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# PRODUCTIVE LEARNING AND INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

SYMPPOSIUM IN BERLIN ON 4<sup>TH</sup> OF NOVEMBER 2011

*This publication* is funded by the European Social Fund.

#### Bibliographic Information from the German Library

The German Library lists this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data is available online under <http://dnb.ddb.de>

ISBN 978-3-00-037573-6

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Self-published by *IPL*E 2011

Printed on environmentally friendly paper (produced acid and bleach free)

Printed in Germany

Layout: Sylvia Gleißner, Berlin

Printing: Paulick & König Gd R Druckerei Bunter Hund, Berlin

© Institut für Produktives Lernen in Europa (*IPL*E)

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## Preface

This book describes the international development of *Productive Learning* during 20 years. *Productive Learning* was born in 1991 as a child of wonderful experiences we won with our work in *Die Stadt-als-Schule Berlin* built up between 1984 and 1987 transferring and transforming the model of *City-As-School New York*.

Together with our *Institut für Produktives Lernen in Europa (IPLE)* we initiated in 1990 and 1991 the *International Network of Productive Learning Projects and Schools (INEPS)* for realizing the European name of the institute: spreading and developing the idea of educational programmes which follow the central idea of *Productive Learning* i.e. to replace traditional subject structured school learning by cultural learning based on activity experiences in “real life”.

We had the chance, together with the excellent team of the institute, to find partners in about 20 European countries as well as to get the fellowship of one of *City-As-School New York*’s founders. During the last 20 years educators all over Europe worked hard creating and establishing their variants of *Productive Learning* in their country joined in the *INEPS* network. They got the power by dreaming of another way of learning and education being more satisfying than their daily work in schools and out of school education.

20 years later the *IPLE* invited the pioneers of *Productive Learning* to tell “their story” and to come together for exchanging their experiences and their visions for the educational future of their country – and nearly all of them followed the invitation. We took it as a sign for the vitality of *Productive Learning*’s idea and practice.

We thank our European and New York friends for their important contributions to the report of what happened and what should happen in future with *Productive Learning*. And we wish them that their successes grow in favour of young people who get the chance of an “own learning” following their strengths and interests and allowing them to develop their person and their abilities for contributing with creativity to build their world of living and maybe more than this.

The book offers the national reports on the development of *Productive Learning* as well as important statements of the pioneers they pronounced during our symposium on 4th of November, 2011, in Berlin. We hope that this publication contributes to spreading and further development of international *Productive Learning*.

Besides our international friends we would like to thank our colleague Sylvia Gleißner for having prepared the manuscript as well as the printer Bunter Hund for having produced the book; both did their work with empathy and accuracy as usual.

Berlin, December 2011

Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider

## **Introduction:**

### **The international dissemination of *Productive Learning***

Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider

This publication is taking stock of 20 years of effort to enrich education and schools in particular through an educational reform that seemed timely and at the same time appropriate to the authors:

- to embark on personal educational vitae or paths
- to link education and cognition with personal experiences and
- in this way to explore and access the abundance of culture on the basis of personal meaning and simultaneously in terms of meaningful tasks within society

*Productive Learning* is convenient because this educational reform addresses a need for skills and abilities which are increasingly required by the international society and industry due to dealing successfully with vocational and private tasks such as: independence, taking initiatives, ability to co-operate, and productivity.

We are thus very grateful and delighted that nearly all of our international partners in Europe and in the USA were willing to describe the development of *Productive Learning* from their perspective, dealing with the progress of education and schooling in their own countries. This enabled us to publish this comprehensive review of the history and the prospects of *Productive Learning*.

The following remarks will introduce and honour our companions. During all of those years, the *IPL* understood its own role as that of being a stimulator and supporter, sometimes advisor and coach for the educational projects, which had to be set up or further developed. Without doubt this role was assisted by the fact that - over the course of the past 20 years - the *IPL* was able to establish itself in seven German federal states, and it managed to introduce *Productive Learning* in approximately 90 secondary schools altogether, in some instances area-wide.

### *International Network of Productive Learning Projects and Schools (INEPS)*

The establishment of the *INEPS* network during an international congress on the topic of ‘Learning through Productive Action’ which was organised by “*Die Stadt-als-Schule Berlin*” in co-operation with the International Community Education Association<sup>1</sup> (ICEA) in 1990 has a long history. We were active members of the ICEA, which strengthened our international orientation, through which we were able to establish and maintain numerous international contacts.

We presented a plan for the setting up an international network to the participants of our working group, which was met with broad agreement. The participants shared the same ideas of the underlying concept of *Productive Learning*, and it quickly became very clear that a reform of the school system was not only a topic within Germany, but also indeed an international issue. It was thus agreed to organise a first *INEPS* congress in Arezzo (Italy) as early as in the autumn of the same year.

The women and men, who first got involved, remained for a long time - and in some cases are up to this very day - members of this network:

Ildikó Bardossy and Gyöngi Bakò from Pécs (Hungary), the latter sadly passed away, Jordi Cujas and Roberto Labandera from Vilafranca del Penèdes (Catalonia/Spain), Jacques Bonnisseau from Paris, and Ernesto del Mercato from Cilento (Italy), Pino Piras from San Giovanni Valdarno (Italy) and Paolo Orefice from Naples (Italy), Ana Paula de Campos Leitão and Jorge Moniz from Peniche (Portugal), and last but not least Bret Schlesinger from New York (USA).

The network grew over the years, and initially two congresses were held each year, later superseded by an annual congress. Despite our permanent informal status we created a charter with an *Administration Council (AC)* and a president. Bit by bit, an intensive co-operation developed out of an initially loose association of interested school reformers.

### *Euroform-Project „Productive Learning in Europe“*

In 1992, the *INEPS* network was revitalized as we secured the promotion of the project *Productive Learning in Europe* by the European Union, the German government, and the federal state of Berlin within the framework of the EUROFORM programme. Together with 12 educational institutions in six countries,

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1 Issue 12 *Stadt-als-Schule Berlin*

the *IPL* developed – on the basis of the experiences with the *Stadt-als-Schule Berlin* project – the concept of *Productive Learning* in conjunction with a programme for qualification and dissemination.<sup>2</sup>

Because of the solidarity of our EU partners, we were also able to include schools in Pécs and St. Petersburg in the project, which meant that the project was not confined to Western Europe only. In this way, a working partnership was created, which strengthened the backbone of the network and which provided the basis for its enlargement.

At this point, some comments must be made on the role of the *IPL* in the “export” of *Productive Learning* into other European countries.

#### *Finland*

A visit by a film team of the University of Helsinki in the beginning of the 1990's to the *IPL* and the *Stadt-als-Schule Berlin* already showed how important the existing practice was for the stimulation of new projects. The visiting of a working educational project essentially contributed to persuade the Finnish foundation *Mannerheim League* to provide the financial means for the establishment of *PL* groups in approximately 20 Finnish schools. The Finnish government invited us to showcase our concept and our experiences with the *Stadt-als-Schule* programme of Berlin in Finland. Today, there are 84 schools in 84 Finnish communities, which offer OMAURA or JOPO as a variation of this educational reform.

But how did Productive Learning spread over the years?

#### *Vilafranca del Penedès, Catalonia/Spain*

One of the first European start-ups was established in 1992 in Vilafranca del Penedès by the City's Administration for Employment. This was essentially about vocational preparation, and vocational training in some areas such as catering and TV production. With these projects, Vilafranca's Administration for Employment participated in the EUROFORM project of the *IPL*. Roughly ten years later, the *Institut d'Aprenentatge Productiu (IDAP)* was set up with a focus on information technology. Initially, under the leadership of Josep Alsina, and later under

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2 cf. Ingrid Böhm / Jens Schneider „Eine Bildungschance für Jugendliche in Europa“, Schibri-Verlag, Berlin \* Milow, 1996

the leadership of Mercè Marcé, this institute introduced *Productive Learning* successfully in secondary schools – the first initiative to do so in southern Europe. Today, three schools in Catalonia offer *Productive Learning* in particular to the rising number of pupils who immigrated to Catalonia over the past years – a reason for the school administration to search for educational projects to address their needs.

### *Peniche, Portugal*

As early as 1990, Jorge Moniz participated as a representative of the Catholic private school *Colégio do Atlântico* in Peniche (Portugal) in the Berlin foundation congress.

The second congress had already taken place in Peniche and led to the co-operation of the school in the project *Productive Learning in Europe*. The head of the school, Ana Paula de Campos Leitão, introduced *Productive Learning* within the framework of a vocational training programme for educators. The students planned and realised cultural educational offers for children and young people in Peniche. Unfortunately, the administration closed the school very suddenly. However, Ana Paula de Campos Leitão remained faithful to the ideas of *Productive Learning* and started a new initiative for the implementation of the educational reform in Portugal a while ago.

Numerous attempts to introduce *Productive Learning* in Funchal (Madeira/Portugal) with seminars and with an *INEPS* congress failed – seemingly because of differences between initiators and the government.

### *Pécs, Hungary*

In 1992 in Pécs (Hungary) the project *Varos Mint Iscola* (City as school) was founded in a secondary school, which was mainly had its focus on “weaker” pupils, in particular from the ethnic Romani group. This project was later dissolved because the project leader, who subsequently became the head of the school, left the project in order to start a new job in the school administration. Several initiatives to revive the project involving an independent institution failed because of a lack of financial backup.

A seminar with heads of schools from Budapest which took place in the Hungarian Parliament was also unsuccessful. However, during all of those years the two initiators, Ildikó Bárdossy and Magdolna Tratnyek, did not decrease their

efforts to introduce essential elements of the theory and the methodology of *Productive Learning* in schools.

### *Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia*

As Berlin's representatives at the congress *Educating Cities* in 1992 in Barcelona, we met city councilor Professor Mark Bashmakov from St. Petersburg, whom quickly found interested in *Productive Learning*. Additionally, we were able to arouse interest in *Productive Learning* in two academics from Moscow, Professor Svetlana Tchistiakova and Dr. Nata Krylova, who we met at a conference in the vicinity of Berlin. In both cities, *Productive Learning* was implemented in a number of schools as well as in the *Institute of Productive Learning* which was founded by Mark Bashmakov, though notably *Productive Learning* did not replace traditional teaching but was always offered in addition to it.

Numerous publications followed and the *Russian Academy of Pedagogic Science* became aware of the *IPLE*, inviting us for a visit to Kemerovo in Siberia. The management of the *IPLE* received the honour of becoming member of the Academy. However, this did not ultimately lead to a wider dissemination of *Productive Learning* in Russia.

### *Gothenburg and Stockholm, Sweden*

Since 1991 a school project in Gothenburg for students threatened by failure – mostly young people with psychological and/ or social problems or delinquents – in the beginning applied methods similar to those used in *Productive Learning* but without a systematic approach to the educational reform. After a few years the school created another program adapted to *Productive Learning*. 2007 a new school started as a development of the school project with 300 students and the school used *Productive Learning*. The school remained loyally connected to the *INEPS* network.

Our visit to the Fogelströmska School in Stockholm encouraged the school to apply *Productive Learning* systematically – previously this school only ran the one-year *Individuella Programmet* as an additional educational offer alongside the regular school. Gun Nilsson and Lennart Dahlberg were the protagonists of this project: both of them are still active members of the *INEPS* network. Unfortunately, after political changes and a battle which was lost the school closed down.

*Patras, Greece*

The extracurricular educational institution *PROTASI Movement for another Life-style* in Patras (Greece) – and its director, Angela Passa, applies *PL*-methods in its cultural work for drug prevention. Angela Passa's insistent efforts to engage schools have so far failed as her aspirations were met with stiff opposition by the school authority. Recently she was able to start a new initiative for the introduction of *Productive Learning* in schools with the support of the *IPLE*.

*Paris, France*

In the middle of the 90's a small-scale City-as-School project was set up in Paris. The project *La Ville Pour École (LVPE)* always had to fight for its existence but managed to keep going. Its initiator, Jacques Bonnisseau, co-founder and director of one of the very few alternative schools in France, the *Lyceé Autogéré de Paris*, had been struggling for years to start such a project.

Two years ago, Jacques Bonnissau set up connections with a school administrative district in one of the notorious *Faubourgs* in the East of Paris. The school inspector Marie-Louise Debourle – together with a group of young teachers – has since endeavored to introduce *Productive Learning* within her school district.

*Burgas, Bulgaria*

One school director in Burgas has been very interested in *Productive Learning* for a few years now – an interest which came about through a personal connection with a *PL* educator from Berlin. The methods of *PL* were applied with the aim of a better integration of Romani children. However, Petko Ivanov, his educators as well as a few more interested schools in Burgas, were up until now unable to receive European funding for *Productive Learning* in Burgas – despite considerable support from the city of Burgas and *IPLE*.

*Bucharest, Romania*

In Romania, the dissemination of *Productive Learning* was aided by an independent institution with European funding: *Education 2000*. Two *IPLE* seminars which were held there were positively received by heads of schools and teachers from Bulgaria, Romania, and Moldova. Since then, one head of school

from Bucharest, Mirela Beiu, has been trying tirelessly to gain support from the Romanian ministry – and first and foremost from the ESF.

### *Hilversum, the Netherlands*

Following seminars in Berlin and Amsterdam, a two-year long co-operation with a Dutch vocational institution, the ROC Amsterdam was started in 2008. This led to the introduction of *Productive Learning* in a vocational school in Hilversum. Although the training project of the *IPL* experienced difficulties due to a number of organisational problems of their Dutch partners, the project, *Productief leren*, now exists as an educational offer for vocational orientation for pupils, who are indecisive in school.

### *Vilnius, Lithuania*

A seminar in Riga led to first contacts with school authorities and schools in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Up until now, however, only the contact with Lithuania flourished. A representative of the *Institute for School Development* of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Simona Plienaitytė, kept in touch with the *IPL* for a number of years and participated in international events of the *INEPS*. She succeeded in winning the support from the ministry for a *PL*-project in three Lithuanian schools, funded by the EU, which will commence in 2012.

The many initiatives of the *IPL* to publicize *Productive Learning* in European countries which were ultimately not successful shall not be forgotten here:

Over the years, we have been invited by educators and academics working in industry and schools to run seminars a.o. in Salerno (Italy), Portiers (France), Funchal (Madeira/Portugal), Lyxele (Sweden), Kraków (Poland), Patras (Greece), Vienna and Salzburg (Austria), Bern und Zürich (Switzerland) – without the desired result of turning these seminars into *PL* initiatives. In addition, the annual International Seminars which the *IPL* organised at various locations with *PL*-schools or for people who were interested in *PL* did not lead to new foundations.

On the other hand, what made it possible to introduce *Productive Learning* in a number of countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Finland, France, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Russia and last but not least in Lithuania?

The definitive answer is as follows: because of the fact that some individuals were so excited about *Productive Learning* they were able to overcome widespread opposition from and within ministries of school as well as major financial difficulties. We often like to call this excitement ‘den Virus haben’, in German, which translates into that this level of excitement is contagious – by which we mean the development of a vision in which the opportunities for self-education through *Productive Learning* are illuminated as *Productive Learning*

- makes the inclinations and the desired development of young people the very foundation of education – thus creating a stable interest in learning
- chooses activities in “real life” as the starting point and the final destination of learning, which brings to bear the self-effectiveness and the abilities of the learner
- opens doors to the abundance of life and culture for activities and education, thus re-gaining the meaningfulness of that which has to be learned.

Perhaps – and it would be interesting to find this out – all of the people “infected” by *PL* had themselves positive and also negative experiences within their own personal educational vitae, which led individuals to believe in the methods and principles of *Productive Learning*.

Now it is our international friends and partners turn to tell us about the development of *Productive Learning* in their own countries.

## **Productive Learning and School Development in Bulgaria**

Paulina Pavlova

In today's globally digitized world, the way we learn and develop our skills is no longer the same, not a traditional and predictable one. We live in societies which are built on tolerance, diversity, mobility and constant change. The same applies to our education. What we learn in school and even at university is no longer sufficient for life; therefore, the concept of lifelong learning is becoming more and more popular.

School and university degrees are no longer the sole basis for a successful career. The labor market is changing so fast that a study on his condition today can be completely irrelevant tomorrow.

At the same time, our attitude towards learning is changing. In the recent past, we assumed that our education stops when we finish school. However, now we are taking for granted that after university or school the educational process enters into a new phase.

This led us to the understanding that most of the acquired knowledge and skills are not 'happening' just within the formal education system, but rather in a slightly different context (work environment, voluntary work, family, friends) and, therefore, these specific ways to acquire knowledge and skills are now viewed with increased interest. At the same time, young people today (especially those with fewer opportunities) are becoming more practically oriented. They are not interested in learning if they do not see clear benefits and how far this process will reach. It is not enough to give them vague explanations of what a diploma can 'bring' to them. Young people need to be given clear, meaningful and acceptable reasons for their educational process. Therefore, we need a different approach to learning. There is a clear need to go beyond the traditional perceptions of diplomas and degrees, and move towards an education that is more geared towards skills training and competence-building.

The educational system in Bulgaria as a whole today requires radical reforms, directed principally towards students. With regard to our national educational needs, a long conversation started after the democratic changes in the 1990s - but none of the governments so far had the political will and the competence to implement the expected effective changes despite their declaration that edu-

tion is the main and most important priority. Certainly, there are a lot of reasons which can be pointed out - but we know that the biggest challenge for all the staff within the education system is how to bring students back into school.

I can clearly remember the beginning of the democratic changes. I was a student at a high school and as sociologists say 'this period of transition made Bulgaria an attractive and interesting place to live'. All social spheres of life were full of contradictions and people had to overcome many obstacles.

Moreover, they were not ready for this. Nobody told them what to expect and how to react. Collapse could be observed everywhere. People's hopes crumbled away gradually as statesmen, politicians, leaders only started to create something new, contemporary and hopeful for the future. Goals and hopes were abandoned as old totalitarian institutions were ruined and soon the expected democratic changes were a mirage.

All of these facts and the consequences of this period also affected the education system. During the first years of democracy, people involved in the education system tried to save it and followed the old rules and programmes, used the same old methods and approaches. As they were told that this was successful, they were afraid to create a new education system and put it into practice. There were schools in almost all cities and villages. According to the social policy whose goal was a well-educated population, each citizen of Bulgaria has the right to be educated regardless of his/her age, race, and gender. Education in Bulgaria is mainly supported by the state, through the Ministry of Education and Science. School education is compulsory for children aged 7 to 16.

The Bulgarian education system falls within the continental European tradition. The main types of secondary schools are: general educational, vocational, language schools and foreign schools. During the period of the new democracy, the role of the Bulgarian school in terms of educating and bringing up individuals has declined and lost its strength. Traditionally, Bulgaria had high educational standards. In the post-communist era, the lack of funding, little parents' control and old-fashioned teaching methods damaged the system to some extent, particularly in vocational training. At that time, students preferred sitting in cafes rather than studying in boring classrooms. The students did not respect their teachers because of 'the enormous abyss' between the old and the new generation. Moreover, a lot of teachers had to find a second job to make a living due to the democratic reality: low salaries, lack of opportunities, and lack of respect at the work place.

However, during this period some changes were made by the state in order to create a ‘functioning’ education system, and this process of change is still continuing today. Despite the fact that the new millennium, the increasing rate of development of the world economy, the growing industrialization are raising new questions, problems and are changing the goals for the education system. All these economic and social realities influence the direction of the development of our social policy which has to deal with educational problems - thus proposing a variety of appropriate methods, sources, and programmes.

In order to solve such problems and address these difficulties, our social policy has its principles - which have been imposed and confirmed. New principles were added: the principle of variety, and the principle of continuity as well as autonomy of schools and universities.

Despite Bulgarian students’ top awards at international competitions, problems in state schools still exist and have become worse and more pronounced. I mean not only problems concerning finance and the technical equipment in schools but also problems in terms of the teaching process, discipline, and students’ motivation – as well as teaching qualifications adequate to contemporary social requirements. Dialogue and feedback between teachers and parents is no longer the norm. The bridge between school as an institution and society has been destroyed.

According to recent sociological research by the National Institute of Statistics, the number of students has decreased dramatically over the last ten years - more than 275 000 fewer students. Today, the demographic problems and the migration from villages to cities influence the structure and the size of schools. The number of children in small villages decreased considerably, some villages are even un- inhabited. Numerous schools have been closed, staff has been reduced- there are over 400 fewer schools. And this is not only about unemployed people but it is more about students who leave school without an education. Successive governments have been trying to do something for these pupils - they were able to use public transport without paying to attend a school in the nearest bigger village or town, but this idea did not work as expected. It has been said that this is due to the fact that most of these children are from minorities. Food, transport, and money for clothes is not enough to make parents more responsible for their children’s future. We must note here that the number of students dropping out is also significant - between 30 000 and 20 000 per annum. 15 % of students do not finish their education with their schoolmates of the same age. Every year 7 % of 7 year-olds do not enter the door into their 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom. Towards the end of 2010 - according to a competent inter-

national comparative study - the quality of Bulgarian education became lower and lower. Bulgaria now is the 46<sup>th</sup> from a ranking list of 65 countries concerning reading and literacy. 500 000 children dropped out between 1990 and 2011. Aggression in schools, homelessness, and drug abuse by pupils in the streets, an increase in child criminality – these are only a few facts from this appalling statistic - a result of the unsuccessful reforms and political mistakes. We set off for a long trip by making the first small steps. Now our efforts must be directed towards the most vulnerable part of our society – the children.

These tendencies are frightening and time is running out – regardless of a current nostalgia for the ‘good old system’. A personalized education is now a top priority and only by using its approaches an adequate impact can be made. This is what *Productive Learning* offers to young people and their educators. Its main aim is to provide new opportunities to those adolescents who are not willing or not able to follow the traditional school programme - but who are still interested in becoming active in the social and vocational world and in continuing education on the basis of their activity experience. Students at risk of failing and so called ‘drop-out’ students can be reached by *Productive Learning* and can find their way back to an individual way of getting an education and enjoying personal growth. Students at risk and dropout students are the basic target group of this project, because otherwise they would not finish their vocational education and would not be prepared for an independent life.

