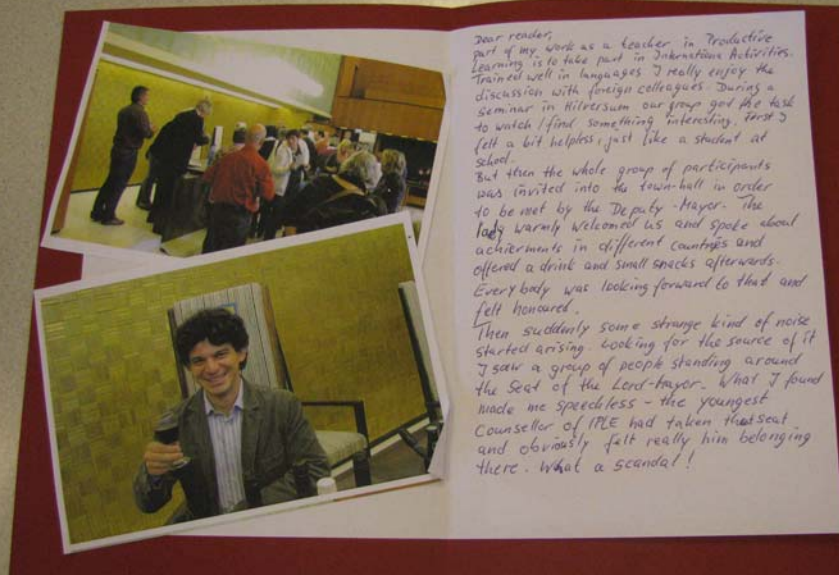
- Discussing students' material
- Talking about theoretical aspects



● Practical work – creating one's own mini-portfolio



Our results



Looking back
now I can say,
my intension to work
on that task changed
during the period of time
I dealt with it. I now
feel much more relaxed.
The first step
always is the
hardest!



Gästebuch

Lined area for writing in the guest book.

If it's to be -
it's up to
You!

What did I do - What did I learn?
It's a little bit embarrassing, but I wanted to try to smoke a special cigarette. So we went to a coffee shop and Daniel, one of our facilitators 😊, bought a cigarette, but (only) with „gras“. He, that means three punns, smoked these cigarette together. I think it's not necessary to describe how we did it! 🟢 That's what we've done. But what did I learn? At first: It tasted not very well, it scratched unpleasant in my throat, but not quite, no pleasant feelings - nothing! 😞 But that's not completely right - we had our fun - because of Daniel 😊! You could ask himself? And now I know, that: It doesn't taste, I don't like it and I don't need it. And we supposed, that the effect depends on how you feel before smoking and especially how much „gras“ is inside! As proof I chose this sketch, because it shouldn't look nice!