Therefore, as we grew familiar with the ideas of *Productive Learning* we realized the great opportunity for an innovative approach that we can offer to our children. The basis of *Productive Learning* is the activity, the action, and a final product. It means that young people can see a result in the first instance and thus find meaning in education - and subsequently, with the teacher’s help, they retrace the learning process. A lot of students do not see any point in the theoretical study within the traditional school system, and because of that, they think that the education at school is boring and incomprehensible. Most of these children are considered as being failures, outsiders who do not deserve any help. The alternative - *Productive Learning* - where one can see the results of one’s efforts immediately - is definitely suitable for such kind of students. The situation in society is now reflected in the conditions at school. The differentiation taking place within society affected the students; the social problems did not pass those youngsters by. These social differences require adjustments by the teachers, new methods of teaching in accordance with the individual characteristics of each student. All teachers know what efforts are necessary to prepare themselves for the needs of each student, to have the time and the patience to deal with every single individual. However, if we want to preserve our children,

if we want not to lose them for our cause and to motivate them for the aims of education, we have to accept the fact that there is no other way. We have to bring them back to school - but not to the school that they have already left but to a school where they would have the chance to succeed. If we want to be successful it is necessary to change school curricula and regulations, and new methods and approaches directed at every individual student will have to be found. We will have to do away once and forever with the frontal teaching, and the educators have to be trained in their new role as organizers and mentors of the educational process.

For several years, the teams of four schools of the city of Bourgas have been trying to find ways to implement the foreign experience into our conservative education system. During those years of largely negative experiences many events passed by – some of them strengthened our doubts and worries but other gave us the chance and hope to keep fighting for the ideas of *Productive Learning*. Here are some of them:

- The process of dropping out still continues. During the school year 2007-2008 there were 43 925 students in 161 schools in the region of Bourgas. Over the same period, 917 students dropped out for different reasons – low marks, lack of integration, social problems. The fast number of them is from schools. However, most shocking is the fact that during 2009-2011 the number of secondary and high school dropouts from ethnic minorities is equal to that who continues to stay in education. We came to the conclusion that teachers and parents fail in their task to motivate their children and pupils. Teachers get the lowest salaries in the working community and most of them are not sufficiently motivated to give their best because of the dire social status of this job. Parents become busier and busier in their efforts to make a living. They do not have enough time and sometimes even the will to communicate with their children.
- New governments came in and the reforms were started every time from the beginning – always with good intentions but negative results in most of the cases.
- Bulgaria has become a member of the European Union. European projects have become available and presented the opportunity to Bulgarian people to apply for them. Unfortunately, there are not many trained specialists who can work out a project and there is always a shortage of money as experts say.
- About 20 teachers in the region of Bourgas have been trained in *Productive Learning* methods by taking part in different seminars in Bulgaria and abroad.

- Two international seminars as well as the 20th congress of *INEPS* were held in Bourgas. The participants were welcomed by the vice-mayor of the municipality of Bourgas, Mrs Yordanka Ananieva, and the executive director of the regional inspectorate of the Ministry of Education and Science, Mrs Pepa Bacalova. They put into words their satisfaction that the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of *INEPS* was being held in Bourgas, and expressed their willingness to support the initiative of the 4 Bourgas schools for the implementation of their *Productive Learning* projects. The *INEPS* congress resulted in joined efforts by all colleagues from the Bourgas schools and the representatives of the Chamber of Commerce. The representatives of the municipality of Bourgas and the Ministry of Education were informed about the problems with dropout students and the necessity of the implementation of *Productive Learning* in our schools. As a next step, we had to use the Congress' energy to obtain permission to found a group for *Productive Learning*. We needed a European project that could ensure the existence of that group. We expected with great eagerness the availability of the new projects of the European funds in May 2008 - but we were very disappointed when we realized that there was no appropriate project for carrying out the idea about *Productive Learning* in compliance with the current educational law.
- The enormous support of *IPLE* is strengthening day by day – it advises projects, supports regionally, nationally and internationally the development of *Productive Learning* and facilitates its networking.
- Good cooperation with the vice-mayor and experts of the regional educational inspectorate who took part in the two sessions of a seminar in Romania in 2008.

The Regional Pedagogical Center will help in teacher training and qualification especially for *Productive Learning*.

- The regional Chamber of Commerce is totally supportive of the cause of *Productive Learning*
- An immense interest shown by the young people during the 20<sup>th</sup> congress of *INEPS*. Through friendly conversations they found out that in *Productive Learning* the needs of each child would be met to enable him or her to reach their full potential and prepare for a career according to their own choice.

All those circumstances and experiences give us hope and give us a lot of energy for the successful implementation of *Productive Learning* in the schools of Bourgas. During the last year, some key steps in undertaking reforms of the school education were implemented. The school network was optimized. The decentralization of the school system gathered pace. School became an autonomous

institution through the introduction of programmes, financing and delegated budgets, final school examinations, external assessment, computer rooms, Internet access and e-students' books for the 9-12 grade etc.

But what has already started has to be backed up by new authorities. The so-called continuity of the changes has to lead the educational system to a higher level which corresponds to the needs of contemporary society.

According the National Reform Programme 2011-2015, three fundamental goals can be formulated:

1. Improvement of the quality of general education, providing opportunities for consultations and additional activities for supporting pupils who are experiencing educational learning difficulties.
2. Development of an education system, including developing mechanisms for the vocational and personal training of pupils and students in real work environments, providing an adequate connection between higher education and the labor market. Student scholarships and grants will provide equal access to educational and higher aspirations in order to improve performance.
3. Improvement of the scope of the education system in order to reduce the number of children who drop out to a minimum - so that children aged 7 to 16 will not find themselves outside of the system of compulsory education. The authorities and the municipalities admit that the education system needs flexibility to reduce its negative effects on the vocational goals and the aspirations for life of young people. As written in the programme: *'Flexibility will be achieved through new forms of education that will offer new opportunities to the drop-outs to come back to school and to get their degree in education or receive a vocational qualification. Skills and competencies have to come into sharp focus.'*

The National Reform Programme of the present government and the local and presidential elections which will take place in two weeks' time give us new hope. We are optimistic about future dialogues with the municipalities and authorities- they have clearly declared that they operate in line with the educational needs of the European Union. We have European projects and European funds. New constructive dialogues have to be started in the near future. I think that an eventual meeting in Bulgaria between the representatives of IPLE and the educational municipalities or the representatives of the Ministry of Education can add some energy and hope to future collaborations.

Now that we have come to realize that *Productive Learning* is not a “casa perduta”. On the contrary, more than ever we believe that *Productive Learning* is one of the best opportunities for dropout students which the wind of democratic change has brought.

## Omaura (MOC) and JOPO® in Finland - From passenger to driver

Juha Lahtinen

### Finnish educational system, form and principles

The main fundamental principle of Finnish education policy is to offer all citizens equal opportunities to receive education, regardless of age, domicile, financial situations, sex or mother tongue. Education is considered to be one of the fundamental rights of all citizens.

Provisions concerning the right to fundamental education guarantee everyone, not just Finnish citizens, and the right to free basic education. The most important thing for young people at risk is that public authorities are also obliged to guarantee everyone an equal opportunity to obtain other education besides basic education according to their abilities and special needs, and to develop themselves without being prevented by economical hardship.

As the National Board of Education states: The general structure of education reflects its principles through building open avenues and avoiding dead ends which would lead offside after inconsiderate choices at whatever junction.

As you know, Finland is a country with a small number of inhabitants. In 2009 there were 553 300 pupils in basic education. The teachers are working very individually and almost all the teachers have done a university degree (MA in Education or in the subject they teach). There is no separate school inspectorate and inspection visits to schools are conducted by state authorities. The activities of education providers are guided by objectives laid down in legislation and the national core curricula. The system relies on the proficiency of teachers in their efforts to meet the objectivities laid down in curricula.

The basic education syllabus takes nine years and almost all the children complete their compulsory education in comprehensive school. The comprehensive school may also provide additional basic education, the voluntary 10th year. In some schools this additional year uses activated methods a bit similar to *Productive Learning*-schools or JOPO-classes in Finland. The additional year is aimed at pupils who have not received a study place or who need time to make future plans for studying. It is also possible to familiarize oneself with a certain Vocational Training branch during this voluntary 10th grade.

The current national curricula in basic education include objectives and assessment criteria, but within this framework schools and local authorities form their own curricular regulations that are sensitive to the local context. Teachers are free to choose their own teaching methods and have the freedom to select their own teaching materials.

One of the ongoing reforms is to prevent dropout from school and social exclusion. For this aim the Ministry started the programme JOPO-Flexible basic education"- in 2006. The Ministry of Education and Culture initiated also in 2006 the Preparatory instruction and guidance for Vocational training (AmmattistarSSI) which attempts to assist young students who have completed the basic education and remain uncertain of their study prospects, or are at risk of dropping out at the beginning of their vocational studies. After promising results, it was decided to make the scheme permanent from August 2010 onwards. The legislation came into effect in January 2010.

In vocational upper secondary education students are mainly aged 16-25. The school-based education system means full-time studies for three years at a vocational institution. Education and training is primarily organized in yearly classes. Otherwise, students follow their individual study plans.

Students are free to choose which educational institute they apply to. Vocational upper secondary education is based on the basic educational syllabus; it takes three years (120 credits).

Interesting for *Productive Learning* is that even the education and training mostly takes place in institutions, all qualifications include **at least** 20 credits (approx. six months) of instruction at the workplace. This may be much more according to the students' individual plan (on-the job-learning). Maybe even more interesting is the fact that vocational qualifications may also be done as apprenticeship-training, which also contains courses arranged in the institutions. Right now, for example, in Helsinki the authorities have started apprenticeship training for the students who have finished their basic education in JOPO-groups. One of the architects of this innovation is Petri Hänninen, one of the agents in INEPS.

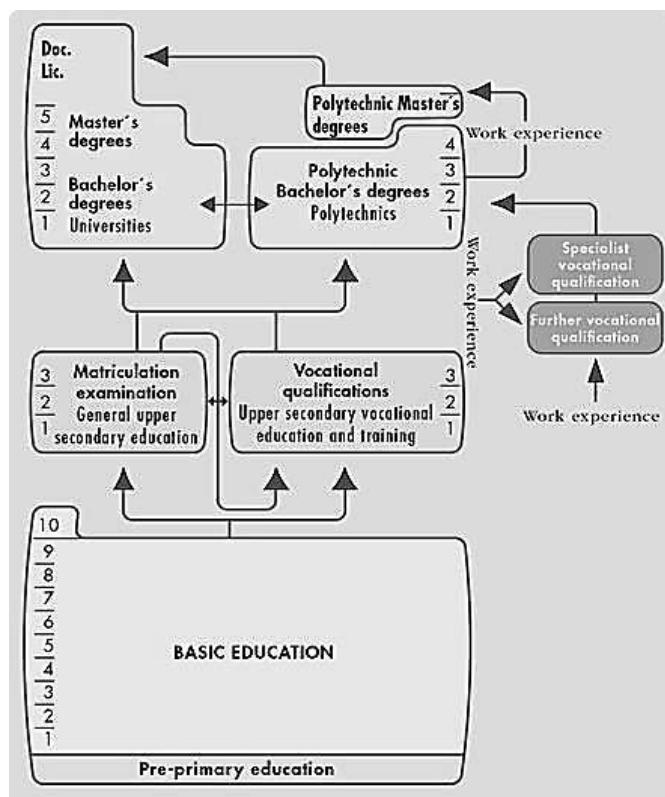
Upper secondary vocational education and training is primarily free of charge for students, but students have to pay for the materials.

The *Productive Learning*-types of educational projects or classes in Finland are located at basic education, additional 10th grade-classes, vocational 'ammattitartti'-classes or apprenticeship-training. Most of the teachers or

youth workers in those projects or schools have never heard about *Productive Learning*, but when they took part in training sessions or lectures they usually felt relief – this is exactly what they are doing.

For the future, the National Board of Education gives some strategic objectives for 2020:

- *Basic education supports pupil's growth as human beings and ethically responsible members of society and provides them with the knowledge and skills they will need in life. Education promotes civilisation and equity*
- *Vocational education and training provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to acquire vocational skills and with the potential for self-employment. Programmes provide students with capabilities for self-employment, develop the world of work, promote employment and support lifelong learning*



Finnish educational model in structure.

### The beginning of *Productive Learning* in Finland

In the early 90' some innovative pioneers started to find out an alternative way to run a school. Those researchers from the University of Helsinki started their experimental studies by videotaping projects in Paris and Berlin. In Berlin they visited a school called *Die Stadt als Schule*. There they met some enthusiastic teachers and educators, and they became convinced that those kinds of 'social-pedagogical' models will work in Finland as well. These Finnish explores were Jukka Somerharju and Susanna Inkinen.

After their adventure, researchers introduced the treasures they found and they got promising feedback from the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL). The Mannerheim's League got financial support from RAY (Finland's Slot Machine Association). From this starting point we can say that the *Productive Learning*-type of education in basic education started in Finland.

With the support of RAY and coordination by the MLL they started a project called Omaura from 1993 to 1996. The project was based on a system piloted in Germany and prior to that in New York, USA. The aim of the project was to prevent the dropping out from basic education and to integrate early school leavers back into the school system.

The Mannerheim League first coordinated the Finnish project and later on a special Omaura-association. Today, (2011) the Omaura-association is integrated into a new mainstream project called JOPOÒ (Flexible basic education). More about JOPOÒ in chapter four.

Initially in the 90's there were Omaura schemes in about ten locations, and they were integrated into schools as special classes or projects for students with special needs. During the fifteen years of Omaura-action there were more than 30 projects in different parts of Finland, and the Omaura-association (In English Omaura means ,My Own Career', often shortened to MOC) was the designer of these projects.

The historical background to the MOC was the inner-city program *City as School* in New York and *Die Stadt als Schule* in Germany - this was adapted to the framework and 'climate' of the Finnish school system as I have described earlier. In most of these groups there was either a youth worker or a social worker co-operating with the teacher. Individual groups were funded by the municipalities and usually they functioned as a part of ordinary schools. MOC was regarded as a special education programme and pupils had their individual curricula.

The target group of MOC's local projects were 8-10 grade pupils who were at great risk of exclusion on many different levels; social, educational and so on. The aim of MOC-projects was – using the methods of *Productive Learning* - to start a process whereby those students, little by little, motivated themselves to study and to achieve such key qualifications which enable them to succeed in second grade education (vocational or general). It was also important that the youngsters had an opportunity to develop their self-esteem, social skills and other skills that are necessary for leading a good life. No MOC-group was alike, but certain elements of the *Productive Learning*-philosophy and social pedagogy were common to all local projects.

One key point of MOC was that each student made his or her individual plan by him- or herself with the support of parents and teachers. The purpose of the plan was to increase the commitment of the youngster to his or her own studies and to stress the importance of cooperation. Individual plans were made for shorter periods of time, e.g. studies in resource places. Wider dimensions of individual plans were career counseling and general life plans.

The clear similarities to *Productive Learning*-projects were external learning – studying and learning at the work sites. In MOC – work sites were turned into learning environments of real life. MOC-students had ca. four work periods per year – each of them lasted 4-6 weeks. At the work places youngsters have mentors as facilitators and leaders. The mentors also cooperate with teachers and other workers in MOC. During the resource learning week, there were also some school days, and students were expected to write reports and carry out research concerning their experiences at their own workplace.

In between the work periods, students had intensive study courses for academic subjects, especially in those subjects which cannot be studied at places of work.

One important part of MOC-projects was experience education, adventures and camps. In MOC the experience education was regarded as a successful method for developing self-confidence, self-esteem and social skills.

Finally, some of the best results of MOC was the cooperation between multi-professional teams and parents. Parents were activated to co-operate in order to support their children's positive initiations. In MOC-classes there were parents' meetings several times a year. MOC – groups' activities were based on local partnership. Each group built a multi-professional network suitable for its needs. Youth-workers and social workers participated in the activities at schools.

Adults had their own MOC-network as a peer group and MOC was also part of the *International Network of Productive Schools and Project (INEPS)*.

### **Some outcomes of MOC-activities**

Mrs. Elsi Veijola carried out research into the effectiveness of the project Omaura (MOC) in ten locations (Veijola, E: Young people at risk of social exclusion and Omaura – follow-up study of episodes in the life of the young people who participated in the Omaura-project 1995-2001).

The pupils were interviewed three times over a period of more than two years: in autumn 1995 and spring 1996 and in autumn 1997, just over one year after leaving school. The teachers were interviewed twice: at the beginning and at end of the spring term 1996. The pupils' parents were interviewed once, during the period December 1995 – March 1996.

A follow-up interview with the young people was conducted between April and June 2001, about 5.5 years after the first and 3.5 years after the final interviews. The teachers were also interviewed at this time to gauge their feelings about teaching in Omaura-projects and to find out their suggestions for developing the work further.

The *Omaura* project turned out to be very opportune as it offered a completely new option: supervised employment for young people in local businesses and other organizations in addition to their schoolwork. These periods of work are also included in the curriculum. The findings suggested that the *Omaura* system might boost the motivation of boys who find school unappealing.

The life management skills of these young people were analyzed in terms of any delinquency or alcohol and drug use. As it turned out, their life management skills improved clearly over the *Omaura* year. During the year, there was a marked decrease in delinquency; eight young persons with a delinquent past did not commit any new offences. In addition to this, four young people had stopped using drugs by the time the last interview was conducted. Another typical finding was that in the follow-up interview in autumn 1997, nearly 80 % of the group thought that their life-management skills had improved.

On the basis of the spring 2001 interview, the pupils were grouped as achievers (13 persons), those in transition (5) and those at risk of exclusion (9). One pupil could not be reached for an interview in 2001. A breakdown of the study

showed that when it came to home background, nine of the achievers came from households characterized by a low level of risk. Of those at risk of social exclusion four came from homes characterized by a high level of risk, and five had home backgrounds characterized by moderate risk. According to the 2001 interviews, two of the pupils who came from homes characterized by high risk had moved into the group of achievers.

On the basis of this study, it can be said that the *Omaura* project can offer a feasible alternative for helping young people who are at risk of social exclusion during their last year of comprehensive school.

Many of the parental interviews revealed that the parents were satisfied with the *Omaura* project. Many of the young people also felt that the *Omaura* class was the key factor that helped them turn their lives around. (Veijola, 2002)

### **From marginal to mainstream - JOPO® - Flexible Basic Education**

In 2006, the Ministry of Education launched a new national project 'Flexible education'. The municipalities were free to apply for money from the Ministry to establish a project for the prevention of early school leaving. Prior to this, two *Omaura*-teachers, Ari Enqvist and Petri Hänninen wrote a book about *Omaura*-pedagogy and *Productive Learning*-philosophy funded by the Ministry of Education.

The Ministry of Education received hundreds of applications and they choose initially 27 projects as pilot projects. The National Board of Education arranged the training program for educators in projects and those training programs were coordinated by OPEKO. The manager of the training was Juha Lahtinen, and coaches were the experienced 'MOC-veterans' Jukka Onttonen, Timo Liikanen and Kari Rajaorko. The program was supervised by the Ministry of Education.

In autumn 2011, the last MOC-project and classes will come to a close - and those entire projects will be integrated into the JOPO—"movement". We will celebrate the official end of the *Omaura* association in November - but at the same time we are more than satisfied that the idea and philosophy of *Productive Learning* lives on in JOPO. In fact, the influence is more powerful now than ever: JOPO is part of school decrees; JOPO-classes have found their place in the mainstream. Next in this article, there are some descriptions and research about the impact of the JOPO in Finland.

In 2011, the Ministry of Culture and Education supports those communities who have JOPO-classes with almost four million Euros, 3352 €/pupil. There are 84 municipalities who will get this special support and 1176 pupils study in those 84 JOPO-classes. In 2010, the number of municipalities was 72 - so the movement is increasing. You can say that in Finland's scale, JOPO is a solid part of mainstream basic education.

The Flexible basic education's (JOPO) aims and objectivities are written into School decree 9 a § (29.12.2009/1768) and 9 b § (29.12.2009/1768)

**The abstract of the book “Joustava perusopetus (JOPO)” by Ulla Numminen and Najat Ouakrim-Soivio, 2007**

*'The book Joustavaan perusopetuksen – JOPO-toiminnan aloittaminen ja vakiinnuttaminen (Towards flexible basic education - adoption and establishment of the system) is a product of a national dropout activation programme initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2006. The flexible basic education project, which in Finnish goes under the acronym JOPO (from flexible basic education), is one action in the programme. It seeks to support young people in finishing their basic schooling and applying for further education or training after school. All the JOPO activities are integrated into basic education and conform to its aims and content but apply flexible action models and instruction adjusted to individual needs and situations. At the same time, efforts are made to ensure that school-leavers find a place in post-compulsory education or training. The JOPO teaching uses action-based forms of work and on-the-job learning at authentic workplaces. It follows the principle of the same school for all.'*

*The JOPO action steps up multi-professional cooperation between organizations, such as comprehensive schools, local youth, social and health services, and vocational institutes, upper secondary schools and possible youth workshops. JOPO includes intensified cooperation with parents and various work forms geared to support them in parenting.*

*The plan is that flexible basic education will be established as a new, permanent action model in basic education. JOPO is intended for young people who would benefit from action- and work-based forms of learning and teaching. In the school year 2006 – 2007 the JOPO activities are carried out in 27 municipalities in different parts of the country and in 2007 – 2008 there will be approximately 75 JOPO groups. The Ministry of Education supports the activities of each group for two school years. Education providers are committed to making it a permanent form of activity.*

*JOPO influences not only young people's study but also local and school activities and teachers' work. The aims of the JOPO action can be examined in terms of these groups as follows: As regards the pupil, the aim is to prevent the deterioration of school motivation and dropout and intervene in problems at an early stage and at the same time to use individual support to help pupils finish their basic education and continue in further training. As regards the school, the aim is to develop individual activity-based forms of learning and the use of hands-on learning environments, which promotes cooperation between the school and the world of work. As regards the teacher, the aim is to promote their capabilities to use and develop work forms based on early intervention and to develop their skills in multi-professional cooperation. As regards local authorities, the aim is to promote cooperation between different administrative sectors, e.g. the school, youth, social and health services.*

*Flexible JOPO instruction is given in connection with ordinary basic education in groups of 10 to which 7th-9th year pupils are assigned. The group studies together for a couple of years until the end of school. The group may also include pupils who have opted for a voluntary 10th year.*

*The instruction follows the basic education core curriculum, but applies non-traditional forms of teaching. The instruction is partly given in school and is partly guided learning in workplaces or in some other learning environments, such as different school camps, study and workplace visits, trial forms of education, etc. The learning assignments to be carried out at school or at the workplace are based on the core curriculum and adapted to each pupil individually.*

*The JOPO teaching and other activities are devised by a team consisting of the principal, the teacher or special-needs teacher responsible for the group, and a fulltime youth or social worker assigned by the local authority. The instruction is planned in cooperation with other teachers in the school and the on-the-job mentors. The youth or social worker focuses on the pupils' social growth, co-operation with the pupil's family and other supportive and advisory work and on the development of a network of workplaces. The teacher is responsible for instruction and assessment in the ordinary manner.*

*At the workplace, guidance is the responsibility of an employee, an on-the-job mentor, who is the pupil's tutor and mentor. The school trains the mentors for the guidance work. The work-based assignments are agreed with the workplace. The homeroom teacher and the youth worker visit the workplaces and monitor how the learning works out. The on-the-job learning assignments are assessed. Agreements are concluded with the workplaces.*

*Individual arrangements are made to ensure sufficient pupil guidance, especially careers guidance, which is intended to encourage the pupil to continue studies after leaving school. Every JOPO pupil has a follow-up plan when they leave school. Further supportive measures are developed for the transition from school to further education in cooperation with other educational establishments in the municipality or in the region.*

*National and regional in-service training is provided for the principals, teachers and youth and social workers in support of the launching and establishment of JOPO activities. The JOPO action included monitoring and evaluation.'*

Ulla Numminen, Najat Ouakrim-Soilvio, Joustava perusopetus – JOPO-toiminnan aloittaminen ja vakiinnuttaminen, Opetusministeriön julkaisuja, 2007

### **Outcomes of the research reports of JOPO**

Flexible Basic Education (JOPO®) is a project launched by the Ministry of Education in 2006. Its purpose is to develop new teaching methods and procedures, which help reduce dropout. It develops new methods catering for individual needs which use activity based learning, small group teaching, on-the-job learning and different learning environments. JOPO activities support pupils in finishing school and applying for further training by means of multi-professional cooperation, early intervention and intensified school-home cooperation.

The report describes the implementation of the JOPO project in schools in the school year 2007–2008 and assesses the impact of the project. The impact analysis is based on changes effected in the JOPO pupils' ( $n = 624$ ) situations over the course of the school year. It also evaluates how the different methods and forms of learning influence pupils' development. Apart from pupil-specific monitoring data, the impact analysis is based on self-evaluations by schools and local education authorities ( $n = 65$ ), feedback submitted by pupils ( $n = 265$ ) and their parents or care-givers ( $n = 170$ ) on questionnaires, and interviews with stakeholders.

The JOPO activities are organized into small groups led by a teacher and another professional. The teachers usually have special education training, and their work partners are generally youth workers, youth instructors, community pedagogues or special needs assistants. The foremost forms of activity are small group teaching and individual guidance; on-the-job learning and possibly studies in other subjects in ordinary teaching groups. Other activities include

school camps and various excursions in order to develop team and community spirit. Pupils also participate in forms of learning and special courses especially tailored for them.

In particular, the JOPO groups have developed action based learning methods, which highlight inquiry based, and co-operative learning and project learning instead of teacher-led learning. In place of subject centered learning, the JOPO project has developed thematic learning and more needs based and situational time use. Different groups emphasize slightly different things. In some groups, the focus is more on special-needs type guided and individual learning, while others favor on-the-job learning. The activities of some groups focus on learning derived from the pupils' strengths and interests, which bolster their self-assurance, self-confidence and future orientation. In all groups, the basic educational task, that is, learning basic life-management skills (time management, working in a group) and social deportment consumed a great deal of time from actual instruction.

The most common reasons for enrolment in a JOPO group are problems with motivation, a need to study in a small group and low school achievement. The JOPO pupils' family and life situations are more difficult than average, which is manifested as psychosocial problems and insecurity, and the groups include an above-average proportion of children from one-parent families.

JOPO activities are effective. The situation of nearly 90 % of the pupils had improved from the initial state of affairs.

As regards pupils that had not benefited, the main reason for the failure to get their studies underway even within JOPO was their extremely difficult family and life situations. JOPO had its largest effect in ensuring that pupils got their school-leaving certificates, in reducing absenteeism and in improving study motivation.

The pupils' situations were affected most by small-group work and personal support and guidance. Other effective forms of activity were on-the-job learning, immediate intervention in non-attendance and intensified school-home cooperation. In practice, the differences between the various JOPO procedures were small, and the results show that the effects are individual; in other words, success is explained more by the pupil's background and life situation than the use of certain action models within JOPO. A given method thus works with some pupils and not with others. The differentiating factor in benefits gained is to what extent a pupil has participated in non-traditional activities, notably

in on-the-job learning and in school camps. The pupils who had most benefited from JOPO had participated several days longer in these than those who had benefited the least.

Both the pupils' and parents' assessments and feedback were mostly positive, and the JOPO project was considered valuable and useful. In fact, JOPO activities are being adopted on a permanent basis in all but few municipalities. The additional resources they require and the current financial situation in municipalities hinder their adoption. Mainstreaming the new action models into basic education will in turn require the development of structural factors relating to the action culture and subject centeredness of schools.

Jyri Manninen, Saara Luukkainen 2008, abstract, Joustava perusopetus, hankkeen vaikuttavuuden arvointi, Flexible basic education – impact analysis – English abstract

## **Epilogue**

I have been working in the field of education for about 25 years. During the first years as an arts teacher, class teacher and career counselor. I also worked as a schoolbook author for several years, and all those years I have tried to find out the most pleasant and most effective way to teach and to learn.

By accident, I had a discussion about learning and teaching in the sauna with my good friend Jussi Kähärä. Jussi told me about Omaura and *Productive Learning*. It happened in 1998, thirteen years ago. So I quit my work as a teacher in 'traditional' school and started as *Productive Learning*-educator in vocational MOC-projects. I took part in my first INEPS-congress in 1999 in Berlin and I met my first 'inepsers'. Thank you all and a special tribute to Dennis Huntington.

I do not work at school anymore but I work as an individual consultant mostly in the field of education. I run training programs for principals and teachers in all levels of education and my main question is: 'How to create meaning?' In my opinion, one of the answers is 'by *Productive Learning*-methods'.

Special thanks to my Finnish friends from Omaura and JOPO, and to my nice and wise colleagues Jukka Onttonen, Kari Rajaorko, Petri Hänninen, Lahcen Abahas-sine, Jukka Somerharju, Jussi Kähärä, Markku Jahnukainen, Hely Salmi, Ari Enqvist, Timo Liikanen, Pirjo Lampinen, Najat Ouakrim-Soivio, Pasi Majasaari, Elisa Vilpas, and many, many others.

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## A French short story of *pee ale – PL*

Jacques Bonnisseau

Try to explain to a French educator what «*Productive Learning*» (apprentissage productif, in French) is. It sounds like :

- students spend most of their school time in work places...
- do you mean you provide businesses with free work force ? (keep in mind the French traditions of social struggle, Emile Zola's «*Germinal*», ending with the 35 hours work a week employees love, bosses hate..)
- well not really, it's a deal, students learn from experience, everything they do opens new fields of knowledge...
- do you mean washing glasses in a restaurant actually makes you learn something ?
- that's part of the deal, say, students help, tutors open....
- Tutors ?
- I mean people students are working with...
- Before you carry on (remember it's difficult to finish a sentence in a French conversation), when do they actually learn, let's say math for example?
- Well two ways, when they take care of some accounting task at their work place or at school in additional classes they have to take to complete....
- What exactly do they complete ??? do they really get a degree ? the baccalaureate ?

A rather complicated conversation as you can see. French background in education is, may be more than anywhere else, rooted in the tradition of priests' and monks' indoor classroom, spreading out abstract concepts, mainly disconnected from outdoor reality.

I remember Jean Levi, economy teacher so disappointed that his students made little or no connections between school stuff and real life. He was really sad, he said « when students leave school after classes, they have this empty, blank look on their face. When you talk to them about life, social issues, actual questions like for example should we get rid of the Paris stock exchange to build a fairer society?, you can see the spark lighting in their eyes. And Jean Levi decided he would create a school students would run and administer themselves. It would be based on democratic principles, all decisions made by the community of students and teachers, including money, time tables, what to learn, grading... you name it. It was back in 1982, le Lycée Autogéré de Paris opened in September and was - still is - a fabulous experience.

Roughly 200 students, 24 teachers and that's it, inventing step by step new curricula, creating a brand new way of dealing with time, grading, organisation (even the cleaning was done by teachers and students) and voting to make decisions. The students made an application and had to show interest and commitment in order to be admitted. From the very beginning, some teachers managed to introduce « real life » in the school program. Connecting to the world meant achieving what was called « projects », mainly outside the school; a large range of actions from city based researches to trips around the world, like touring a school show in Argentina, or shooting a film of the demonstrations commemorating the death of hunger strikers in Belfast. The school included workshops, and invited many specialists to lecture and share their know-how with students and teachers.

A fabulous but demanding experience to work in such a school: a lot of time spent in conversations, weekly general assemblies, lots of extra hours, incredible commitment of students, great achievements, great shows and an on going learning process for the teachers through numbers of practical experiences. For many students, it was (still is) a second start, a discovery of themselves, of their strong points and the beginning of a successful carrier. Others would not find their place in this framework, and would not feel involved. We had to go out again and find alternative ways for students to find their ways into learning.

The first meeting with what would later become INEPS took place at a Berlin conference of ICEA in the beginning of the 90's. The wall had just been crushed down and people gathered from all over the world to share their ideas and practises: in a few words, it sure takes a village to raise a kid, and that village had better be global too!

We discovered “City As School” New York and “Stadt Als Schule” Berlin, another learning process based on “real life” experiences which give access to knowledge. School is everywhere in the city and the course of the studies is an addition of various internships, gradually building a way to graduation. Learning has to make sense including the famous Bret Schlesinger’s « HaHa situations » (see page ???) practical translation of the “learning as a discovery” motto of City As School.

Innovation in this “learning by doing”-based concept consisted in creating a whole pathway to graduation. For once, those among the students who did not succeed at school weren't kicked out of the school or simply “guided” to unqualified jobs or at best to vocational training many of them had no interest for. Needless to describe the “productive learning” process which can be found in

many other articles of this book; however to make it clear, the whole curriculum was not about learning a job, it was about acquiring academical and practical skills throughout a number of internships at places of resource in the city. Fred Koury founder of CAS NY said, “ Curiosity is the key that opens the door to adventure. For those first students, coming to CAS changed their perception of education. Students who once hated school had new inspiration and motivation.”

Jens Schneider and Ingrid Böhm had long understood that one City as School in Berlin was not enough. Expanding the model demanded to rely on an international community, sharing experiences, building curricula and developing new models fitting the needs of students in different countries. They launched INEPS network, and funded IPLE to train educators and spread the concept and the practice of what they called “Productive learning” (the meaning of which, as you already know, can be confusing). PL, its nickname (pronounce PEE ALE), rather than CAS intended to have a broader view and meant there was no specific model. City as School was one, many other could emerge from local initiatives.

What applied to students did apply to educators and school leaders. Being members of INEPS required more than just sit in conferences and talk; each country should in turn organise the congress of the network and welcome seminars for educators. Learning by doing was each member’s experience. So we welcomed the INEPS congress in Paris in 1994, and visited Berlin’s, Vilafranca del Penedes, New York and many other places’ schools and projects, cities and people. The variety of schools and projects, Danish Produktionsskole, CAS in New York and in Berlin, radio and TV workshop in Catalunya, OMAURA-my-own-carrier network in Finland, and the strong differences between local and national education systems did not allow promoting one single formatted model. It is still one of the main strengths and interests of INEPS network to support members from very different backgrounds, and help them find the best way to develop a PL program in their country. The network provided a number of opportunities to meet and created conditions for peer learning for educators. And workshops to design curricula and processes to meet the conditions to open new schools or programs based on PL.

So educators realised they learned much more in this international framework than in their local context. By expanding our experience of alternative ways of education, we could envision how to adapt them to our local contexts.

In turn what applied to educators should apply to students. So we created Youth congress of INEPS for students to meet and learn from each other’s experienc-

es. The success went way beyond our hopes and expectations; for educators and teachers it was an outstanding opportunity to work together. Each person brought his or her best skills to the organisation: “Adventure learning” model introduced by the Finnish and Swedish delegations, art and land art designing, city discovery, communication games, panel discussions.... Students took a prominent role in the organisation. It was not only a visit; it had to belong to them. Imagine two young Czech deaf ladies giving the first sign language lesson to a totally silent audience of 60 youngsters for over an hour and a half. Not only was it a communication introduction to the youth congress, it carried out the idea we all need the support of others to grow and learn.

After a couple of years of hard and complicated work, the project for CAS in Paris gained enough support to become a reality. The National education board allowed a small school hosted by a larger, regular high school. La Ville Pour Ecole was born at a small scale. The headmaster, Gilbert Longhi offered the premises and his personal contribution to the organisation of the school. A small team of 4 or 5 teachers, 30 to 40 high school students who had dropped out and rejected school, a couple of rooms, a couple of offices, telephone internet (which was scarce), that's what it was at the beginning.

To make it short, students followed four steps: first find oneself at home at school, second go out in the city to experience and learn, third make choices to design a personal curriculum either at school or in apprenticeship or to work and fourth, master the necessary skills to make that choice possible.

It then evolved in different ways, introducing a computer-based “learnshop” with free access for students and individual support by educators and a “project learning process” in which students would achieve a personal project with the help of skilled resource persons who would guide and support them.

The “International Solidarity School” joined the school. PL was based on development projects with African countries. Today the “Pôle Innovant Lycéen” gathers 4 small schools between which students can choose depending on their needs.

As all education initiatives, LVPE and the “Pôle Innovant Lycéen” have their numerous success stories to tell. It is a home for many youngsters, who regain self-esteem, discover their potential, enjoy success and find their place in society.

It is certainly not the only PL place in France. The “Maisons Familiales et Rurales” have long based their learning process on a professional experience- based

curriculum, which takes place mainly in rural surroundings. At a smaller scale, “Nouvelles Chances” projects have introduced learning by doing situations, including closed partnerships with artists and scientists. Not to mention number of “in school” initiatives bringing the world inside the school walls, the most impressive of which is probably a circus based learning, including a long term setting up of a circus’ big top in the school yard.

This colourful and rich landscape has long demonstrated its success and its tremendous effects on students’ career paths. However these schools and projects are too often small scale and isolated initiatives. What about moving from alternative education into mainstream education?

Education is mostly based on traditions, customs and the personal history of educators (see the conversation above). It takes a lot of training to introduce new models and get teachers to open up to the world and come out of the regular circles of their own educational system. It is precisely what IPLE and INEPS agenda have all been about. An international teaching experience or training session is the shortest and the most efficient way to broaden the views and skills for teachers, educators and school leaders.

That is probably the next step, not only to develop an alternative school model, but to introduce at a large scale an international training framework for educators. Let’s acknowledge it has been the commitment of those who carried out spreading PL internationally, namely Bret Schlesinger, Jens Schneider, Ingrid Böhm and many others, remarkable women and men, whose inspiring example should largely be spread, advertised and expanded.

## **Productive Learning and school development in Germany**

Ingrid Böhm, Heike Borkenhagen, Holger Mirow and Jens Schneider

### **The emergence of Productive Learning**

The history of *Productive Learning* did not start with the foundation of our Institute. In fact, it began when Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider had dinner together on the top of a skyscraper at the Columbus Circle in New York City. In 1983 they decided to found a “*Stadt-als-Schule*” (City-as-School) in Berlin, after having visited the City-As-School in New York City.

The reasons for this decision were their personal experiences at school, at first as students and later professionally, as a maths and music teacher and a social worker and social educator. Another reason for their decision was of course the vivid debate about education and its necessary reform after 1968, the introduction of the “*Gesamtschule*” (comprehensive school), as well as the foundation of independent and of “free” schools in Germany, the U.S. and in many other countries. Names such as A.S. Neill and his *Summerhill School*, Ivan Illich and “*De-schooling*”, Paulo Freire and his “*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*” and their German counterparts Hartmut von Hentig and Oscar Negt were omnipresent in the discussion about school reforms.

The political movement of citizens that initiated at American and European universities was also an upheaval against the traditional educational system. Left-wing and liberal groups saw the educational system as the reason for a widely spread authoritarianism causing apathy towards undemocratic and unjust, economic, public and societal structures. From their point of view the “hidden curriculum” as well as the exclusion of disadvantaged socio-economic groups from societal participation was the tool of the people in power to preserve social structures.

The attempt to reform schools with the „*Gesamtschule*“ did not really succeed, as its basic understanding was rather technological and so the innovative educational ideas of the younger teachers in the 70s had been (more or less) abandoned due to a gradual exhaustion as they got older.

In this situation of radical change that lasted well into the 1980s, Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider founded the Youth Education Centre *Die Stadt-als-Schule*

*Berlin* (City-as-School Berlin) together with a development group in 1987. In 1991 the out-of-school project was transformed in a school pilot project with 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. In 2002 the pilot project evolved into a permanent “school of particular educational character” which was integrated into a secondary school in 2010 adding unique distinction to it.

#### *From Die Stadt-als-Schule Berlin to IPLE*

Both founders were deeply impressed by their experiences as educators in *Die Stadt-als-Schule Berlin* which together with their international networking activities led to the preparation and further development of the *city as school concept*. They founded the *Institute for Productive Learning in Europe (IPLE)*, as an Affiliated Institute of the Alice Salomon University of Berlin, and the *International Network of Productive Learning Projects and Schools (INEPS)*.

What fascinated and moved them so much in the four years of their educational work at *Die Stadt-als-Schule* that it later heavily influenced their professional lives? In short: It was the enthusiasm, seriousness, determination that they saw in the young people – many doing their tasks and reflecting on them – if they were *their own*. The willingness to act and, often enough from practical necessity, occupy oneself with questions and topics evolving from the activities and their surrounding practice fuelled the engine of self-education of these young people. Education received *personal meaning* and only as such it became education at all, in the sense that the school founders understood the word. This concept proved to be highly feasible on the individual student’s educational level. It won the city as school approach its fascination and its driving force.

Already during their educational work at *Die Stadt-als-Schule* the need arose to develop a conceptual theory to describe the successful practice. Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider began with that, having the opportunity with the pressure of the successful educational practice, but only in 1992 when they acquired the “*Productive Learning in Europe Project*” financed by the European Union, the German Federal Government and the Berlin City Council it was carried out in cooperation with 12 schools and educational institutions across six European countries.

The result was not only the theoretical concept of *Productive Learning*, what was named *IPLE*’s founders educational vision, but also a project-oriented qualification programme for the educators who were introducing the *Productive Learning* concept. They planned to have correspondence courses in conjunction

with on-campus courses and on-site consultations in the involved schools and institutions. They identified 12 theoretical and methodological aspects of the pedagogy of *Productive Learning* and conceptually developed those in the form of "Study Letters", partially with the help of others. The seminars' contents followed these aspects as well, utilizing methods describing the individual topic and its practical implementation.

At the end of the project in 1995 *IPL* could not only establish the success of both concepts, but also achieved a complete set of instruments to disseminate *Productive Learning* internationally.

### *Berlin*

The 1990s in Germany were characterized by the reunification of the two German states, which affected all parts of society. Not only politically and economically, but also in terms of public and private institutions adjustments and developments were necessary for the accession of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) to the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and its constitution.

The education system that is specifically regulated in Germany in accordance with the federal principle in each province had to be set up from scratch in the 'new states' on the territory of the former GDR. In Berlin the school structures in the East had to be adapted to the school system of West Berlin. Many officials inside the ministries, school boards and also school principals were replaced by politically 'correct' people from East and West and these people often showed a willingness to innovate and develop. This development process in education facilitated our efforts towards innovation at school; perhaps without the reunification we would not have been successful.

A first major success came in 1996 in Berlin, when the European Social Fund (ESF) could be used for experimental school programs of *Productive Learning*. In association with the Berlin Ministry of Employment the school administration could be convinced that the model 'City-as-School,' which had gained recognition, should be used to offer students at the risk of failure a promising alternative, and also to provide professional orientation. Here, as ever since the 80s, the high school drop-out rates as well as rising youth unemployment were the main reasons for the willingness of school authorities to allow *Productive Learning* as an alternative to the 'subject based' curriculum and to permit school degrees on this basis.

In the years between 1996 and 2002 seven pilot projects of *Productive Learning* were set up in secondary schools (*Hauptschule*), five programs in special educational centres and three in extra-curricular projects. The experimental programs at '*Hauptschule*' were successful and today the 14 *PL* sites in Integrated Secondary Schools are essentially based on its curricular and methodological design, which allows the participant three days of 'learning in practice' at self-selected placements outside the school, often in companies , but also in social and cultural institutions.

The school programs in special educational centres were also successful, but the design was oriented more closely on the curriculum of regular schools, and the practice was organized within the school. All participating schools founded 'student enterprises' whose 'operations' were increasingly inter-linked with the subject-oriented learning. The co-operation with the special schools was regrettably ended by an administrative decision in 2000. The *Productive Learning* projects in special education centres continued their work under a pilot project for student enterprises and contributed with the results of the developments which were made there. Two schools kept the contact with our institute tenaciously and gained the acceptance of *Productive Learning* within the corresponding regulation. These conditions allowed for a convergence with the *Productive Learning* at '*Hauptschule*' and allowed the establishment of additional *PL*-programs in special needs schools.

The non-formal education projects worked very successfully with the school programs and increasingly co-operated with other schools in the region. As a consequence of the expiry of the European funding, only one project continued to work as part of a 'consulting house' for young people in the district.

The curricular and methodological development work in Berlin was characterized by two goals from the beginning, between which a partial 'conflict' exists: On the one hand, the development of individual curricula was intensified; these were meant to link the learning consistently with the interests and the practical experiences of individuals. This proved to be the key to success; especially for attracting those young people back to learning, whose academic success in the subject-oriented curriculum was or is at risk.

On the other hand, it was intended that *Productive Learning* was to cast off the 'stigma' to be a 'program for at-risk-students' only. With the transfer to a regular school program *PL* was to be opened to all levels of education and corresponding school degrees. Therefore, integration within the regulatory framework

was necessary, and the pressure increased to prove the 'equivalence' of *Productive Learning* with the requirements of traditional school degrees.

At the beginning of the experimental phase the development of 'Learning in Practice' and the 'Communication Group' was the main focus. For these 'new' components of the curriculum no routines existed. The accompaniment of the learning in real-life situations, the reflection and the deepening of the experience inside the school were the main topics of the teacher training and the curricular and methodological development.

Increasing attention was paid to the integration of the 'subject learning', especially the 'cultural skills' of reading and writing (English, German) and calculation (Mathematics). From 2001 onwards, these disciplines within the *Learning in Practice* have been identified as separate areas of assessment. This ensured that the rules of the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK) for all secondary school qualifications were met. It also facilitated the re-organization of the experimental programs in 2002, which were then permitted to allocate all school degrees up to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

The inter-weaving of personal interests, practical experience and 'learning objects' was (and remains to the present) a central issue of development and training. The educators tested and developed different ways: they combined individual learning and group work, developed links 'from practice' such as the *Individual Productive Tasks* ; 'from the subjects' e.g. by using 'discovery tasks' to identify the meaning of Mathematics, English etc. in the field of practice; and 'from the person' - for example by using very personal experiences as an inspiration for learning projects. The methodological diversity is a response to the very different learning abilities and aptitudes of young people. It is often characterised by the need to develop the necessary independence of young people step by step and to avoid excessive demands.