30min/brief / Reflexion



Gästebuch

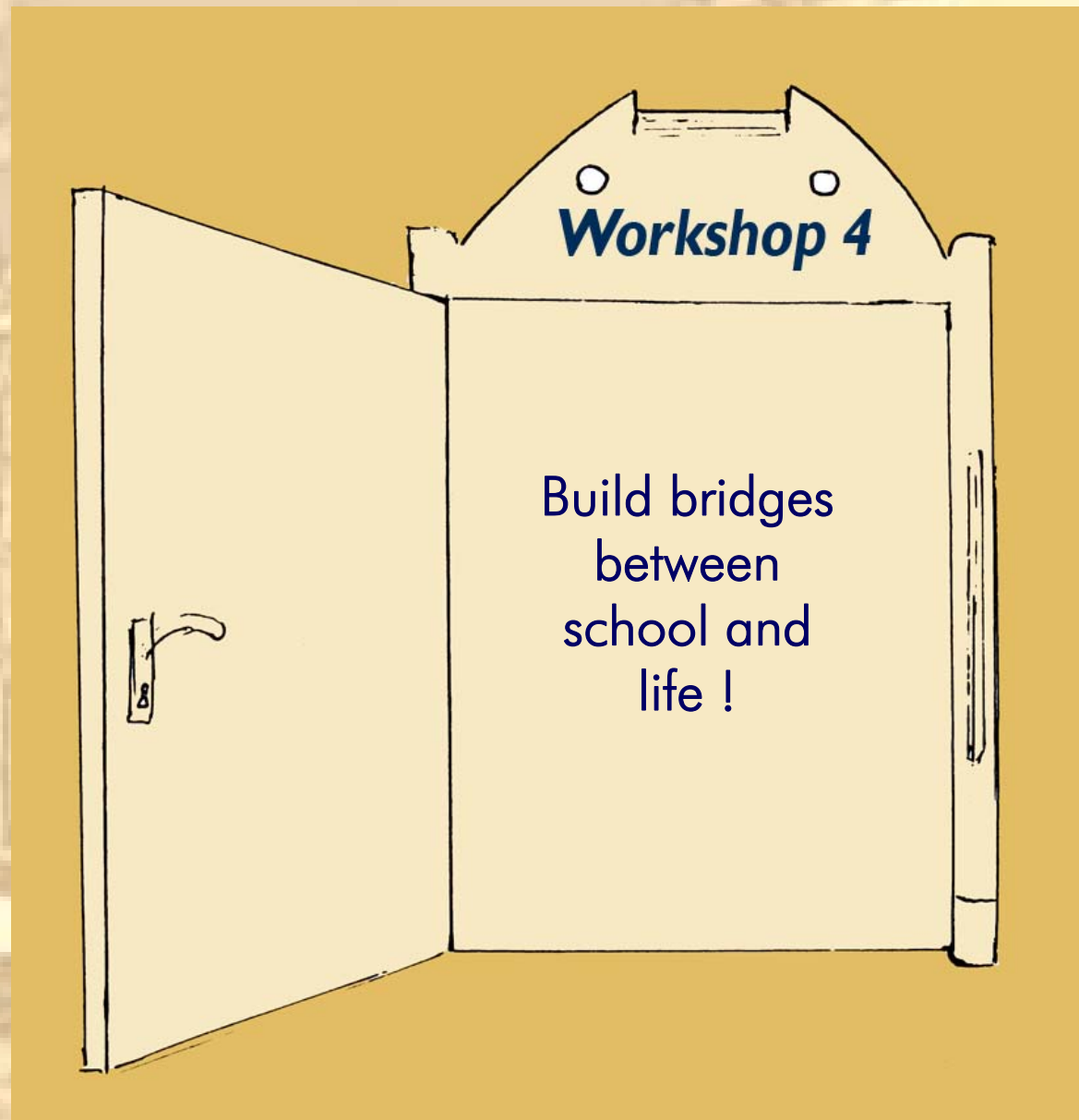
Dear Karin, I stored your experience - you described it in a very pleasant way. Like the "outcoming" product itself!

Detlef

Wenn du Erfolg haben willst,
begrenze dich.

Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), franz. Literaturkritiker

If you want to be successful
restrict yourself.



Facilitator: Daniel Guzmán

Summary of Workshop 4

Build bridges between school and learning

The Workshop has been attended by nine participants from three different countries: Estonia, Germany and Greece. After a short welcoming and introduction the participants started with an “appreciative inquiry”. Together with a partner of choice they exchanged about their personal experiences of successful learning situations; situations which are worse to keep in mind.

These very heterogeneous situations happened in school and outside of it. Some even started as a frustrating experience. But they all had sustainable effects and an experience of success later on. The seminar group tried to evaluate, which conditions or aspects did have influenced the situation to be special.

Participants discovered several points in each experience and they compared these points with another. For example there often has been an important person, often the teacher. One has been very patient; the other explained very well, another was very strict with high expectations. They all were different, but just right for the learning person.