#### *Productive Learning and the „Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)”*

In 2001, the OECD published the results of the „Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)”, and the results of German students were below average. The multi-faceted discussion of the results and its conclusions cannot be discussed here, but three points ought to be mentioned, which seem significant to us for the acceptance and development of *Productive Learning* in Berlin and nationally:

- The survey formulated explicitly the intention to '*go beyond the measurement of school knowledge and to capture the ability to use domain-specific knowledge and domain-specific skills for dealing with authentic problems*' (cf. basic concept of the international PISA project). This objective and any related discussion of competency-based educational standards were an encouragement for *Productive Learning*, with its emphasis on the 'application of knowledge and skills'.
- The PISA results also promoted the discussion of 'comparability' of school performance and strengthened the advocates of central examinations. In 2003, the KMK published national educational standards for the Intermediate School Certificate (ISC) after the 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2005, the Berlin administration introduced examinations for the ISC; which are also obligatory for students of *Productive Learning*. Their impact is viewed very differently. On the one hand, the tests are seen as a 'step back', because they facilitate a purely subject-oriented 'learning for the test'. On the other hand, it has been said that the participation of the PL-students in central tests has increased the social recognition of *Productive Learning* as an equivalent course of education. The proportion of students in *Productive Learning* which obtain an ISC remained constant - regardless of the test format. About 20 % of the PL-students gained an ISC in Berlin.<sup>3</sup>
- Once again, the PISA study reinforced the attention to the problem of risk groups. The high proportion of pupils in the study who reached only the lowest proficiency levels (nearly 20%), as well as the considerably high rate of students who leave school without any school degree (about 10 %) were and are perceived as unacceptable. In 2007, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education (KMK) formulated the decision to '*reduce the number of pupils leaving school without qualifications, secure transition and reduce the number of drop-outs*'. *Productive Learning* was mentioned as an example for the prevention of dropping out of school.

In 2005, the experimental programs at secondary schools and special needs centres were transferred to regular programs. The curriculum and the forms of assessment were approved and incorporated into the relevant school regulations. More schools have been given the opportunity to establish *Productive Learning*.

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3 About 60 % of the PL-students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade reach the „Erweiterter Hauptschulabschluss“ and 20 % leave school without a school degree.

### *Integration of different school types in secondary education*

In Berlin, a recent milestone in the development was the structural reform of the school system, which was introduced with the new Education Act 2010. The spectrum of school types was reduced by integrating 'Hauptschule', 'Realschule' and 'Gesamtschule' into one type of school: the Integrated Secondary School (ISS). Today, there exist only two major types of schools in secondary education: the ISS, mainly targeting the preparation for vocational schools and training, and the grammar school ('Gymnasium') mainly targeting the preparation for university. The special needs educational centres still exist; their prospects depend on the outcome of the ongoing debate on 'inclusion in education'.

*Productive Learning* is now mentioned in the Educational Act as a form of 'Dual Learning'. Dual Learning is defined as a '*meaningful link between school learning and learning at the practice place*' and shall prepare and facilitate the transition to the world of work. Interestingly, Dual Learning is not defined as a 'school subject', but permits the connecting of diverse curricular activities in all grades from 7th to 10th grade.

Today, every Integrated Secondary School in Berlin has the opportunity to introduce *Productive Learning*. All school degrees of secondary education are accessible and also a possible transition to the upper level. However, the implementing regulations specify *Productive Learning* as a '*special organizational form of Dual Learning (practical learning)* for students who are likely not to reach a school degree without participating in that particular form of education.'

This is a reflection of the 'ambivalence' of the developments that have taken place in the last 20 years in Berlin. On the one hand, *Productive Learning* contributed substantially to the school development and has become a statutory part of the Berlin school. On the other hand, *Productive Learning* is still seen as an offer for 'at risk students' within the regulatory framework and, therefore, in public perception as well.

### *Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt*

Since 2001, the Institute tried to gain a foothold in other Federal States. Initially, Brandenburg's former Minister for Education took an interest in the programme and a little later Saxony-Anhalt as well, when a Government Official in charge of students with learning difficulties attended a Forum on *Productive Learning*. In

both Federal States many administrative obstacles and funding difficulties had to be overcome before seven school projects could begin. Motivation of both Departments for Education – as of other Federal States following later – was an alarmingly high rate of school failures.

*Productive Learning* was just as successful in those two large surface states as in Berlin. It was possible to find practice places in (mostly small) enterprises and institutions in the “lowlands” also. Students, parents and teachers were willing to participate and the school success as well as the transitions to vocational trainings and job preparations were predominantly accomplished.

While Saxony-Anhalt expanded *Productive Learning* on a state-wide level in consequence of that and introduced it to 21 schools, Brandenburg kept only the seven pilot school programmes for mostly unknown reasons despite their success. Several tries by the Institute to achieve an expansion of *Productive Learning* were rejected by the Department for Education.

### *Thuringia*

In Thuringia *Productive Learning* made its way into the relevant Ministry via the State’s Prime Minister. The desire “from upstairs” reinforced the previously weakened tendency of officials to take care of *Productive Learning*. They had already conducted trials of programmes for students at risk to fail and permanently established this concept. However, they needed methodological training which was offered by the *IPL*.

In 2006 a two year qualification programme was established, which was attended by 17 teachers from seven schools. The project allowed further development of educational opportunities towards *Productive Learning*. Efforts were made by three of the schools during the qualification. However the opportunity remained in all schools for students who were particularly weak in regular classrooms. The project was according to participating schools very successful and in consequence of that a significant expansion had been planned by the Ministry with the *IPL* providing the consultation and qualification. However, the *IPL* had to compete with an influential regional provider, and it was decided in favour of them. Various statements made by teachers who trained at the *IPL* indicated that the qualification left much to be desired.

### *Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania*

At the beginning of 2001 we approached the Ministry for Education of the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in North-East Germany, to propose the introduction of *Productive Learning*. We knew that the state was highly interested in reducing the high proportion of pupils leaving school without qualifications. We earned a lot of acceptance among officials and organised information events about *Productive Learning*. Several schools took part and were interested in the introduction of *PL*. The first attempt however failed because the institution's remaining European Social Funds had to be used for "school support centres", in which maladjusted students were temporarily cared for and occupied.

Two years later, we turned again to the Ministry for Education, because we knew from experience that at the end of an ESF funding period some of the money had often not been used, despite being earmarked. To the surprise of the Ministry we had the chance to get ESF-money to start a pilot project at six schools. The Department for Education wanted this all the more since the established "school support centres" had not achieved the expected success in supporting maladjusted school children.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs encouraged the Department for Education in working with young people at risk of school failure and to really innovate education instead of imposing "general support measures". They were prepared to use European Funds for it. The responsible official received support for *Productive Learning* from inside the Department and the Minister for Education of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in particular.

The project could only start at the beginning of the next school year, which was connected with considerable difficulties, that were overcome by a strong interest in this new form of education and a strong commitment by the people involved. The pilot project had borne fruit in a relatively short time, increasing the State's willingness to expand *Productive Learning*. Through the Ministry for Education's considerable political efforts it was possible to secure funds from the subsequent ESF funding period 2007-2013 for a state-wide expansion of *Productive Learning* in initially 25 and finally 27 sites. Each student should be granted access to *Productive Learning* when needed.

The Department for Education and in particular the responsible official were determined to make *Productive Learning* a driver of school development for Se-

kundarstufe I (Secondary School Level) towards practice-related and individualised learning. The term “Flexible Schulausgangsphase” (Flexible school-leaving phase), borrowed from Finnish school development, described the plan to allow students to extend their school days for up to two years. This should allow them to aim for the best school qualification without the pressure of time.

The Ministry for Education established a planning unit on the basis of our proposal, with the task to design the “Flexible School-leaving Phase” and its legal framework. This reflected the intention of the Ministry to keep school principals, members of administrative staff, *PL* teachers and representatives of the Department continuously involved in the school development.

The *IPL* was also represented in the planning unit and a driving force in the planning process, with support from the Ministry who on their part found the political and legal form for the implementation of our concepts. The *IPL*’s positive and negative experiences in the other three Federal States gave this planning unit a clear advantage. The result was an “ordinance” including a “conceptual framework” for *Productive Learning*. *PL* became a part of the regular school system in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

*Productive Learning* has been successfully established in all 27 schools that took part in the pilot project. As seen in other Federal States as well, it was the intensive two-year training next to the educational concept that changed the teachers’ traditional role as subject teachers to a new self-understanding as educators of *Productive Learning*. The goal of the Ministry for Education to reduce the number of unqualified school drop-outs was reached. About 80 % of the students received the desired certificate and about 50 % of them were giving a training place in enterprises.

In agreement with the Ministry for Education four *PL*- educators qualified for “project consultants” who took over quality assurance and quality development after the introduction of *Productive Learning*. These qualifications will also be completed by the end of the project in the summer of 2012.

The effectiveness of *Productive Learning* was used by the Ministry for Education to apply educational principles and methodology of this form of education to the regular school system as well. Since 2009 three *PL* schools carry out the project “*Handeln, Erkunden, Entdecken (HEE)*” (“*Take action, Explore, Discover*”), which has been initiated and developed scientifically by the *IPL* through means of trainings, consultancy and project evaluation. Further plans are in the start-up phase.

For us, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania is a shining example of how a school innovation can be realised with the collaboration of everyone involved in this reform – if such a need exists and is generally accepted.

### *Saxonia*

#### *Project objective and structure*

In 2008 the *IPL*E took part in a contest for „Practical Learning“ ideas in the Federal State of Saxony. The State Department for Culture and Education in Saxony decided in favour of the *IPL*E’s concept. The State’s Ministry supported a project to accompany *Productive Learning* at seven schools in Saxony from 2008 to 2014. The ESF application by the *IPL*E had been approved for a period from 2008 to 2013 and later prolonged by amendment to 2014.

The Federal State of Saxony’s objective was to reduce the number of school drop-outs currently leaving schools without a qualification (9 %). The Department for Culture and Education predefined that *Productive Learning in Saxony* may only be targeted at students threatened by failure in *Hauptschule* (“lower secondary general school”).

The project’s components are:

- a three year training course for teachers taking part in the project
- a two and half year consultancy training for 2 *PL* certified teachers
- consultations at the 7 participating schools and *PL* teams
- self-evaluation at the schools
- project development reports and evaluation by the *IPL*E
- external project evaluation by the Institute of School Pedagogics at the University of Rostock particularly with regard to students’ educational development and teachers’ competence development.

The teachers’ vocational training programme in Saxony is a three year course as opposed to two years from other *Productive Learning* projects, which includes a one year preparatory phase as requested by the State’s Department. Although this violates the „linking practice with training“ principle it allows educators to carefully prepare themselves for practice.

At the beginning of the project the Department for Culture and Education of Saxony established a project advisory board which includes the *IPL*E as a member. The project advisory board coordinates activities and measures and promptly resolves difficulties anybody involved might have.

#### *Participating schools and teachers*

*Productive Learning* is being conducted at 7 secondary schools in Saxony. Each site has two *Productive Learning* groups of up to 20 students, one group of the 8<sup>th</sup> and the other of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Two educators are responsible for all learning areas in one learning group.

By the end of the project a total of 35 teachers will have participated in the vocational training programme „*Productive Learning in Europe*“ of the *IPL*E. The State's Department for Culture and Education in Saxony will select two of these certified educators for attending another training programme to qualify as „*Project Consultants for Productive Learning*“ in January 2012. The participants will be prepared to take over the tasks of further education and consulting at the 7 *Productive Learning* schools after the conclusion of the project.

#### *Participating students*

A total of 600 students will participate in *Productive Learning* in Saxony through the entire course of the project. During a six week orientation phase, following the admission procedures at the begin of the school year, students become acquainted with *Productive Learning* and later decide together with the educators whether *Productive Learning* is an appropriate type of education for them.

A particular challenge in Saxony is the low number of applicants. Due to demographic change schools are threatened with closure and try to keep their students. Also striking is the low number of girls taking an interest in *Productive Learning*. Possible reasons for this could be:

- Boys are more likely to come into conflict with school than girls. Girls would adapt to difficult situations more easily and remain “undetected”.
- Boys are more attracted by the practical relevance of *Productive Learning* than girls.
- The diversity of *Learning in Practice* is not sufficiently clear to girls

Consultations and seminars at the *PL* - sites in Saxony have regularly revealed difficult school biographies and life situations of participants (examples for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of students):

- The majority of participants were studying in a higher year than the corresponding grade (having stayed down one or more years). A quarter of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade learning group had last successfully passed the 6<sup>th</sup> grade or lower.
- More than half of the participants did not live with both parents; The percentage of students receiving additional care by public social services was close to or even above 50 % at some sites.
- In large cities the proportion of students diagnosed with special therapeutic or educational needs was also about 50%. The number of school drop-outs was partially linked with admission to therapeutic services.
- The proportion of youths in all schools who had previously come into conflict with the law was never below one third, sometimes even above two thirds.
- With regard to alcohol and drug abuse, teachers estimated approximately one third at one site and at two other sites even four fifths of students were at risk.

#### *Project evaluation*

Teachers, the *IPL* and the University of Rostock, all evaluate the educational programme with varying emphasis. Since a detailed description of the results goes beyond the scope of this report, below is a brief summary:

- Significant educational achievements of students are evident
- Almost three quarters (73 %) of the first year's students reached the *Hauptschulabschluss* (lower secondary general education certificate), 13 % of those reached the *qualifizierenden Hauptschulabschluss* (qualifying lower secondary general education certificate).
- The majority of the first generation of students has *Productive Learning* with realistic future employment prospects.
- Various surveys conducted by the *IPL* and the University of Rostock as well as the present annual evaluation of the *PL*-sites suggest a positive personal development of students, especially with regard to their attitude towards learning and confidence in their own abilities and opportunities as well as their general behaviour.

The majority of surveyed parents of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of students describe a positive development in their children:

- Positive changes in the attitude toward learning and school
- Improvement in educational attainment
- Developing of qualities such as confidence / self-esteem, independence, responsibility / reliability and attentiveness
- positive changes in terms of preparation for professional prospects and a positive future orientation
- positive changes on a social and communicative level

The school biographies and life situations of the students, some of which were very difficult, heavily influenced the educational work. They often required considerable support and had a negative impact on learning. The scientific monitoring by the *IPL-E* has received an overwhelmingly positive evaluation by teachers in all aspects of consulting and training.

### *Conclusions and outlook*

All evaluation results indicate a positive course of the project and a broad acceptance among everyone involved. An important basis for this are the strong commitment of all educators involved in the project, the close cooperation and absolute trust between all parties as well as their constructive and solutions-oriented cooperation on the project advisory board.

In perspective it will be important to assure the continuation of *Productive Learning* after the end of the project in 2014 and its quality. Quality assurance includes regular evaluation of the educational work, further training opportunities for educators and consultants, regular exchange between the parties in Saxony and protagonists from other regions, as well as the participation of project sites in Saxony in the developments in other Federal States.

Since the State Department for Culture and Education in Saxony has not planned to expand *Productive Learning*, it is still necessary to consider whether *Productive Learning* should be used to develop further educational opportunities.

## **Prospects of *Productive Learning* and the work of the *IPL* in Germany**

*Quality management and the development of Productive Learning in the final years of secondary school*

The concept of *Productive Learning* for the grades 8 to 10 was approved. Since its introduction in Berlin, *PL* has helped more than 10 000 students at risk of academic failure to obtain a school degree, and to develop prospects for life and employment. Therefore, securing the conditions and quality standards is an important task that includes teacher training as well as networking and evaluation.

This success should also support the expansion of *PL*-programs and the introduction of *Productive Learning* in other federal states. A pilot project in Schleswig-Holstein was established a short while ago, and talks with relevant ministries in other federal states are being held. The political intention to halve the rate of school leavers without a school degree should promote this. There already are initiatives in various regions that often can be co-operated with by using the methodology of *Productive Learning* for improving the existing programs.

### *Development of more programs in all grades of secondary education*

In recent decades, school and education in Germany has changed and undergone substantial development. Apart from the introduction of ‘competency based standards’ mentioned above, the following can be found on the agenda: individualization of learning, opening-up of school, practice orientation, cross-disciplinary learning. Current examples (already mentioned) are the ‘Flexible School Leaving Phase’ in Mecklenburg-Pomerania and ‘Dual Learning’ in Berlin.

The experiences and methods of *Productive Learning* can contribute to these areas. It is important to develop models and educational offers for all grades, which can also be realized with fewer curricular changes, e.g. in the form of a day of practice or project learning per week. We expect that, in this way, the number of students that benefit from the programs will significantly expand and that participation in school development as a whole is being strengthened.

In Berlin, where the *IPL* has been supporting a number of schools for several years within the framework of such a ‘transfer project’, important experiences were gained. The results of the project *HEE* in Mecklenburg-Pomerania (7<sup>th</sup>

grade) are testimony to the significant interest from schools and good development opportunities.

In addition, *Productive Learning* can contribute to inclusion in education, as the individualization of learning is a constituent feature of its approach. The co-operation with centres of special needs education, the integration of students with special needs in *PL*, and the great heterogeneity in learning groups provide interesting examples and experiences for this important issue.

#### *Introducing Productive Learning in vocational education*

Vocational training in Germany is determined by the ‘duality’ of practical training in enterprises and lessons in vocational schools. The model is regarded internationally as exemplary and provides favourable structural conditions for a close link between ‘theory and practice.’ However, these possibilities are not exhausted in many areas. There are courses of vocational orientation and preparation for young people who do not move directly from school into vocational training, and these are predisposed for introducing *Productive Learning* in our point of view. The experiences gained from a first pilot project at a vocational school in Berlin are quite promising. *Productive Learning* in particular opened-up prospects for young people who want to ‘get into real-life’ and whose interests are not met by the often limited range of workshops within schools.

#### *Co-operation with universities in research and education*

The co-operation with universities will be continued and expanded. The *IPL* is an affiliated institute of the Alice Salomon University of Applied Sciences, which operates in the fields of health, social work and education. Co-operation in applied research as well as in teaching, e.g. in the areas of ‘non-traditional students’ and ‘innovative teaching methods’, is under discussion.

We consider the collaboration with the University of Rostock as very important as well. The external evaluation of the projects in Mecklenburg-Pomerania and Saxony, carried out by the Institute for School Education, provides important results and suggestions for the development work. It also contributes to the visibility of *Productive Learning* in the public and political domain.

## Why the soil is fertile for *Productive Learning* in Greece

Angela Passa

### More than an introduction

When I was asked some time ago to participate in the *IPLÉ*'s Symposium and the anniversary of the 20 years during which the *IPLÉ* has been in the front line of educational struggles, I accepted the invitation willingly because personally and my organization PROTASI owe a lot to what *IPLÉ* represents. I feel much honored about this invitation and I thank the *IPLÉ* for giving me a great opportunity to speak about my country - especially at this difficult stage. Before I come to the point, I would like to explain a little bit about the situation today in Greece, according to my personal philosophy and the philosophy that PROTASI is based on.

Most of you know what the media tell us, but there are also other aspects which are not known to you. Although all Greek citizens are forced to obey the political, economic, social restrictions, inhuman rules and non-democratic decisions which are imposed on Greece, this doesn't mean that we are all responsible for the breakdown of the state.

Basically the Greeks are divided into two big categories. The citizens of the mainstream Greece and the citizens of the parallel Greece. Although the citizens of the parallel Greece are not the majority, this does not mean that they don't exist. They usually fight without too much noise, pushed by the media and the establishment to the margins of social life, trying to prevent and to cure the side-effects of the major political decisions which serve the dominant ideology of capitalism. And as you know, capitalism doesn't have a nationality.

But it is better to explain practically how the people of the parallel Greece think and understand the reality.

- The citizens of the parallel Greece are characterized by a *dialectic way of thinking*. There is a dialectic connection between what they believe and what they do. This means that they try to realize what they believe, and if they realize that something doesn't lead them to their goals then they renegotiate their attitudes and try again in real life situations. The action is the key that will justify their theories. This interaction of theory and practice is the process that prevents from making mistakes. The contradiction between

the words and the actions is the main characteristic of the citizens and politicians of the modern overly consumerist Greece.

- The citizens of the parallel Greece have developed *to a big degree the process of self-awareness*. They are found in a continuous contact with their internal ‘world’, their internal ‘environment’. They are trying to answer to existential questions ‘who I am, where do I go and why?’ At the same time, they are in a continuous attempt to understand the external reality, the external environment.

While the citizens of the modern Greece see the symptoms of a situation and try to face it, the citizens of the parallel Greece are aware of the fact that the problem is ‘the illness’ and not the symptoms. They search for the reasons and they intervene mainly (in the illness) without ignoring the symptoms. For those of us who are involved in the prevention of the addiction from drugs, this is a very familiar and comprehensible process.

The people of modern Greece talk and understand today’s social crisis only as an economic crisis that took them by surprise and upset them. The people of parallel Greece perceive *the economic crisis as part of a bigger and more general crisis* that was hidden for many years under many levels and in many fields, in short, in all of society. This crisis was causing a lot of symptoms in the natural and human environment. The causes of this crisis are found in the modern lifestyle and the overly consumerist, materialistic model which shapes our daily life.

After this reference to the way of the citizens’ thinking in parallel Greece, let me give some examples of these attitudes and behaviors in practical issues, when people are called upon to take certain decisions.

1. One very important characteristic of the people in parallel Greece is that, whatever happens to them individually and to their environment, they search for the responsibility essentially within themselves. They investigate their *personal part of responsibility* in order to change their behavior. Next they search for the responsibilities of the others with the intention not to blame, accuse or to scorn them, but to stimulate and encourage them to understand their behaviors and to become more functional. What is dominant nowadays in Greece is the fact that the majority of the citizens in modern Greece don’t really recognize their responsibilities and they blame (for all major or minor situations) the others who can be their companion,

their partner, their boss, the government, the European Community, the Germans etc. The truth is that all of us, to a bigger or smaller degree, and according to the different roles we play, we are responsible for what is going on in the society.