Comparing all experiences and important aspects the participants discovered other “jewels” of successful learning experiences:

Helping person:

One jewel is the helping person which contributes the learning process (s. o.). Thereby it's not important to define his/her task or the help itself. It might be different in every case and depends on the needs of learning person. This could be a guide through the process, a strict advisor or a patient listener. But in every case the helping person gives feedback; “stays by” the learner and is interested in his/her process.

Success:

In every described situation success was the reason to remember this situation; especially an instant success. Thereby in some situations success followed far later. First these situations have been remembered as hard, horrible or stress. But the recognition of these situations changed afterwards with the posterior experience of success.

Learning with fun:

This jewel surely is connected to other jewels. For example learning situations are fun, when you “earn” appreciation after success. But fun could also depend on involved persons or interesting topics.

Fix structure:

A common agreement for being a necessary contribution to positive learning experiences has also been the “jewel”: “fix structure”. A fix structure works like a frame; on the one hand it offers freedom inside an on the other hand it and shows the borders. Depending on the needs of the learning person whether the freedom inside the frame is motivating or the strict borders – pushing the learner to make (more) efforts.

Self confidence:

In every learning experience the self-confidence to manage the task (or important steps) was supporting the efforts that have to be made.

Access to proper materials:

The participants remembered the importance of “access to proper materials” for their own learning processes. The better this access, the more professional learning could be supported. For some participants the access increases by owning the materials, but this couldn’t be generalized.

Environment, where I feel good:

Additional to the access to proper materials the environment, in which the learning process takes place, influences the experience to be a positive or successful one. Belonging to the environment there are effects caused by other learners and persons as well as effects by rooms / decoration / noise and so on. Depending on the individual needs a different environment has to be prepared for an optimal support.

Respect:

Respect between the persons belonging to the learning process is a necessary condition for a relationship that influence learning in a positive and harmonic way.

Idols:

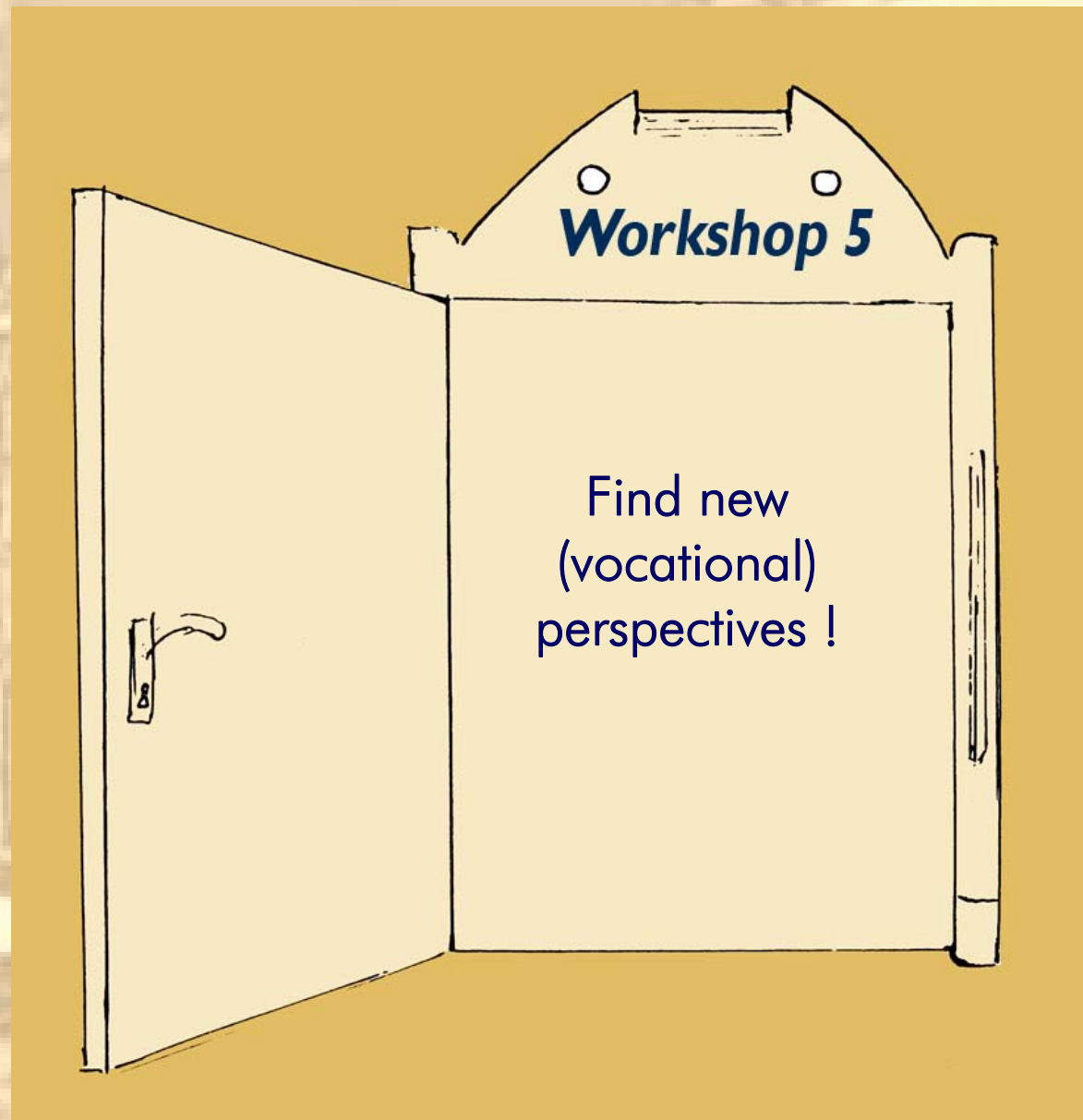
In most cases, the helping person was an idol, too. But an idol is more; it is some kind of vision that motivates you to give more effort in order to reach your vision.