2. A second characteristic is that *the meritocracy, the transparency, the objectiveness and all the elements of a correct evaluation* towards everyday life are merits that are primarily engrained in us. We are trained not to be led by egocentrism. Consequently, we demand these merits from others, the community, and the government. It is irrational to refuse any evaluation of our work because we are afraid of the criticism of the evaluators. The negative attitude towards evaluation indicates irresponsibility and indifference.
3. A third fundamental characteristic of the people in parallel Greece is the *democratic sensitivity and the respect for diversity* in every place where human relations occur. We defend, in the best way possible, the basic principle of democracy according to which all the citizens have equal rights and obligations. The width of the rights of each citizen is extended to the point that he/she starts restricting the rights of another citizen. For example, maybe I like listening to loud music up to the point that another citizen starts to be annoyed, because all citizens have the right to quietness. I have the right to demonstrate my opposition to a law or a situation up to the point that I don't prevent my fellow citizen to have a different opinion or behavior. We fight for the right of a person to be on strike and protest if he/she decides to do so. But another person who doesn't want to be on strike and protest has the same democratic right to support his/her attitude. Threats and violence towards somebody who doesn't want to participate in something he/she hasn't chosen himself/herself, is a non-democratic way to defend our rights. The same non-democratic situation occurs if somebody doesn't allow his/her fellow citizen to go to his/her job by locking him/her out of his/her work place, or prevent him/her to drive his/her car by closing the roads or study by seizing his/her school. If some minorities or even majorities try to impose their attitudes in such violent ways, using the tools of their job which have been entrusted to them by their managers for different reasons, then it is possible that they can use trucks, lorries, trains, boats even tanks some times.

Although these examples maybe considered very complicated with lots of pros and cons, I would like to make two important statements.

- a) There is a very common agnostic mistake - that of 'black and white'. In our society people are not separated in the people of modern Greece on the one side, and the people of the parallel Greece on the other. While it is clear that there are two policies, one dominant and the other in parallel, which fight with one another, it happens that 'inside' the citizens there simultaneously exist both of them which also contradict each other. Which one will dominate the other is a personal issue and the choice of every individual. In most of the people there happens to be a very clear superiority of one of the two policies but there are also too many people who are moving between the two policies, and depending on the conditions, they show a tendency either to the one or to the other option. This is the percentage of people who we can approach, affect and whose positive side we can encourage.
- b) Every one of us is facing this struggle on a personal level. It is the 'battle of the opposites' we expect and which, before too long, will lead us towards an evolution. On a practical level, if we are interested in promoting the policy of the parallel Greece, we need - in every small or big way - to check our attitude and think about it. Which policy does it serve? Only if we are in a state of constant questioning within ourselves (this is a basic precondition) we'll be able to determine the correctness of our process. This constant confronting of ourselves is also our basic tool to inspire and motivate other people. We all know that people change not only through words but basically by experiencing the behaviors of others - and only if they are mature enough, or if they have chosen themselves to change.

If I was asked to determine who is the best version of a Greek citizen I would say:

„It is a person who appreciates education and culture, is conscientious and has got ethos and morals. He/she sets goals and works for their implementation in a methodic and professional way, with persistence. He/she interprets the phenomena and the situations in a rational way with a clear mind, without simplifications and sudden impulses. He/she is extrovert and is not afraid of antagonism. He/she is proud of his/her background and history but he/she doesn't consider them as a passport for a special treatment by the others. He/she preserves and promotes the positive values of the Greek society such as solidarity, hospitality and strong family bonds“.

On the contrary, and maybe this is the model that the MM promotes which is predominant at the moment, we have the Greek 'macho man' with an oriental mentality. He was brought up with the stereotype of the privileged people who

were able to create the Parthenon ‘while the other people were still eating oak-galls’. It is impossible for him to act as a member of an entire whole. He thinks that he has only rights and no obligations. He drives his car aggressively, he parks his car wherever he wants whilst ignoring the restrictions, he smokes in smoke free places, he throws his garbage everywhere, he takes arbitrary decisions and he doesn’t respect the rules of social co-existence. He provokes and laughs at people with different attitudes. He feeds and maintains the patronage political system, getting profit for himself while he is transformed to a little satrap when he is given some power.

Maybe by describing the two sides of the Greek reality most of you will recognize common elements in your national realities. I don’t believe that the description above exists only in Greece. And this is what we should take into consideration.

I made this brief reference to the present situation in Greece and the parallel Greece not as an apology but mostly in order to combine it with the principles, the values and the visions of what *Productive Learning* represents today.

The methodology of *Productive Learning* is the building that stands on the top of the foundations. What we have in common in our work at PROTASI are these foundations, meaning the values and visions for the future of our children.

PROTASI met *INEPS*, *IPLE* and *Productive Learning* in 1996 and since then we follow a parallel process, building bridges, connecting our practices, exchanging our ideas and producing new ones.

*If we were to compare Productive Learning with the Parallel Greece I presented before, there would be certain points that are common to both e.g. the dialectic way of thinking, the process of self-awareness, the perception of what the crisis means today, the taking on of personal responsibility, the struggle for meritocracy, transparency, objectiveness, democracy, diversity and many more.*

*I am also convinced that Productive Learning is a way to achieve all the principles mentioned above, and the values, not only in the Parallel Greece but also in the Parallel Germany, France, Italy, Portugal etc.*

*This is my focal point, and I hope that the Symposium will generate an optimistic atmosphere so that we can further bring Productive Learning into mainstream education keeping all the values that it represents.*

In our Youth Center in PROTASI - which is mainly a non-governmental organization working in the field for the prevention of addictive substances, we have implemented the project PLOUTOS (**Productive Learning OUTOf School**).

PLOUTOS in the Greek language means 'WEALTH'

### What is our project 'PLOUTOS'?

*Productive Learning* out of school is connected with the basic principles of *Productive Learning* in school, lifelong learning, Community and Health Education.

The main aim for a young person to lead a meaningful life free of addictive substances and addictive behaviors - which condemn people to a life of misery - is empowered by the following goals of PLOUTOS.

1. The radical and deep changes within the scientific, technological, economic, social and cultural areas which define our world are creating an urgent need to update and continuously improve the knowledge and skills of citizens in order to be able to respond to the increasing demands in their personal and professional lives. This means the broadening of the learning process and the supply of educational opportunities throughout the lives of people through flexible learning programmes, and a large thematic field able to respond to other contemporary needs of the labor market (lifelong learning).
2. The learning persons change their status from being **objects** to that of being **subjects** of their own educational processes (*Productive Learning*).
3. Community education for active and responsible citizenship.
4. Positive mental health meaning 'a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.'

Positive mental health enhances social cohesion and social capital and improves peace and stability in the living environment and it contributes to economic development in societies. (WHO, 2001) (Health education)

### **Being an educator in *Productive Learning* out of school ‘PLOUTOS’**

These basic principles apply also to the educators. This means that whatever specification the educators have (social workers, youth workers, teachers, psychologists etc); they must be able to adjust their theoretical background and experience to the new model of PLOUTOS and acquire the skills and competencies needed for a new ‘teaching’ role. While the traditional teaching methods (mostly teacher-centered) focus mainly on a certain amount of quantitative knowledge that has to be transmitted to the students. PLOUTOS is based on the teachers’ or facilitators’ ability to feel, to approach, to inspire their students with qualitative elements connected with the universal values of love, peace, solidarity, and respect for human rights.

In their role as facilitators they help students to discover their potential and skills, they guide students to follow their needs and plan their learning and action processes, they advise the students of the choices and prospects they have, they mirror the students’ difficulties, encourage and support their personal development. All of this is supplemented by group sessions and by taking into consideration all individual aspects. The educational contract which is created and agreed by both students and educators is the key that opens the door to another learning world with many challenges for both students and teachers.

In PLOUTOS the educators teach mostly as people - who they are themselves – not as someone who just verbalizes knowledge for the students, thus they have to be open- minded and eager to learn themselves from the students without compromising their role.

As ‘mediators of a situation’ the educators have to support the students in establishing a relationship between activity and learning in formulating questions that serve as a bridge between experience and education. On the other hand, the educators must be able to guide students to formulate questions on given answers (mostly on issues concerning politic and social life).

In PLOUTOS the educators don’t teach certain subjects - but with their academic education they help the students to take a further step towards their own self-awareness, self-confidence, self-assessment and personal growth. The assessment acts as a feedback on personal growth, results and on the role of the educator: is he/she able to transform the individuals’ activities into group work, cultivating the group dynamics to the benefit of the individuals?

## **Admission and Orientation phase of “PLOUTOS”**

For young people starting their participation in “PLOUTOS” this form of learning is completely new and, therefore, they need the opportunity to find out by themselves if this way of learning suits them.

Normally, the students already had some information about “PLOUTOS”; from friends, teachers, parents and others.

In order to make the right decision, it is necessary for them to experience the spirit of learning at first hand. The whole phase is divided into two parts: the admission procedure which starts every September and lasts for almost two months, and the orientation phase, which starts in November and lasts until the beginning of July.

During the admission procedure the students make an application to the Youth Centre and have a short discussion with one educator. The students are invited to the first group meeting. The educators design - with the students of a group - a learning and emotional contract by taking into consideration the framework of the Youth Centre and the PLOUTOS project as well as their needs, expectations, desires.

The agreed contact by both sides (educators and students) is the basis on which the group starts planning their activities.

During the admission procedure, the first meeting as a group with the parents is also organized.

During the orientation phase the students are given a list of activities (framework of PLOUTOS) - which is the curriculum of that year and they have to set priorities according to their needs, desires and the time available.

The list consists of the following aspects:

What do you want to learn and do?

- creative games
- handicrafts
- health education (prevention of addictive substances, nutrition etc)
- Environmental Education – Sustainable Development
- Youth Exchanges
- Personal skills

- Social skills
- Management and Professional skills
- Something else

The students have to decide on their priorities for the above list. Usually, they ask for excursions, parties, movies, sports. The educators accept everything the students suggest.

It was concluded that during one school year the above curriculum can be realized by integrating also those suggestions of the students which are not included in the list.

### **'Opening-up' Productive Situations**

The aspect of opening-up 'Productive Situations' is an essential requirement in order to separate the productive activity from the practical undertaking. It is important to put the students more and more into the position to explore the Productive Situations themselves within the group and individually.

Opening-up Production Situations include the whole process of planning, preparation, implementation and reflection. It is divided into four phases:

- Phase 1: Developing and specifying interests
- Phase 2: Planning (project method) clarification of conditions
- Phase 3: Implementation of the chosen activity
- Phase 4: Evaluating the experience of the whole process

During the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, the students evaluate their interests and check them against the possibility to be realized (setting priorities). The PLOUTOS educators try to support this process by using creative methods, e.g. communication and other games, sub-group work, videos and pictures, peer education, role playing, internet exploration, discussions etc.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase, the students using the project method plan their activity - setting goals, clarifying conditions, finding resources, involving other systems in their planning (school, family, community, friends) sharing roles and work, investigating information, committing themselves, taking on responsibilities.

The final plan is written up by them on a flip-chart and is put at a visible place in the room in which they hold their meetings. They are also encouraged to keep a personal note-book.

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase, the educators facilitate the students' progress through counseling, supporting their learning and experience processes and handling the relational dynamics developed in the group for the personal growth of the students.

Individual counseling is also possible although the students are encouraged to bring every issue or problem into the group and be solved by the members of the group.

During the 4<sup>th</sup> phase, the students are encouraged to engage in self-evaluation and group evaluation. It is important to analyze the personal steps taken and the actions taken by the group - from the conception of the idea until the finalization of the tasks.

During the analysis of this process the students must realize what the difficulties they faced were, the ways they solved them, if they asked for help, what their emotions were, and the new things they learned out of a positive or negative experience.

The evaluation is the basis for the learning process in the upcoming task.

### **Developing Individual Curricula**

Although most of the pedagogic work done in PLOUTOS is based on group work, individual curricula are very important to be encouraged, devised and recognized.

The different skills that each student acquires during the group work act in addition to the skills developed by the others.

Each student has his/her own needs or skills which must find a place within the group work. The pedagogic strategy that is implemented by the leaders during the group work tries to attract the interest of all students to each individual curriculum by broadening the topic and finding aspects that might interest the other students too.

Since PLOUTOS is applied out of school and doesn't aim to provide students with a qualification or a degree, the subject-oriented learning acts in a supportive and encouraging way to the school work – concerning mostly subjects

such as English language, IT, history, geography, and maths. The key problems (like peace, environment, democracy, health) don't substitute those subjects but connect them with knowledge obtained in school and link them to real-life situations for a school open to life and action.

### Evaluation of educational processes

The evaluation in PLOUTOS is carried out by the student him/herself and by the group. The main focus is the development of the student according to the aims set out by him or her. The objectives follow the steps, setting priorities, planning, implementing and reflection on productive activities.

A similar process is followed for the group evaluation.

The evaluation is carried out by giving qualitative oral feedback during the group session after the end of each activity, sometimes also in the middle of an action, and there is qualitative and quantitative assessment at the end of the year on the basis of an individual anonymous questionnaire.

However, this is what happens only in our Youth Centre. The educational model of the mainstream education system in Greece remains old-fashioned and there is an urgent need for it to be updated. Although I am not very optimistic about the current situation in Greece, I have to admit that we need to start from somewhere and that we have to do this now. Last May, as the Minister of Education presented the New Technological Lyceum in a press release, she said:

*„There are a lot of university faculties that are overcrowded, a fact that leads many young people to unemployment. Over the last decades we underestimated and sub-graded the technical vocational education. We need to rush in order to make the Technological Lyceum the leading ship for the professional restructuring which is necessary for the labor market. The main aim of the Technological Lyceum is the technical and professional knowledge, the skills and their certification, so as when somebody finishes the technological Lyceum he/she will be able to have professional rights.*

*We want the Technical Professional Lyceum to be substantially- not only formally- equal and equivalent to the General Lyceum. We invest in the future of our country. We don't need just scientists, we want specialized and well equipped professionals, technicians who are able to speak our language,*

*have skills in mathematics, computers and develop their citizenship. This is what we call skills and key competences in Europe. The power of our proposal is aiming at the specialization of students".*

In conclusion, it seems that we have a long way to go until we manage to introduce *Productive Learning* in Greece. All the attempts we have made in the past were fruitless because, as the minister confessed, the politicians and the decision-makers could not upgrade and update the education according to the real needs of young people and the society.

We are all afraid of this crisis and the effects it is going to have in every aspect of our personal and social life, but on the other hand, every crisis brings changes which are necessarily fundamental and profound. Sometimes it is better to undergo a real devastation than to be helped via a wrong salvation.

Having worked for more than 25 years in primary drug prevention, I am very much convinced that a *Productive Learning* School is a prevention school not only for disabled students - but for every student who wants to find an interest in his/her learning processes and obtain the skills he/she needs to make him/her a happy person throughout his/her life.

## ***Productive Learning and School development in Hungary***

Ildikó Bárdossy and Renáta Anna Dezső

### ***Actuality of Productive Learning***

Ildikó Bárdossy

#### **Introduction**

In 1990 Ingrid Böhm's and Jens Schneider's invitation to establish an international organization was accepted with pleasure and enthusiasm by Gyöngyi Bakó and Ildikó Bárdossy – teachers at the University of Pécs. For, they felt that the ideas, intentions and professional values, as outlined by both educationalists, corresponded with their own professional values and intentions in an organic way.

The ideas and values were similar to those for which they were known for at their previous workplace, the internationally recognised Szentlőrinc School Experiment. Furthermore, they were the same ideas they wanted to later apply at university for use in teacher training, as well as for in-service teacher training.

These shared professional values and intentions contain, among others, the participation in programmes, which:

- are critical to, and counter, learning in a narrow sense, lifeless syllabuses and impersonal learning;
- prefer an active, constructive, person-oriented way of learning and teaching, interactive processes and constructive relations.

*Productive Learning* (as an active and creative acquisition) is thought to be an activity and a change in the methods of achievement, behaviour and knowledge; all of which involve the whole personality. The productive, efficient learning environment creates authentic, lifelike situations for the students' constructive acquisition; situations involve them personally and are typical of the tasks and problems in which the students are later expected to use their knowledge. In the case of *Productive Learning* it is important to know about our own knowledge, feelings and the process of learning. To support *Productive Learning*

the following question seems to have importance: how do we (as teachers) help our pupils/university students in various ways? How do we get them "in a personal relationship" with the syllabus and other learning situations; to activate their own thoughts and feelings; to understand what they think and interpret; what they experience and feel; to realise the reasons of their deeds. Through learning in real-life situations, pupils/students are involved and made to solve real problems and make real decisions. Moreover, they gain a readiness and increased ability to make choices, co-operate, plan, solve, and evaluate, all while taking responsibility.

The *International Network of Productive Learning Projects and Schools (INEPS)* (from 1990 onwards) and the *Institute for Productive Learning in Europe (IPLE)* (since 1991) provided further possibilities and contributions. Ingrid Böhm and Prof Jens Schneider (co-founders and leaders of *IPLE*) participated in this professional and scientific contribution.

### **Example of a *Productive Learning* project – the Pécs City as School**

In 1991 in Pécs, – a city in Southern Hungary and the European Capital of Culture in 2010 – as part of a primary school, a youth group was organised for young people who had not finished school or could not gain entry to secondary education. This project grew into the Pécs City as School and from 1992 it lasted for about ten years, in co-operation with the University of Pécs and the *IPLE* in Berlin. The model concept was worked out by Ildikó Bárdossy (co-founder and scientific advisor of the project) with Magdolna Tratnyek (co-founder and leader of the project) (Bárdossy, Kovácsné, 1993; Bárdossy, Kovácsné, Molnár, 1994; Bárdossy, Kovácsné, Molnár, 1996; Bárdossy, Basmakov, Böhm and others, 1999).

This Pécs project had similarities with the *INEPS* City as School type projects/schools. These projects/schools help children and young people with social integration and prosper in their life, especially those who missed the opportunity to find a way to satisfy interests and needs in "majority" type schools

These institutions, while teaching children and youth organically, connect teaching with the everyday practices of the home environment, in doing so they meet the traditional demands of teaching and education simultaneously. The communities and workplaces of the area are involved in the education and teaching of children and young people. The pupils can learn, gain experience,

try themselves at the so called practice places that is to say, in places of industry, trade, culture, services, community and political organizations, and so on.

Learning situations in different environments (e.g. inside and outside of school, at individual practice places) create more lifelike situations with a higher degree of involvement. Learning becomes more interesting, at the so called practice places students can use their knowledge directly, thus the process of education and teaching gets a sense of reality in application. With the help of learning programmes (curricula) adjusted to the person, children and young people can satisfy their interests, improve knowledge, and test their strengths. While at the same time, lots of life situations are "available" for them from the everyday life of the different jobs and careers. Through this wide range of different learning environments the students co-operate with each other as well as with teachers (coordinators), advisers and outside specialists (practice mentors).

The goals, values, methods and results of the City as School in Pécs, as the first programme of its type in Central Europe, can be summarized as follows:

<b><i>Social needs, institutional goals, values, as preferred and declared by City as School, Pécs</i></b>	<b><i>Methods and achievements of the institution by City as School, Pécs</i></b>
extension of school tasks	planning and execution of school-pedagogical, socio-pedagogical, career-oriented tasks
completion of functions of education, teaching	development of cognitive, social skills and skills necessary for work
turning towards society and the surrounding environment	creation of new environments of learning (social, political, cultural, economic, scientific organizations; institutions as outside learning scenarios, practice places [again], learning workshops)
help with prosperity and social integration	career-oriented seminars, personal advisement, application of methods which reveal needs, wishes, and ideas of students
learning, active participation in real-life situations, productive situations	learning skills and everyday life skills develop with the help of projects in the orientation stage; with seminars as a programme planning model, involving outside prospects and working with an open curriculum; with the choice of individual practice places; with the execution of individual practical learning programmes (the so-called "Learning and Activity Packet"); with possibilities provided by exchange programmes; with participation in workshop activities

<b><i>Social needs, institutional goals, values, as preferred and declared by City as School, Pécs</i></b>	<b><i>Methods and achievements of the institution by City as School, Pécs</i></b>
providing a second chance (which is also a priority of education policy in the European Union)	exploring previous school failures; processing actual problems; looking for possibilities and chances to create background conditions (self-developmental seminars, learning workshops, courses on learning methodology, individual advice, individual consultations)
execution of a more co-ordinated and professional co-operation	co-operation between: teachers, psychologists, career counsellors, social workers, information specialists, librarians, representatives of special fields of workshops' profile , practice place mentors, parents, student representatives, minority leaders, representatives of different social and economic organizations

Problems and problem solving methods present amongst students in the City as School can be summed up as follows:

<b><i>Individual, social problems</i></b>	<b><i>Applied means of problem solving</i></b>
lack of self-knowledge and real self-image loss of self-confidence problems of behaviour unable to handle problems	Training in self-knowledge and development of the self; behaviour therapy; conflict management training;individual advice
integration disorder existential difficulties crisis situations troubled family background	cooperation with the Family Counselling Institute, the Educational Advisory and other professional services; advising individuals; co-operation with psychologists, healthcare seminars
lack of clear knowledge of goals and opportunities in life	job orientation; co-operation with job advisers; experience of real opportunities of life in workshops, at practice places, and at outside places of learning
lack of secure relationships with adults disappointment-loneliness, want of love in life course	teacher-student relationship as a result of teacher's (facilitator) changed role; advising individuals; training of self-development seminar; more realistic self-image and gain of self-respect; co-operation and acceptance appearing with help of workshops' possibilities in self-expression

<b>Learning difficulties</b>	<b>Realized ways of problem management</b>
lack of basic skills underdeveloped learning skills lack of motivation in learning lack of respect of knowledge as a value gaps in knowledge previous failures in school being under pressure in achievement demanding situations lack of knowledge of effective learning methods	seminars on the methodology of learning (and all subject seminars); individual, promotion of learning consultations gave importance to the following skills and abilities: speaking skills (e.g. reading aloud, criticism, asking questions, debate, comment, presentation); comprehension skills (e.g. understanding spoken texts, ad hoc speech, informative texts, following questions, debate, comment, presentation); writing skills (e.g. taking notes, outlining texts, writing book reviews, individual learning and activity packets, project plans); reading skills (e.g. comprehension, reading speed, active reading, critical reading, examining texts)
lack of knowledge and formulation of learning goal lack of knowledge necessary to plan, follow, and evaluate own learning (individual, paired work, co-operative learning)	involvement of students in planning and interaction; evaluating processes of learning; prepare students to plan their learning; to evaluate their own work; use meta-cognitive knowledge and cooperative competencies

### **Context of Hungarian education and school development – chances, dangers, opportunities**

The idea is not a new one that education can be a cohesive force if it takes into account the diversity of different groups and individuals, and avoids being an exclusive factor itself. On the one hand, schools have been discredited as being places of social exclusion; on the other hand, they have been appraised as the key institutions of (re)integration (Delors, 1997.)

One of the basic problems of the present Hungarian school system is that it does not consider, or cannot cope with, the diversity of groups and individuals. With its closed system, it cannot help to find individual paths, life opportunities, nor can it help the confluence of the various, diverse personal lives within the context of the different school “worlds”. Along with the particular names of today’s school groups: the “race stable” the “nursing home”, and the “alternative” type of schools, the existence of these schools, and their work itself, signify the dysfunction of the world and reality of education. (Ligeti, 2005.)