In most cases, the helping person was an idol, too. But an idol is more; it is some kind of vision that motivates you to give more effort in order to reach your vision.

These jewels were extracted by the reflection of positive personal learning experiences of the participants. They are our answer to the questions what does successful and positively remembered learning mean. We all agreed, that this jewels combined with the approach of *Productive Learning* – following they way from activity to learning – leads to something like the “perfect world” of learning.

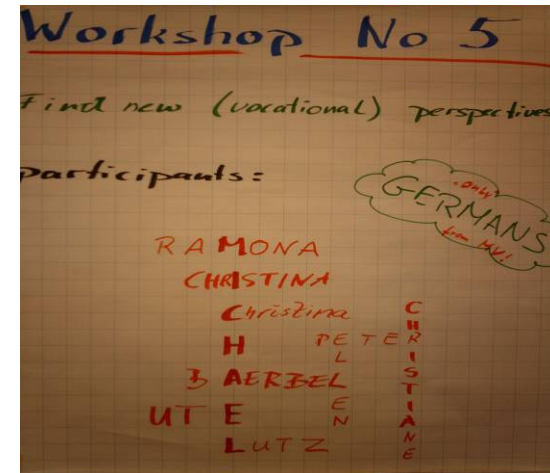
For presentation the participants used this metaphor of a perfect world by shaping a Landscape of a land filled with jewels to where a bridge is leading. The bridge is the personal effort of every participant by supporting their students in order to reach this perfect world of *Productive Learning*.