To be able to analyse the problem, and find possible solutions, we find the following questions useful, as are the possible answers to them. What is the reason and what makes necessary, or not, the existence of the *race stable school*, which accepts only the privileged? What is for or against the *nursing home* populated by multiple contra-selection? What are the goals and values of the *alternative type school* and who do they accept? Can the worlds of the different schools and children/young people with different interests, abilities, motifs, backgrounds and needs, meet each other? How is it possible to move in the school system? How can those who have social handicaps, and those without; the talented ones, those who do "well" and those that are left behind; the healthy, and those with special needs; the "gifted" ones and the "excluded" ones realize the knowledge in themselves?

Several statistics, and examples of research data, professional accounts, and analysis show that about 15-20 % of children/young people are affected by school failure, dropping out and exclusion, due to the fact that special difficulties are diagnosed and treated too late, while "sinking" the children in unsuitable schools. Problems become even more severe, deeper and wider due to the dysfunctional school system with its negative consequences for personal development: significant differences in results and the learning achievements of the different areas, schools, classes; unequal opportunities to have access to "good quality" education and teaching; low rate of continuation of studies and lack of finding a job in the case of some classes and learning groups. (Csapó, 2003; Halász, 2003; Liskó, 2005).

Whose decision is it in today's Hungary – that of society, education policy, or last but not least *professionals*- that *inclusive (like the productive school)* or *exclusive schools* are asserted, taken as norm and supported?

Who is "disturbing" a school (that is to say, the *exclusive school*),

- in which children/young people all alone are expected to adjust to the *world of school* without any appeal;
- which does not want, or is not able, to adjust to the world, possibilities, needs, and specific personality development of a *child/young person*;
- the *teacher* of which does not have valid and applicable professional knowledge, with a differentiated and flexible repertoire of methods essential for any meaningful and effective learning, or for the aid of learning?

Maybe those children/young people for example who

- show interest in class exercises and material not in the expected way or time, by the teacher;

- are not interested in an exercise which seems senseless and is not understandable for them;
- seem to be unintelligible, not to say lazy or stupid, because they do not understand what the teacher explains and wants them to do;
- use their loudness as a cry for attention;
- are intolerant towards lies, injustice and openly express their negative opinion;
- are willing to accept and keep only rules and requirements which are seen to have sense and are understandable for them;
- do not learn at the same or at an equal tempo, in some parts they lag behind, in other fields may "run ahead";
- can scarcely tolerate failure (as they may be under the pressure of it);
- do not respect teachers who treat them with a lack of respect that another person is due.

These schools are not ready to deal with children/young people with special educational needs, or to create an adequate learning environment *for all, every one of their students*, in which they could find a basis to further students' chances in their studies and their lives.

The *inclusive school* (for example the productive school) is committed to strengthening its own organization in its values and work, while enabling stronger *social cohesion* in the school. Furthermore, it aims to develop into a *key institution of integration and reintegration* accepting the *diversity of individuals and groups*. It is eager to *accept and keep everyone in schooling or if desired, to continue their studies*. Teachers and other adult staff at this type of school have *intensive professional communication and co-operation skills*; they use *specific professional competencies to improve the life chances of each one of their students* – the talented and the not so talented ones, the ones with special needs (with a sociocultural handicap, with problems of behaviour, integration, with sub-skill disorders or language problems etc.).

Schools like this support *students* to, for example:

- meet "their real self", recognize their own values, abilities and take an active part in the development of those values;
- get to know and experience the world around them locally and in a wider context, broaden their horizons (life space), learn the "human way of being in the world" in various real-life situations and exercises;
- know and accept each other (in the world, and with other cultures) and be able to live together and co-operate;

- be ready and able to make decisions, to plan, execute, evaluate, act alone, and co-operate,
- have motivation and take the chance of further studies, getting different qualifications, finding adequate jobs;
- find their own course in life, to be fulfilled in a way that suits them best and is natural to them (taking necessary time for them, having access to their individual professional development).

These schools are ready to, and already, exist for the people and it is not only their declarations and curricula in which they call themselves child-oriented.

### **Accumulation of knowledge, or applicable, self-building knowledge – curriculum, learning, and the role of the teacher**

*Core Curricula* introduced in 2000 after the 1995 *National Curriculum*, started to regulate all different types of schools (that is primary schools, vocational schools, secondary professional schools, grammar schools) in the areas of work, the fields of interest taught, and the development of skills. It also provides the framework for further development of the local school curricula.

The core curriculum of *grammar schools* conveys and demands academic rigour above all, and has amongst its declared goals, the following: it is the pedagogical objective of the grammar school to make the possibility of subject development flexible in the way it prefers based on the “learning of learning” principle development of skills which promotes useful, applicable at different levels knowledge to compressed academic knowledge. The differences between theoretical knowledge and technical, more pragmatically applied knowledge are to be reduced. Within the framework of compulsory lessons, disciplinary knowledge is connected to the possibilities of its application in the present. Balance between theoretical and applied knowledge is an important aspect.

Amongst the declared goals of *secondary professional schools'* core curriculum is the students' orientation between different pieces of information, finding answers to practical questions posed in life and the ability to form independent opinions based on known information; also, to emphasise the importance of making responsible decisions.

Acquisition of effective and motivating learning methods can be found amongst the declared purposes of the vocational schools in order to enable students to be ready to learn their vocations in a productive way; so that they become able

to make self-development permanent, to further vocational in-service studies and to change their vocational field if needed.

Although several versions of the national and core curricula have been published since their introduction, the original goals outlined above are still up to date. Today the educational policy makers of the recent Hungarian government are working on the new Act of Public Education and the revision of the National Curriculum. It is hoped that progressive intentions will be considered in this process.

The points emphasized above are course declarations, norm-formations on the level of state documents in the field of education. Realisation of these goals always depends on the actual work of each and every school, the know-how of teachers – the adequate professional interpretations of their role – and on the circumstances of the students' learning opportunities and interests.

Validity of *school knowledge and learning* is an ever existing challenge in Hungarian schools. Researchers in Hungary try to find answers to questions, such as: do students learn what they need and in the way they need it at schools in order to achieve valid, long-lasting and valuable knowledge and skills? Do our pupils/students have valid knowledge? Does what they know have any use or sense – is it more than a pure reproduction of facts that have already been acquired? Is knowledge attained at school still valid outside the walls of the school?

Research findings in Hungary point out that we need to seek techniques and methodology that result in an improvement of the quality of knowledge.

Is a set of skills, including a framework for thinking, and of representations of knowledge, of the nature of learning, and the support of adequate and valid learning techniques an essential marker of teachers' competencies?

Research findings of cognitive psychology and constructivist pedagogy may lead our attentions to significant challenges that must be considered not only in schools, but in teacher training and in-service teacher training. During such trainings the following elements may be emphasised:

- intellectual products are better determined by the quality rather than the quantity of human knowledge
- quality of human knowledge can be described by the markers of applicability and usability

- a significant characteristic of effective knowledge is multiple accessibility and applicability
- cognitive processes without concrete context do not exist, human capacity is knowledge-field specific and situation-based.
- valid knowledge can be acquired through valid learning and comprehension
- the learning individual is active – S/he is constructing knowledge based on previous experience, facts, cognitive structures, emotional and voluntary approaches within the framework of a comprehensive structure.
- learning according to the constructivist approach is a permanent structure, creation of our inner world, development of our own framework of interpretation.

Metacognition or intrapersonal intelligence is likely the most important part of human intelligence as it is linked to all other aspects of intelligence. This is the way we realise our own thoughts and feelings in order to understand what we think and feel, and realise the sources of our deeds. Metacognition – according to the belief of the author of this contribution – is also a key aspect of professional (teaching) intelligence that has not attained its due importance either in teacher training, or during practice at schools.

This is why colleagues working on the educational module of the teacher training programme at the University of Pecs are devoted to promoting courses based on would-be teachers' own activities. We intend to strengthen teacher candidates' professional self-consciousness via creating a *Productive Learning* environment. Here students can make explicit their knowledge about their own learning and teaching-supported activities, in doing so, improving the level of their proficiency and personal responsibility.

*Productivity, reflectivity and interaction* are the key concepts of training, focusing on learning support activities, equally at the level of planning, realisation and evaluation of a particular teaching-learning process.

According to our experience in teacher training and in-service teacher training it is reasonable to search for ways moving away from accumulating knowledge, and towards self-development and comprehension of one's own knowledge; the essential part of *Productive Learning*, the approach and methodology of interactive and reflective learning, can and should be introduced in the majority of schools, so that it can create a bridge between the practices of the mainstream and that of productive schools.

Our experience (based on research findings, development and teaching outcomes) show that *Productive Learning* can also function at a university level – furthermore, it must be done. We can make significant steps forward in case we teacher trainers, assume that we are not the masters of lecturing on professional issues, but facilitators of learning-development, self-governing learning support, by creating an effective learning environment for planning, realising and evaluating of both individual and small group activities.

### **Afterword – our common responsibility**

Whose responsibility is it to refuse exclusive schools and to accept and run inclusive schools? Let us see the possible answers:

1. Public responsibility – that of the whole society because education has a determining role in “producing” future citizens, labour force, to lay the foundations of social integration, solidarity, and moreover, access to education is a basic human/Children’s right.
2. Responsibility of the local society – as quality of education has a significant influence on the social, economic, cultural, demographic and employment force of a specific area or region. On the other hand, education of the local society is influenced by its political, cultural and economic relations.
3. A matter of the specific educational institution – that of the school leadership and school staff as their choice of norms, the level of proficiency determines professional and social responsibility.
4. The learner’s responsibility – the individual’s dignity and emergence of one’s human rights and chances in life, depend on the school system supporting them – and it is the responsibility of the learning individual to choose from the opportunities offered. They have to be productive agents in the learning process, of collective learning, with their own self-development, in acceptance of themselves and that of others.

There are several educational approaches leading towards better social integration. Constructing, renovating, maintaining the highways of these ways remains the responsibility of the European, state, regional and local education policies.

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## **Actuality of *Productive Learning* in Teacher Training**

Renáta Anna Dezső

### **Rationale Behind**

Widening the circles of those who think and act along the principles of *Productive Learning* is a permanent social must-do. Tertiary education, especially teacher education and in-service teacher training is a scenario that we cannot ignore when talking about social inclusion if we intend to widen the horizon of colleagues and future teachers through influencing their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The significant role of teacher education is clearly pointed out while examining the highest achieving school systems (Barber – Mourshed 2007); the most crucial components of such systems are:

- getting the right people to become teachers,
- developing them into effective instructors and
- ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction for every child.

Due to the 2007 Open Society Institute (OSI) monitoring report on Equal Access to Quality Education “in Hungary public opinion of new pedagogical methods is weak and teachers themselves indicate that they heavily rely on lecture-based lessons and seldom use co-operative methods” (OSI 2008:61). Also “there are no courses for teachers focusing on tolerance or multicultural education available as part of standard teacher training” (OSI 2008:96). These issues, however, are crucial markers of *Productive Learning*.

The present paper intends to illustrate the existence of a counter example: the case of the Institution of Education at the Faculty of Humanities, the University of Pécs. This contribution outlines the significant role of our institution; we are seeing examples of courses of productive, inclusive education (i.e. educational intentions, where values and work is committed to strengthen *social cohesion*).

### ***Productive Learning* and Courses on Education**

The Institute of Education at the University of Pécs is responsible to train student teachers (students who intend to become teachers) majoring in any discipline of the Humanities, Sciences, Sports, Music or the Arts. Due to the application

of the Bologna Declaration in Hungary, there are no compulsory educational courses during the bachelor period of one's training; courses for teachers begin only at master's level. Within two years, (i.e. four semesters) would-be teachers must be armed not only with subject specific methodology but general educational skills, knowledge and attitudes that help them succeed in the schools of Hungarian society.

During these courses students are asked to take regular mandatory school observations and complete reports alongside their notes. *Productive Learning* takes place in this way as students are required to connect their theoretical knowledge to actual practical observation. Compulsory and optional productive seminars, such as Bardossy's course on nationality education of Croats, Germans, and Roma or Dezso's seminar applying the theory of multiple intelligences, while teaching about the Holocaust on a project day require students' active planning, developmental, reporting and application skills. Colleague's contributions (Arató – Varga 2008, Bardossy – Dudas 2011, Dezso 2011) add to these courses by applying the techniques of co-operative education, critical thinking, and the educational implications of the theory of multiple intelligences.

Today, low achievement of minorities in Hungary, especially the Roma, is a burning issue in different scenes of education; it is essential to introduce courses that focus on these relevant challenges both during the process of teacher education and nonetheless importantly, within in-service teacher training. One such course, "inclusive education" was introduced and developed by one of our colleagues, an expert in public inclusive education, associate professor at the Institute of Education, Department of Romology and the Sociology of Education, Aranka Varga. In the early 2000s this built upon and renewed the existing traditions of Elemér Várnagy, who first taught about the situation of Romani children at school, which followed the path of Ildiko Bardossy, the representative of *Productive Learning* at the Institute. By applying *Productive Learning* techniques, with the introduction of "inclusive education" into teacher training, the course that is compulsory for graduate students (i.e. in-service students), our aim is to:

- give student teachers an overview of the culture/socio-economic features of specific groups (i.e. the Roma/Gypsies) living in Hungary,
- raise awareness of extra-curricular teaching-learning potential,
- focus on issues of relevant education policies, and
- introduce up to date approaches of classroom management (co-operative paradigm).

Assuming compulsory prerequisites, the course is introduced in the very last semester of teacher training. Before students take this course they have to complete a complex oral exam in education and psychology, based on courses worth 90 ECTS altogether in the following fields: General Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Social Psychology, Introduction to Education, History of Education and Culture, Theory of Education, Didactics, Educational Psychology, Sociology of Education.

### **Broadening the Horizon – Courses for Erasmus Mobility Students**

Erasmus courses have enormous impact on our societies in the long run, as participants of future intelligentsia contribute to all over Europe. The more heterogeneous a classroom is – even in tertiary education – the more benefits we can have during a course regarding debates based on different cultures. Once in Hungary, the author of this contribution assumes that Erasmus students must meet not only their lecturers' concerns but those of their Hungarian peers – this is why each of the Erasmus courses available at our institution, the Institute of Education is campus credited for the students of the University of Pécs. In this way, students of different faculties may have access to experience learning based on techniques other than listening to lectures.

Based on Bardossy's *Productive Learning* approach and Varga's ideas Dezso developed a new course, originally entitled "Cross National Observations of Education of Caste like Minorities Today" with the support of the Curriculum Resource Center, CEU, Budapest. The Curriculum Development Competition 2009 awarded their intentions to further develop the course and add even more modern approaches and give a broader context of today's relevant world of education. The course, finally entitled "Inclusive Education of Minorities – Examples from an International Perspective" aims to give students new approaches both in theory and practice considering effective education of minority students. It examines similarities of Roma in Hungary versus Roma and/or other minorities worldwide and summarizes relevant cross national experience both in Europe and in the USA. Focusing on social, psychological, socio-linguistics- and social-psychology based theories participants get to know fabulous examples of teachers as heartwarming instructors through movies and documentaries. By developing students' active participation via co-operative learning techniques and various other teaching methods that strengthen learning through doing; participants of the course are likely to become conscious about the importance of inclusiveness, regardless of their future profession. The attitudes and values behind the course are willing to make students:

- realize the significance of productivity in education,
- understand the importance of the “all different – all equal” approach,
- compare ideas behind segregated and integrative policies,
- study the role of the teacher as an approachable instructor,
- recognize the benefits of inclusion, and
- evaluate the education systems students know, based on inclusiveness.

They are aimed at

- learning the basic criteria of the best achieving school systems,
- studying examples of teachers as approachable instructors,
- experience the importance of learning outside the school environment,
- understanding revolutionary concepts of intelligence,
- evaluating theories related to minorities, and
- comparing different ways of intercultural education in European countries.

Considering skills and practice, the course aims to

- develop skills of working in a multicultural environment,
- experience and learn how to use debate in classrooms,
- practice co-operation techniques,
- explore multiple intelligences of the participants, and
- improve mindsets from a fixed to a growing position.

On the level of structural behaviour, the purpose of the course is to raise awareness of the importance of inclusion – in and outside the classroom. “Inclusive Education of Minorities – Examples from an International Perspective” has been taught since the spring semester 2010 and it is not the only initiative of its kind.

The fall semester 2010 brought another course for Erasmus students: “Trans-disciplinary Approaches to Romani Studies – the Most Exciting Issues of the Roma/Gypsies of Europe and Beyond”, also developed by Dezso.

Based on the findings of a relevant three year (2007-2009) Marie Curie sponsored series of academic events, at the Central European University, Budapest, Hungary, course offerings catered for the various needs of academic and professional development across a wide spectrum of disciplines. These include anthropology, cultural studies, political science, public policy, sociology, art, music and movies. The course encourages topics in newly emerging fields and trans-disciplinary approaches and is unique in its diversity of academic offerings. It aims to bring together interested individuals to study together intensively, coming from an enormously varied geographical, cultural and educational

background. This exciting multi-cultural composition of classes provides a stimulating environment for engaging participants in an inspiring and enriching dialogue throughout the course.

Raising awareness of the importance of tolerance, the focus of the course lays on the attitudes and values that make students:

- understand differences between culture, ethnicity and social status,
- (self-)reflect on stereotypical attitudes,
- recognise the beauty of linguistic diversity.

As for knowledge and experience during the course students

- visit and research the Gandhi School, Europe's first Roma Nationality Minority Secondary School situated in Pecs,
- understand the heterogeneity of Romany/Gypsy groups,
- learn about the history of Romany/Gypsy people from a linguistic perspective,
- study the past and present of Romany/Gypsy people from artistic approaches,
- learn about the history of the Roma/Gypsies from a historian's perspective,
- study today's most burning social challenges of the Roma/Gypsies,
- understand the danger of linguicism and the importance of minority language use, and
- compare different anthropologists' findings on Romany/Gypsy communities.
- develop skills of productivity working in a multicultural environment,
- practice co-operation techniques (in case of an adequate/ reasonable number of participants),
- improve mindsets from fixed to a growth position, and
- develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills.

## Courses must Go On

“Think globally – act locally” goes the well-spread slogan; agents in teacher training need to consider this idea and apply it with *Productive Learning* in order to reach out to an ever-growing number of colleagues. The courses described above are not the only ones touching upon significant issues of today's world of education armed with the approach of *Productive Learning*. Colleagues at the Institute of Education, Arato, Balint, Dezso and Mrazik developed a short intensive programme on education (2010). Our programme is available in English for Erasmus students and those of the University of Pecs as well as students from

Belgium, France, Romania, Sweden, Germany, Spain, Poland, Turkey, Croatia, Korea and Hungary having already participated in the seminars since their introduction. Hopefully the project will contribute to training teachers armed with tools of *Productive Learning*, essential instruments of schools of our multicultural reality in the EU and beyond.

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## ***Productive Learning – The real alternative and the chance to invent the changes***

Simona Plienaitytė

The Head of the Project “Alternative Education”

Education Supply Centre affiliated with the Ministry of Education and Science

What could be more attractive to teenagers than knowing that they can do whatever they like? What work could be more interesting to a person than the one which is challenging, full of variation and has a very obvious result – a child guided on the right path?

This is a picture collected by myself through talking with many people infected with the *Productive Learning* virus, as Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider call it. This virus spreads among those who are willing to live their daily routine in another, in an alternative, way.

*Alternative* is a key word for *Productive Learning* to be explored in Lithuania. The national project, “Alternative Education”, initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science will be implemented during the year 2012–2014. The pilot project of *Productive Learning* will be a part of it, or actually it already is as some of the Lithuanians have caught the virus!

*Productive Learning* is an instrument to open up new paths and variety in education in Lithuania. Flexibility in the curriculum, individual learning plans, the freedom and chance to choose at school is coded in the national education law. Our strategic documents on education look well-timed, they emphasize and define 21<sup>st</sup> century views and skills, but the educational community, and society, feels that all these sentences are merely words on a page. Meaningful truth about how the reality of education should look remains avowed in many cases because these words and things do not have a body. They barely live in the real school life. There are plenty of reasons for this situation: a lack of quality in teacher preparations and training processes; stuck in the classical way of preparation; sometimes even old fashioned training methods; in some schools, stuck in the same teaching and learning methods, lack of experience of how to assess students; strict control of schools; complaining about the low rate of salaries and the sheer hard work... I guess this list could be continued indefinitely, like other countries facing up to similar issues. Still, there are perfect educators in my country of Lithuania. With the motivation to be a teacher, the courage and

desire to help students, we will achieve the goals of the “Alternative Education” project.

By the time required expectations are made, real needs and creations are very often quite far from each other. But it seems like *Productive Learning* is an example composition of the perfect combination; it brings a dream to reality.

The *Productive Learning* pilot project expresses and fulfils the need to make the learning process flexible, attractive and useful in real life. Here are some expectations (very simple ones) of the school development outcomes:

- to create a flexible, well-timed, contained school where conscious citizens can be raised and educated with a clear vision and strong values;
- to improve a school in such a way that it can echo students’ needs and to create a school that students would like to attend.

*Productive Learning* contains all the factors needed for the development of a school. First of all it is based on a so-called learning paradigm, which says that the center of the teaching and learning process is the student. A majority of Lithuania’s teachers are in their 50s and were taught to be a teacher in the classical way. Some of them still teach mathematics, literature or biology. European Union Structural Funds cover a lot of different projects concerning teacher training and qualifications, but the situation is not changing rapidly enough. These are the changes needed in ways of thinking, of working methods and habits (these are the most ingrained); even more than this, the changes needed in the educational mentality.

Organizing the teaching and the learning process within the framework of the learning paradigm raises questions about the teacher training system that must be improved. It also highlights teacher effectiveness and the passion involved with being a teacher. What are the reasons for becoming a teacher, and how strong is the motivation? Unfortunately, a lot of future teachers enter education in the universities of Lithuania with only the concern of getting a diploma, forgetting about the need for passion.

Research also suggests that young teachers start work at school, only to leave it after their first or second year. It points to quite a difficult situation relating to teacher training: recruitment and retention. By implementing *Productive Learning* in Lithuania we will be forced (in the best sense of the word) to find teachers who will be open-minded, willing to accept changes and, most importantly, to change themselves. It looks like the *Productive Learning* system is

detrimental to a teacher's *petrification* because of the *Productive Learning* philosophy itself. It cannot be realized if the teacher is not ready to turn themselves "upside down", to work in a different way than he or she is used to do.

Secondly, *Productive Learning* requires retreading and improving 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and suggests or supplies new roles to a teacher. Besides being a teacher, he or she needs to be a learning guide, a counselor, a social worker, a psychologist, a friend. This variety and complex mix of different professions in one person shows how flexible and free in thinking a person has to be if he or she wants to be involved in the *Productive Learning* environment. Finnish *Productive Learning* educators who call themselves JOPO<sup>4</sup> teachers say that you must be a crazy or mad if you want to work following the *Productive Learning* methodology! The current teacher training system in Lithuania and the amount of bureaucracy in the school's present routine, suppress many of teachers to be original and interesting to their students and themselves. One of the most difficult challenges during the "Alternative education" project and *Productive Learning* pilot project in Lithuania will be to find and to encourage schools alongside their headmasters and teachers; to liberate, to release their point of view and their working methods. It is one of the most important and highly articulated needs for the implementation of *Productive Learning*.

Thirdly, *Productive Learning* builds a culture of communication between all the participants of the school and between all the subjects in the school. A *Productive Learning* educator and his or her students are in very close contact because of the small amount of students in *Productive Learning* groups or classes. Communication is the main tool for teachers and for other specialists (social workers, psychologists, youth workers, youth leaders etc.) for building a support team around the child. Effective and positive communication is needed like oxygen in this process, otherwise the proper support will not be "delivered". In Lithuania, we do have a lot of support specialists and groups, but in many cases they are not working in unison; they prepare documents and forms that are required, but the lack of real communication, common understanding and

4 JOPO in Finnish language means *Joustava perusopetus*. In English language it could be translated as a Flexible Basic Education. JOPO is the Finnish way to implement and to realize *Productive Learning* in Finland. "Flexible Basic Education (JOPO®) is a project launched by the Ministry of Education in 2006. Its purpose is to develop new teaching methods and procedures which help reduce dropout. It develops new methods catering for individual needs which use activity based learning, small group teaching, on-the-job learning and different learning environments. JOPO activities support pupils in finishing school and applying for further training by means of multiprofessional cooperation, early intervention and intensified school-home cooperation" (see more [http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2008/JOPO\\_toiminnan\\_vai-kuttavuuden\\_arvointi.html?lang=en](http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Julkaisut/2008/JOPO_toiminnan_vai-kuttavuuden_arvointi.html?lang=en)).

efforts for the sake of the student are forgotten. By piloting *Productive Learning* in Lithuania, we have to convince people to work together, to share their information and data, finally to trust each other. This is one challenge that requires a lot of hard work to make people communicate, to find useful solutions, data-driven and common-sense based decisions, to make it happen. To make it live.

Communication in *Productive Learning* community not only has the role for organizing a supply of support to the student; it is extremely important to form a system of values. It builds bridges of trust between different generations; it wakes and deepens the sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency in each student in the *Productive Learning* group. Looking for the practice places for the students is based on successful communication as well. It creates social responsibility and improves social integration. These are the issues in our country that we need to discuss and to improve.

Last but not least, is the issue of integration and personalization that *Productive Learning* solves. *Productive Learning* methodology shows the real integration of the learning subjects and the real personalization (individualization) of the curriculum. The learning paradigm curriculum has outcomes (or competencies) as a basis and its focus is on improving students' skills and competencies needed for real life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In Lithuania, we do talk about integration and personalization of the curriculum; learning programs are composed in this way. A lot of teachers are working by using such programs, but part of them still cannot understand, or they have not been taught how to bring these programs in to the classroom. Teacher effectiveness is here brought into question; a lack of synchronization between national education laws, documents on strategy, curriculum, exams and real work during the lessons.

*Productive Learning* contains formative assessment which is more accurate and objective than the summative forms. In Lithuania the main method of assessment and evaluation of students is the summative assessment. Teachers are often stuck on measuring academic knowledge; this means while a lot of the countries around the world talk about assessing students' competencies or outcomes, we are worried about our Matura (final school leaving) exams. The main task for our teachers is the "order" from the parents to prepare their son or daughter merely for the exams. The structure is very simple: if you do not pass the exam you will not be able to enter university. If you do not get a degree, you will not find a good job. Meanwhile, *Productive Learning* educators prepare the child for real life and real situations, not only for exams. It brings us, the ones responsible for the implementation of *Productive Learning*, to the idea

that we have to change or to make corrections in our exam system, i.e. we have to search for a way out, for an alternative to the current examination system, for new learning paths.

By summarizing these paragraphs I should mention two basic needs or tasks for developing our schools:

- to create a flexible, well-timed, clear vision with strong values contained in a school where conscious citizens can be raised and educated;
- to improve a school in such a way so it can echo students needs and to create a school where students would like to attend.

The main issues or obstacles for creating the school described above are teacher effectiveness, 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, communication and values, curriculum individualization and personalization, new assessment assets and technologies. Behind all these issues there is a person, a human being. *Productive Learning* empowers to search, to prepare the right people who would be willing to change and to create such a school. *Productive Learning* has a feature of common sense, of learning about the mind and flexibility. These are the guidelines for finding proper tools and instruments to change and improve some elements of our education system in order to attain a better school.

I guess in the coming two or three years, *Productive Learning* philosophy and methodology will look like an alternative in Lithuania, like an ambition or even like a process which cannot be made to come alive. Still, I wish to believe that *Productive Learning* will find a place in our society and in our education system. I do not want to use the term “revolution”, but it looks like this one expresses the power and the need of changes precisely. I hope that even for a small part of Lithuanian teachers, headmasters, principals, parents, employers and students *Productive Learning* will bring another way of thinking, working and thus creating a stable, trustful community.

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**Important statements on  
*Productive Learning* of  
international symposium  
participants**



**Heike Borkenhagen**  
**Germany**

**Director of the Institute for  
Productive Learning in Europe (IPLE)  
Berlin,  
Member of the Administration  
Council of INEPS**

## **WELCOME**

*“Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*I would like to welcome you - on behalf of our institute and on behalf of my colleagues - to our international symposium. Approximately 100 guests from 15 different countries are gathered here today: together we want to reflect on the development of Productive Learning in our different countries; and together we want to explore new ideas for the future. I would like to thank everyone for being here today – because this diversity and the difference of your experiences and your perspectives make it possible for us to see the bigger picture.*

*We can be proud of what we have achieved. Here are a few examples:*

- *Our international network combines more than 60 members from 14 countries.*
- *Since 1991 we meet regularly at congresses and seminars and exchange ideas, plan joint projects and further develop our ideas and conceptions.*
- *Since 1991 nine international youth congresses took place.*
- *Since 1991 10 000 students participated in Germany in a PL project - in 84 schools, in 7 federal states.*
- *80 % of them attained a school-leaving certificate and ...*
- *the majority of these pupils was able to progress into steady employment.*

*Despite this success we are all aware of the fact that there is no cause for contentment. We need to develop further, and we need to find new answers to new questions. For this it is important that we exchange ideas, that we question our actions, indeed, that we sometimes raise doubts.*

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe himself once wrote ‘More knowledge means more doubts’. Without doubts there is no thinking, there are no questions, and there is no development.*

*20 years of history presented sufficient occasions for raising doubts: Are we still on the right track? Do we consider new challenges, prospects, and insights sufficiently within our thinking and during our actions? What shall we preserve, and what shall be changed?*

*It was not always possible to be united in these questions – neither within our institute nor within our international network. We had fierce debates, and long discussions, and we struggled in order to make positions clear. For example, within INEPS we have often revisited the following question: How to balance „openness“ – to network with a wider group of partners – and „identity“ – to concentrate on the specific goals of Productive Learning?*

*At our institute similar questions were raised: Should we focus all of our resources on Productive Learning or should we support and develop a variety of activities in this field – including less radical ones – in order to engage more schools and students?*

*In spite of these conflicts – or perhaps because of it – we always had a common and uniting viewpoint: we wanted to change things, and we were prepared to fight for our ideas and convictions – even when faced with opposition and sometimes also with risks.*

*“Believe in the impossible”– This sentence by Barack Obama in 2006 would also have suited Ingrid and Jens when they founded our institute in 1991. “Believe in the impossible”– this very attitude contributed immensely to where we are today: Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider we would like to thank you both for this.*

*Together with my colleague Conny Miksch, I have prepared a short retrospective presentation about the history of the IPLE and the INEPS. Though before I start, I hope that - during the next few hours - you will be able to appreciate a whole range of developments, that you will be able to talk about successes and about difficulties you have experienced, and that you will be able to return home with new ideas.*

*Talk leading of the Symposium on Productive Learning and international school development on 4th of November, 2011*



**Ingrid Böhm  
Jens Schneider  
Germany**

**Founders and  
former directors of the  
Institute for Productive  
Learning in Europe (IPLE),  
Berlin**



## ***Introduction***

*Ingrid Böhm:*

„Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

*Welcome to our international symposium on 20 years of Productive Learning and on visions of its future, in Europe and the U.S.*

*We are happy that experts from 13 countries have followed our invitation, all of them “old fellows”, dealing in their country with Productive Learning during years, some of them nearly as long as we do it here in Berlin and Germany. Only France, represented by our friends Jacques Bonnisseau and Marie-Louise Debourle, are very sorry that they could not come to Berlin, and we are very sorry too.*

*All the international experts agreed to write essays on Productive Learning and school development in their country; the essays will be published soon in a book on “Productive Learning and international school development”.*

*This strong international interest in our symposium shows very well how important our international friends feel that Productive Learning is and will be in future for their country.*

*Not only our international partners were interested to participate in our symposium, but also colleagues and friends from different German regions – from PL-schools, from school administrations as well as supporters from politics and science. The interest is big: The conference room is overcrowded. Thanks to all of you for being here.*

*You see, we have a lot of good reasons not only to look back and look ahead and to discuss the process and the results of 20 years of Productive Learning but also to celebrate together PL's 20th birthday and to enjoy our coming together.“*

*Jens Schneider:*

*„Dear friends and guests,*

*It should also be up to me to welcome you from my side and to tell you how much I enjoy seeing all of you in this symposium. I think I will find the time later to express these feelings; the night will be long...*

*Because our time is limited we have to get now directly “in medias res” and start our debate. We will have three subjects:*

*- The addressees of Productive Learning:*

*Is Productive Learning (more) an innovation way for school education of all students or (more) an emergency measure for “learning disabled” students?*

*- Productive Learning – general or vocational education?*

*Is Productive Learning (more) an alternative to traditional general education or (more) an educational programme for preparing students for work?*

*- Educational value of Productive Learning:*

*Is Productive Learning equivalent or inferior to classical school education?*

*To each of these questions some of our international experts will give an answer on the situation in their country.*

*For finishing the debate all of them – and if the time allows it – some persons from the auditory – are invited to answer the following question:*

*- The future of Productive Learning:*

*How can Productive Learning keep and increase its educational quality and thereby enlarge its power of innovating education internationally?”*

## ***The addressees of Productive Learning***

*Ingrid Böhm:*

*„Now let's begin to discuss our first theme: The addressees of Productive Learning.*

*That is a question which accompanies our work since 20 years. Most people had the opinion that Productive Learning is a learning way for "bad learners"; only a minority accepted PL as a way of learning for everybody who prefers it to traditional school lessons.*

*The first person we invite to take place in our discussion round is the president of the International Network of Productive Learning Projects and Schools (INEPS) Angela Passa from Patras in Greece. Angela, before answering our question please tell us in short words, not more than two minutes, why and how you use Productive Learning methods in your work.“*





**Angela Passa**  
**Greece**

**Director of Protasi,  
Movement for Another Lifestyle,  
Patras,  
President of INEPS**

*“The educational model of the mainstream education system in Greece remains old-fashioned and there is an urgent need to be updated. Although I am not very optimistic about the present situation in Greece, I have to admit that we have to start from somewhere and now. The minister of education, when she presented last May in a press conference the new technological lyceum she said: „The last decades we underestimated and under-graded the technical vocational education. We need to rush in order to make the technological lyceum the leadership for the professional restructure which is necessary for the labor market. We don't need only scientists, we want specialized and well-equipped professionals, technicians who are able to speak our language, they have skills in mathematics, computers and develop their citizenship.”*

*It seems that we have a long way until we manage to introduce Productive Learning in Greece. All the attempts we have ventured in the past were fruitless, because, as the minister confessed, the politicians and the decision makers could not upgrade and update the educational offers according to the real needs of the young people and the society. We are afraid of this crisis and the effects it is going to have in every field of our personal and social life, but on the other hand every crisis brings changes which are necessary to be fundamental and deep. Sometimes it is better a real devastation than a wrong salvation.*

*I have worked, myself, for more than 25 years in the primary drug prevention; I am very much convinced that a PL-school is a prevention school not only for the disabled students but for every student who wants to find interest in his or her learning process and who wants to obtain skills he needs to make him or her a happy person in his or her own life.”*



**Ildikó Bárdossy**  
**Renáta Anna Dezső**  
**Hungary**

*University of Pécs,  
Varos mint Iscola (City as School),  
Pécs*



*“In Hungary we experienced, that in case we want to found any kind of alternative or school project for learners who just do not fit to the traditional student picture, in order to support and to spread and fortunately to let survive this kind of project there have to be three factors and these three factors at the same time have to be realized.*

*The first factor would be maybe the most important: It is the self-professional and personal self-devotion of educators who have the relevant educational competencies, in order to train and support children. But unfortunately there are two other factors, they are more political, they are the policy making on one hand on the regional level and on the other hand on the national level. And we believe that only, when these three factors meet, we can talk about a success-story.*

*And unfortunately after a few governmental changes, it stopped or faded away in Hungary because of the fusion of the Pécs schools; it means that more school leaderships became centralized so that there is only one person in charge of several schools and in this way the responsibility would spread and personal changes and personal attitudes are influencing this kind of movement. Unfortunately another problem is that this experiment remained an isolated one. So we couldn't find followers or couldn't spread it or make up a network in Hungary.*

*Our intention is to spread the idea and practice of productive learning in teacher training and in-service teacher training through implementing courses where those who attend are asked to produce different kinds of educational plans (e.g. project curricula) during productive seminars that they try out in practice and reflect on afterwards. This is the way we can support our students to realise the significance and experience the effectiveness of productive learning in their own pedagogical practice.”*



**Mercè Marcé**  
**Spain**

*Director of the Institut  
d'Aprenentatge Productiu (IDAP),  
Vilafranca del Penedès,  
Member of the Administration  
Council of INEPS*

*“The results of our first experience in the school were very good, year after year, and the rest of the secondary schools wanted for them this same extraordinary resource. PL modules were called in Vilafranca MAP Class and for its implementation was necessary an IDAP's educator in each school who had to take part to the teachers team.*

*Up to now, whole secondary schools in Vilafranca have a MAP Class and some private school has implemented it too, which are developing this project with a different level of autonomy respect to the municipal support.*

*The objectives of MAP Class are to achieve cultural knowledge and basic skills through productive activity, and to acquire an initial professional knowledge and competence in several fields of work. With the fulfillment of both objectives, the students achieve his graduation, which has the same value than the graduation by means traditional educational system.*

*Until now near to 250 students has been its beneficiaries, students who have had a new opportunity to straighten out not only their academic pathway but also their own lives.*

*The Department of Education of the Catalan government is considering the PL model one of the best models of organization, functioning and methodological approach in the assistance to disadvantaged students, a model which is being inspirational to other experiences. Although we have no proof of it, it's likely that Productive Learning is existing in other parts of Catalonia and, after all, that is the ultimate aim that we pursuit.”*



**Paulina Pavlova**  
**Bulgaria**

*English teacher,  
Productive Learrning educator at  
Ivan Vazov School, Bourgas*

*“Now we have a new school reform program concerning the period between 2011 and 2015. One of the fundamental goals is that the authorities and the municipalities admit that the educational system needs a flexibility to reduce its negative effects on youth' vocational and life realization. As it is said in the programme:”A flexibility will be achieved through new forms of education that will offer new opportunities to the dropouts to come back to school and to get their degree of education or receive a vocational qualification. Skills and competencies have to come into sharp focus.*

*We are really hopeful as we see that the government and the educational authorities have come to a conclusion that a new forms of education have to be accepted and spread to get the students back to school. The fact that each year we have a higher percentage of children criminality, of drop-out students, of drugged children in the streets is quite negative and requires urgent actions.”*

Paulina, do you mean that Productive Learning is for minorities who need it, for drop-outs or for ethnic minorities, or is it something for everybody?

*“In the last years, we've seen that it is not only for ethnic minorities. Productive Learning is for everybody. Most of the drop-out students come from an average Bulgarian family and we think Productive Learning is the best opportunities for them to be motivated to finish their education.”*



**Co van Houten  
The Netherlands**

*Chairman of the International  
Department of the Regional Opleidingen  
Centrum van Amsterdam, Hilversum  
Manager in Productief leren –*

*“Education in The Netherlands is very traditional. I am working in Hilversum that’s the area between Amsterdam and Utrecht. This region is a very traditional area. When a teacher has an opinion about a student, it’s the only truth and the student has to accept it.*

*I think, in this direction my colleague Aaltje Veen and I made achievements since we started the School for Productive Learning in Hilversum, the Netherlands.”*

*Co, will you go further and do you see a future for Productive Learning in The Netherlands, also in Secondary Schools?*

*“Most of our students are coming from vocational education. Let’s say that about 25 % are coming from Secondary Schools, and the others are coming from ROC Amsterdam School of Vocational Education. I think the development we made in the last two years is a very intense cooperation with different industries. And I think this is very important for us because this cooperation with the Dutch industry gives our students a lot of perspectives.”*

And also to you the question about the addressees: Is the PL more an approach for the disabled students or also for the gifted students?

*“I see it as an educational innovation, because I see that a lot of our students are real entrepreneurs. And for that reason they are not easy to cope in regular education. By giving them a lot of chances, you see a great development in how they are changing from a student with sometimes a lot of problems to a young adult with a lot of ideas and dreams, but after ending the PL period, with perspective on a job and/or further vocational education. I think it is very important to coach them in this process.”*

## **Productive Learning – general or vocational education?**

Jens Schneider:

*„Dear friends, we thank you for your presentation of what you do in your country using the concept of Productive Learning and its methodology. Now we ask you to leave us, only temporary of course, before we start with a second round of interviews.*

*The second theme of the symposium is: What is Productive Learning, is it general education or vocational orientation?*

*In Germany, not at least because of the financing of Productive Learning by the European Social Fund, we have to emphasize the support of Productive Learning for getting students into employment. We can accept this demand because we understand Productive Learning as “education for life”, and work is may be the most important part of life in our societies. But as Productive Learning replaces two years of traditional curriculum completely, it is an alternative to the “classical” subject-oriented general education programme, as we wish it to be.*

*Juha, please be our first partner in discussing this question. Before doing this we should remind us, in a few minutes, the unbelievable story of the introduction of Productive Learning in Finland.“*





**Juha Lahtinen**  
**Finnland**

**Teacher of Omaura,  
Counsellor and trainer  
Opeco / educode  
Tampere,  
Member of Administration  
Council of INEPS**

*“Nowadays, our way of Productive Learning is not a project anymore. It's a part of the Finnish school law; it's mainstream. And in Finland it's written in the School Law that you are really open. If the municipality makes a decision that they want to have this kind of learning – they want what is called JOPO, Flexible Basic Education Project, in their school, then they are open to do it.*

*And they get special money for that; something like 3500 € per year per student. It's special money, it's over this normal state money. And it means that you can do really what you want to do with your students. And it's always legal. And it's like miracles happen! Even if the economical situation all over Europe at the moment is – how can I say – a little bit challenging. And still this movement is growing and it's working.*

*Last year there were 77 projects, 77 municipalities who have this Flexible Basic Education groups and now there are 100 and next year there will be more. And so it's mainstream and it's Finland-wide. It's increasing all the time and I am passing away...*

*In my opinion it's not only the solution for the social problems in the school system or against dropping out. I think it is the solution to avoid pushing out.”*



**Mark Bashmakov**  
**Russia**

*Director of the  
Institute of Productive Learning,  
St. Petersburg*

*“We use the slogan: Productive education for everybody! Productive Training for everyone! Productive Learning at anytime and anywhere!*

*Now we are in a very difficult position. We started with some projects. We were very impressed by the projects for example in Vilafranca or in Finland, OMAURA. And we tried to organize the schools. And now we are in a position where our government tries to implement a new standard. It's a very difficult struggle in our society. And, just in the moment, the previous standards were recognized as very bad, now there are new standards.*

*We cannot even suggest that all schools as a type of new educational enterprise will use the Productive Learning. However: Our slogan for everybody we introduce by suggesting for everyone is: Some steps, some activities, some events, they have inside these elements of productivity. I can give you an example: In our network are now more than 12.000 schools, more than two millions of pupils in Russia, they receive a certificate of our institute – it is called Institute of Productive Learning.*

*However, I think it is a very big problem now to understand and to clear up the most important features about what Productive Learning is and how we can use them in our every day school work: What we have to prepare, what we have to develop from a theoretical point of view, what we have to implement not only to prepare our students to live in the market-society. I understand well, that it is more easy to find money for that and we did it many times with you and with my other friends. Nobody now wants to pay for general education, but we have to prepare young people to live in a high technological society too, and all these ideas are very demanded in our country and I am absolutely sure that they are very important for everybody.”*



**Olof Persson**  
**Sweden**

**Project director of Ungdomsverkstaden,  
Yrkесf rberedande Centrum,  
Gothenburg**

*“We started to use Productive Learning as a method for students who do not fit to school, who have raised a motivation for studies, because it’s another way to learn subjects, another way to learn things. For example, it was very useful when we had religion, social skills or what we call in Sweden “Society Knowledge”, and history. It was very, very good, because, when you go to a practice place, you discuss with the people there, they have problems and crisis’s or difficulties to pay for housing, they hate politicians, they hate banks, so even for math’s you have a culture, a ground to use. So, they come back to school and we discuss what they have done at their practice places and then we have a ground to educate them in these theories.*

*But some years later we thought: Where are they? They learn things, they have skills! Why don’t we take a step further? So we have it also as a vocational training, so within three and a half years they can have their portfolio, and we graduate them, and then they can have a work.*

*Before we started this, we had a one-year pilot-project, and the companies said, that is very good, because if a student has been in a company for three years, he or she will come in time, because otherwise they go out. They have social skills, they use to work with people of different ages, they always work with the most modern machines or equipment, which schools can’t buy, because it is too expensive – but the companies they have it. And they use to meet customers. Because if a painter comes to your house to paint it, and it is good. But somebody of them is a little more nice to you and you remember his name and telephone number.*

*That’s why we took it further. We have three kinds of students; we have these 60-70 % who do it as vocational training - and we have those who take it as a general education and others who need to raise their motivation. We have three divided groups.”*



**Simona Plieniaityté  
Lithuania**

*Education Supply Center,  
Ministry of Education, Vilnius*

*Organizer of next INEPS-Congress 2012*

*“In Lithuania we are starting with a pilot project of Productive Learning in coming year, in 2012 and it will a part of the National Alternative Education project. By implementing this project we are focusing on Youth schools. It means that our target group is unmotivated students. The idea to support such students was from the very beginning in the frame of the project and we are keeping this line, but I think, later on, in case of successful PL pilot project we would like to suggest for every student to try PL. I believe all gifted children could follow PL too.”*

That means it is not only work training?