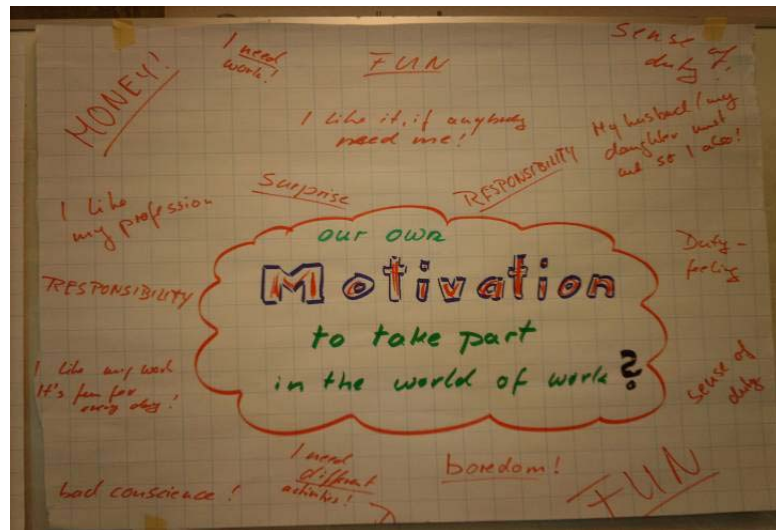


Facilitators: Michael Käselau

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP 5



TO WARM UP AND MAKE SENSIBLE FOR THE FIELD: LOOK AT YOURSELF!



- ## Key - Questions
- Is the world of work able to satisfy the young people?
 - What are the "general skills" needed in the world of work nowadays?
 - How to develop this motivation / these skills in general / vocational education?
 - Does TL prepare students to the world of work?
 - What kind of methods / targets you need to realize it?

OUR KEYQUESTIONS

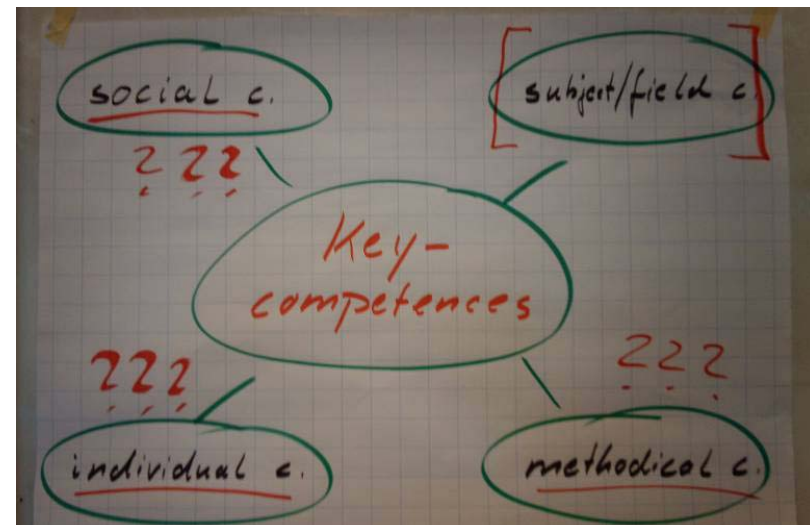
QUESTION TO THE GROUP – AND DISCUSSION

ALL students are developing vocational perspectives highly motivated ?! ?! ?!

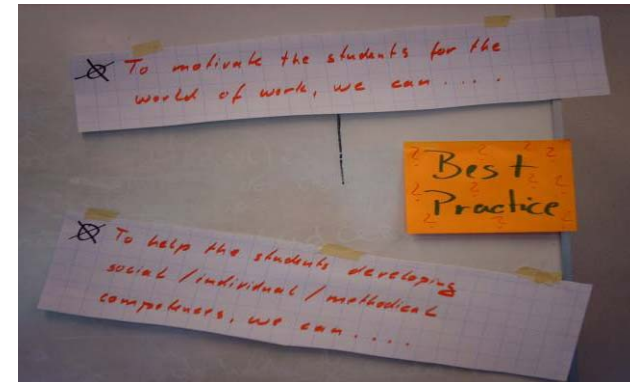


IDEAS OF THE GROUP

WHAT ARE KEY-COMPETENCES?



WORKING GROUPS COLLECTED "BEST-PRACTICE-EXAMPLES"



RESULTS