*“No, it is not. Of course, vocational training is a part of PL, but we are thinking about general education and PL being an alternative for the mainstream education in the future.*

*In my point of view PL is especially ‘wise’ model and it contains a strong philosophy and methodology. I think this is the reason why this model has been so successful. It has all the factors and it forms skills needed for living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As I said it has a very strong philosophical background and ideas, it attracts and allows teachers to work effectively—teachers which aim to learn by themselves and who do not want to teach only. It means that they are changing their mind, they are ready for another way of thinking. It is an important issue and progressive step forward in education.*

*PL has a formative assessment also, a flexible way to organize classes and lessons and this way takes us to an integration and personalization of the curriculum. PL develops culture of communication too. I think it combines everything what nowadays school needs.”*



## ***Educational value of Productive Learning***

*Ingrid Böhm:*

*„Thank you, my friends, for this second round of discussion, please get back to the first row of this conference, where to sit you have really merited.*

*The third aspect we would like to discuss is:*

*Which is the educational value of Productive Learning in comparison to the traditional school curriculum?*

*Very often people say: Oh yes, Productive Learning is a wonderful way of education – for those who have difficulties with math, language and history. It is easier for them to learn more practically, maybe they are gifted more practically. By learning in this way they have the chance to be graduated. Even those who are enthusiastic of Productive Learning, even ourselves, don't we doubt sometimes about the value of Productive Learning? I open the third round of our discussion.“*

*„Ana Paula, please be the first interview partner in this discussion round.“*



**Ana Paula de Campos Leitão  
Portugal**

**Former principal of the Colégio do Atlântico,  
Mar'Humano,  
Peniche**

*“Why PL today? - nowadays in Portugal and for me and MAR’HUMANO association? It’s not a mood, it’s not a simple idea. We are still here, many people, from different countries and different cultures, different sensations, different realities – we are still here and that is a hopefully signal. It’s a good reason to go on. I am not anymore at school as a teacher; I do mainly training for teachers and I am MAR’HUMANO president. (I try to translate in English: It’s Human Ocean and its aim is to develop cultural and pedagogical ideas, mainly in Portugal, but also in communities speaking the Portuguese language). And it seems to us that PL is a good frame to bring people together, all those speaking the Portuguese language around the world. And that’s why we would like to work not only within Europe but also with the United States.*

*Another important reason for this moment and for all of us, is that we live in a terrified world, I would say. But although the great constrains all of us have at home, I believe, sincerely believe, we all must have hope and see forward. And at this moment in Portugal we have many difficulties, like each one of you, but, at the same time, I believe, there are some great opportunities. We have a Ministry of Education really devoted to think about new frames for education and I have several meetings at this moment at the new Ministry of Education and they are hoping PL can be a good proposal to rebuild a new confidence through education.*

*Maybe the main reason is that PL is needed for us as teachers, for us as principals, for the students, for the families, for the cities; to bring together all people - entrepreneurs, teachers, families, and schools! To bring together all people for a new way of being and living together.”*



**Mirela Beiu**  
**Romania**

**Principal of Scoala Nr. 87 „M Botez“, Bucharest,  
Member of the Administration Council of INEPS**

*“I think it has come time to start something new and Productive Learning is a new fresh air for us.”*

And do you see a chance?

*“Yes, I see a chance. It is very difficult, because the legislation is not permissive and it’s a lot of bureaucracy in Romania and a lot of restrictions. If we want to implement something new, it is not up to us to decide.*

*Now there are two chances that I see: We have a new law in education, which is more permissive; it has been adopted this year; it has just started to work, to get into function. Not all of the methodologies for the new law are ready. So this law allows alternatives to the traditional schools’ education and they became more autonomous. We can decide if we want an alternative, a new program. But the methodology for this new program for alternative education is not ready yet. I hope it will come soon.*

*The other, second chance is, that we have applied for funds, for a COMENIUS regional project, and we have been successful. The project is called “City as a Learning Place”, where learning is an adventure. It has just been financed by the European Commission within the Live-long Learning Program. Within two years, two regions of Europe, Bucharest and a region from Lithuania, we work together to design models of learning in the city. And we also have a teacher training course to teach the specialists who work with children during these two years. We really hope, that we have in two years good results and we will be more convincing.”*



**Holger Mirow**  
**Germany**

**Director of the Institute for  
Productive Learning in Europe (IPLE),  
Berlin**

*"I would like to tell two personal experiences and I want to do this very briefly to give the audience an idea of my relation to Productive Learning. It's the story of two of my students from Productive Learning at Hufeland-Schule in Berlin: Fulya and Stewart, and they are very different and unique persons. Fulya was an immigrant girl, living in Germany for six years, when she came to Productive Learning, and she came from a school for special needs education. Stewart came from a Gesamtschule, a compulsory school. He went to a kind of inner immigration in school for some reasons. I will not describe them in detail, but they made him fail in his school."*

*The two years they spent at Productive Learning, both had very different interests and different styles. From their way through "learning in practice" you can easily see the differences. Fulya was always with people; in cosmetics, in nursery, in care, as a medical assistant, whereas Stewart was doing a tour through crafts and: as a plumber, as a carpenter, in a metal workshop and only once in service in a supermarket. At school, they had different ways as well. Stewart went back into learning quite quickly and on a rising level. He was dealing with quite difficult questions, for example, as you see on one picture, he was analyzing how photo-voltage equipment works. Plumbers nowadays do not only make the tab stop dropping but they have many things to do. For example they install solar panels on roofs and Stewart was involved in this kind of things. You see him presenting the results of his ,individual productive task'.*

*Fulya had more difficulties with learning in school. She had special learning needs and it was not easy for her. You can see that she doesn't look so happy at this picture – at school she rarely was – because she hat to catch up with so many academic things.*

*The results of Fulyas and Stewards itinerary in PL were quite different: Fulya made her way to ‚Hauptschulabschluss‘, which is the lower level of secondary education. She started an apprenticeship at one of her practice placements with support, support for the school-part of learning. I hope she will successfully complete this apprenticeship next year in December. Stewart decided to continue studying. He is now going for ‚Abitur‘ (A-Level) combined with vocational training in a upper secondary school. Recently he told me that he wants to continue to study at the University afterwards.*

*So, what is the quintessence, the message of this story of Fulia and Steward? To my mind it is the following. With very different preconditions on very different levels Productive Learning can be a really helpful way for students to continue education. The interesting thing is, that these two cooperated very much and they have been very close - that's why I took them as an example. Fulya is very competent person in social things. We had a couple of quite rough boys in the group. With her emotional intelligence she sometimes ‚protected‘ Steward from hassle with them! On the other hand Steward helped Fulya to understand mathematics or to work on her orthography. The story of Fulya and Steward is also a proof for me, that we don't have to separate young people with different needs, abilities and talents in school. They can work successfully together, even profit from each other, if you have a setting that allows them so.“*

What ,do you think, will be a good way of development for *Productive Learning* and for our institute?

*“I think we definitely have to go on with the successful model of Productive Learning during the last years of secondary education. We can be proud to help so many young people who do not do well in regular school. But that's only one part. The second part is: We also have to open up and develop more conceptions for different age-groups, at least starting at 7<sup>th</sup> grade. We should cooperate more with partners in this field. I don't really believe in the opposition of “traditional learning” on the one side and Productive Learning on the other, as many of you know from our discussions already. School has changed and improved the last decades. We heard what Prof. Mark Bashmakov told today: they are working hard on how to reach a much larger number of students using the methods and the positive experiences of Productive Learning. We, IPLE, should pay more attention to this direction too.*

*For the research tasks we should intensify the cooperation with universities. As you know we are an affiliate institute of the Berlin Alice Salomon University and we have Prof. Theda Borde, the director of the university here today. We*

have recently been discussing plans for more common activities in the board. Another important partner to be mentioned is the University of Rostock. The team of Prof. Thomas Häcker is responsible for the external evaluation on the PL- projects in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxonia at present. This is very helpful and the intermediate results give us valuable hints for the project development and the training program.

To intensify cooperation with partners and to develop more flexible conceptions of Productive Learning – I think we already did some important steps into this “future direction”. I think that they will help us to contribute to school development in new fields.”



May I introduce Fulya and Stuart\*

\*September 2006



- immigrant family from Turkey
- six years in Germany
- broken German
- from a special needs school



- Pankow boy
- "Gesamtschule" (high school)
- "inner immigration"
- simply stopped doing anything in school



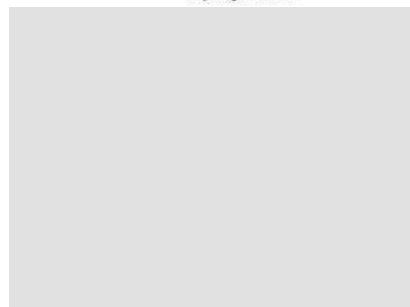
Very different preconditions and very different interests as well...



Fulyas "learning in practice"  
– working with people in different ways ...



Stuarts "learning in practice"  
– a two year tour through crafts ...



Stuart in school:  
back to learning – with rising level

Fulya in school:  
- different needs and hard work  
(e.g. catch up in German language)  
- often in partner-work with Stuart





**Bret Schlesinger**  
**United States of America**

**Former vice principal of  
City-As-School  
National Academy of  
Alternative Education (NAAE),  
New York**

*“Back at the 1950’s we decided that everybody should graduate high school, everybody should get a high school education. A wonderful idea! The problem is: Why? Why should everybody get a high school education? Back at the turn of the century, high schools were generally training to go on to college. And that’s how the curriculum was developed. There were academic curricula for you to teach academic subjects to be prepared to go on to so called higher education. Now, when they decided that everybody should go to high school, they never changed the curriculum. This is why we have drop-outs. Because not everybody needs that academic push.*

*The wonderful thing about Productive Learning is that it allows students to learn what they really need to know, and to learn how to act in a society. It’s interesting, because the skills that you learn in high school are all the wrong skills. If you cooperate with another student in high school it is called cheating, but in the real world if you cooperate it is called team work. What are we teaching our students? That they shouldn’t work with each other? Stupid! In Productive Learning you are learning the skills that you will need in the future world.*

*So, to answer your question: Is Productive Learning better than traditional education? It really all depends what the student wants. There is another point: nobody ever asked the students what they really want! Nobody does an analysis of what the students skills are, because it’s a waste of time! Because you teach them all in the same way at a traditional school, whether they want it or they don’t want it. Or whether they can use it or can’t use it. We are wasting a lot of time!”*

## **Thanks to all participants of this symposium**

*“After having heard so many important statements on the past and the presence of Productive Learning in thirteen countries we should look ahead and express our assumptions and also our visions on the role of Productive Learning which will it or should it play in future.*

*We are sure you agree with us that we got a wonderful bouquet of flowers showing us how Productive Learning was and is flourishing in so many countries. We understood the reasons of the success but also of the difficulties of Productive Learning in finding a way to innovate international education.*

*The crucial point for our common future of Productive Learning is:*

*How can Productive Learning keep and increase its educational quality and thereby enlarge its power of innovating education internationally? What is the summary of our symposium? We have a lot of things to do!*

*We thank all of you for having followed IPLE's invitation to this meeting.”*

*Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider*



## **Students at the school of *Productive Learning* in Hilversum, The Netherlands, are responsible for their own learning!**

Co van Houten and Aaltje Veen

### **Introduction**

The first contact between the ROC van Amsterdam and the *Institute of Productive Learning in Berlin* was established in springtime 2006, through a phone call with Jens Schneider. Co van Houten, at that time Chairman of the International Department of the ROC van Amsterdam Gooi en Vechtstreek, tried to speak with Jens in his best German. Sharp-witted Jens then suggested communicating in English, "Then we both have to speak in a foreign language", Jens said. This phone call was the start of a fruitful co-operation between Berlin and Hilversum/Amsterdam.

In the last five years, we have organized various conferences and workshops together with the *IPLE* and have visited each other frequently in both Germany and the Netherlands. In April 2009 *Productive Learning* Hilversum opened its doors and thus starting a project that was supported by schools in both general secondary and vocational education. In the first two school years (2009 – 2011) there were a total of 120 students, ranging in ages from 14 to 22.

In September 2011, *Productive Learning* started in a new school building with about 90 students; with this, school administrators and supporters from local politics have given the students a good quality learning environment. It is a monumental industrial building in Hilversum, designed by the well-known Dutch architect Dudok.

When Aaltje Veen and Co van Houten, both initiators of the school of *Productive Learning* in Hilversum, discussed their *Productive Learning* initiative for the first time with school administrators from Hilversum and surrounding municipalities, their first reaction was fear of 'cannibalism'. Moreover, some of these school leaders in secondary schools and vocational education had the opinion that in '*our region*' the problem with drop-outs did not exist. In addition, an effective school system had already been set up in the region for students with special needs.

In their way of thinking, implementing a system automatically meant that the problem has been solved!

The first discussion with these school leaders took place in 2007. Now in 2011, all school leaders in the Gooi and Vechtstreek region have come to recognize the usefulness of *Productive Learning*. In spite of the internal debate about the necessity of *Productive Learning* in this period, the Dutch Ministry of Education has supported and financed the implementation of this new educational provision in the Hilversum region.

Nowadays *Productive Learning* is seen as an important school within the regional network of education. The politicians of the six municipalities that constitute the Gooi and Vechtstreek region have also embraced *Productive Learning* as a form of education that contributes significantly to the regional educational network. The municipalities are therefore supporting *Productive Learning* with a substantial financial contribution.

In this co-operation the municipalities are represented by the Agency for Compulsory Education in the Gooi and Vechtstreek region.

From the start of *Productive Learning* in April 2009, three vocational training programmes have been developed, namely for:

1. Retail Trade
2. Creative Industry
3. Catering.

During the school year 2011 – 2012 a vocational training programme for health-care will be developed within this educational facility at Hilversum as well.

Originally, *Productive Learning* was set up for so called *drop-outs*. Yet, to an increasing extent, parents and young students outside the target group are requesting to be admitted to *Productive Learning*.

For instance, refugees older than 18 years, who have not been admitted to regular schools for secondary and vocational education, have expressed interest. Another group requesting admission is school leavers without a diploma, from private schools. A special point of interest in this regard, has been that, to an increasing extent new students are notified by their friends who are already following a *Productive Learning* programme.

This is an organic development. We do not regard this as competition with other schools in the region because all these young people have already left school without a diploma, or were for various reasons simply refused entry to other schools in the Gooi and Vechtstreek region.

For this reason, we are now studying the possibility of our *Productive Learning* students doing exams so that they can obtain secondary school diplomas of different levels. In this regard, it must be noted that the team of *Productive Learning* teachers are qualified and competent to monitor and conduct examinations.

### **What makes the Dutch School for *Productive Learning* special?**

Of course a number of approaches in *Productive Learning* in the Netherlands are similar with *Productive Learning* in Germany, and with approaches adopted by other European schools which are working with the principles of *Productive Learning*. In the schooling program in Hilversum, we are also working on going from activity to education. In the first period, mostly lasting three months, we work with the student to become motivated into attending school again.

Life at the Dutch school for *Productive Learning* looks different from what you are used to in a regular school. In the classroom of the school for *Productive Learning*, students are taught the same subjects as in regular secondary and vocational schools, and you see students working on their assignments in sub-groups. However, what is not immediately visible is that all students have an individual learning path. This individual approach focuses on the individual learning and support needs of the student. Simply put, their teachers know them.

It is not uncommon for a student to request his/her teacher not to ask him/her too much. "Leave me alone" often means that the teacher literally takes some 'distance' to avoid escalating behaviour. The school for *Productive Learning* will never penalize their students unless they themselves ask for penalization. Then they can ask their teachers to set limits. It may sound unbelievable, but it is everyday practice in the new school building located in the Zeverijnstraat in Hilversum where *Productive Learning* has taken up residence since September 2011.

The Dutch school for *Productive Learning* is not a *system-school*, which is the common basis of so many schools in the Netherlands. It is for this reason that the school for *Productive Learning* is unique. It is intended for young people that get stuck in the system of a regular secondary or vocational school. We therefore like to call our approach *psycho-education*. This means that your action as a teacher always matches the student's perception and attention span.

The school for *Productive Learning* is an educational environment where the student leaves with an educational degree, and preferably also a job. This school additionally takes into account how students can learn best by doing.

When the student has an initial interview at intake to register as a *Productive Learning* student, a parent/guardian always accompanies the student, through which the parent/guardian also becomes acquainted with the school. Involvement in the social environment of the learning process of *Productive Learning* students is essential.

Since the start of the school for *Productive Learning*, a majority of the student parents/guardians have become very involved in the education of their child as well as in the school.

A lot of parents/guardians of the *Productive Learning* students are feeling a so-called '*education impotence*'; they don't always have the right answers on how to coach their adolescent child. Especially when in the childhood experience, growing up is not always easy. These parents/guardians also feel supported because they are known by the teacher. In the last year, a few parents told the teacher that they have regained their parenting-role.

The school has obtained a similar commitment from the companies in which the students are doing their 3-days-a-week internship. During the remaining 2 days at school, the students learn to *say thank you* because nothing happens without a just cause. Experience has shown that we quickly hear these young people saying thank you when someone else has done something for them.

### **Meaning of *Productive Learning* for students**

For each participant, *Productive Learning* means a new start towards a successful future. A new start in which s/he makes choices and for which s/he herself holds the final responsibility. Each student gets the opportunity to indicate what s/he wants to learn, how s/he wants to learn and when s/he wants to learn, within the confines of the curriculum required for obtaining a diploma.

The focus of *Productive Learning* is on discovering students' talents and interests within the framework of career orientation. This experience, in practice, has an important role in motivating the development of learning. Within the three courses *Productive Learning* presently offers, participants get a chance to develop themselves at their own level.

Counselling is the key when it comes to supervision of the participant. This has a bearing on the introduction, the intake, and the learning process that takes place during the practical period in both a company and at school. Counselling is also important as it gives regard to guidance on personal circumstances.

A new start means new behaviour. In other words, the behaviour of the past changes; this should result in a.o. coming in on time, keeping appointments, completing assignments, achieving objectives and (if necessary) changing behaviour. Within *Productive Learning* in Hilversum, we call this *psycho-education*. This concept has as a starting point of locating any obstacles in the individual learning process, and subsequently discussing these barriers. Consequently, in a multidisciplinary consultation, plans will be worked on that are finely tuned to the required, individual aims of each student in order to restore him/her to his/her own full potential again.

Barriers could be:

- Social circumstances such as friends that are false;
- Personal circumstances that include autism, borderline- giftedness, gender problems, teenage parenthood etc.
- A troubled home situation, and also
- School conditions such as not knowing which form of education is suitable, as well as having an aversion to the regular school system.

In many cases, there is shortfall in education. Parents are therefore closely involved in the supervision of the child, also if necessary, a youth organization, a psychologist and maybe even an attendance officer. Management of such multidisciplinary consultation is to be done by the teacher/supervisor.

The personal attention paid to each student is unique. The focus on building relationships is the foundation of a new start. The student realizes that s/he is appreciated as a full partner and that s/he will be taken seriously. This, on the other hand, also creates a demand on the student: of at least a thank you! You cannot always only take in life; you also have to give to life.

### ***Productive Learning: the future in The Netherlands***

On 3 October 2011 the Dutch quality newspaper *de Volkskrant* put an article on the front page with the headline: “*a psychologist in every school*”. According to this article, each secondary school should appoint a psychologist. Parents want to bridge the gap between themselves and schools. They also need a space within the school where they can speak with the teachers in an informal manner. This was also one of the results of a study carried out by the Radboud University in Nijmegen, in collaboration with the Educational Innovation Group (OIG).

An important difference, in comparison to a few decades ago, is that parents have become more aware of what they expect from schools regarding their children. They are also concerned about the implications of a growing number of problem students in the classes. For this reason, they consider the presence of a specialist in school a very important issue.

At *Productive Learning* in Hilversum this problem does not apply. The reason is that at *Productive Learning*, parents are expected to actively contribute themselves, by giving their child the attention s/he deserves with respect to the educational programme at school, and the internship period inside a company. We inspire parents to get their position as a parent back again and would like them to help support other parents as well. This network is part of the stakeholders' network of *Productive Learning* in Hilversum.

*Productive Learning* in the Netherlands will develop into a training institute that works closely with industry in various sectors: Creative Industry, Commerce, Catering, Health Care, Renewable Energy and Technology. IT WILL BECOME A BUSINESS SCHOOL! The student learns to practise a profession with direct coaching from a professional in the industry. In the same period, the teachers at school offer the general subjects like Dutch, Maths, etc. This makes learning more meaningful for students. The school will create a win-win situation by committing companies to *Productive Learning* education. The school will work together with these companies; in return, the companies should be willing to provide job security to the students. *Productive Learning* in Hilversum already has some positive experiences with Creative Industry at this point.

*Productive Learning* also intends to become a centre for continuous learning, for instance offering after-school tutoring and organizing summer and weekend school facilities. Other important developments in the future of *Productive Learning* will be:

1. Providing international exchange facilities for students, teachers and other stakeholders.
2. Having representatives from politics to become permanent stakeholders, based on which, a long lasting win-win situation will be created in the context of public interest.

The success of this approach will result in the establishment of additional centres for *Productive Learning* in the Netherlands.

## ***Productive Learning and school development in Portugal***

Ana Paula de Campos Leitão

### **Introduction – *Productive Learning: Why and what for***

As John Dewey (1859-1952) argued already in the 20's of last century, *Productive Learning* also regards education as a process of interest and effort where the learning topics, to be apprehended by the students, must have some relation with the previous experiences of the student or with their current needs. On the other hand, there is also another match between what Dewey and *Productive Learning* stated concerning practice: democracy has in school its own workshop practice, and, following the ideas of Dewey and *Productive Learning*, democracy must be understood as a practical concept - the emancipation of the mind (so that each individual can develop his own work) requires that school transforms the society, which means that we must learn by doing, we must not only know things but also the meaning and utility of things, and the things we learn always are connected with the context our lives. This is the basis of the necessary concentration on induction through educational processes.

We want also to remember here Hannah Arendt, who identified the active life as one of the bases of the human condition: it's the element which (re)binds men together. Arendt also argued that all that is man-made requires inevitably all the context of their actions - think and act would be the double axis of the human condition -, complementarily with the objective world. According to these approaches assumed by Arendt, *Productive Learning* permits the construction of new agoras, these renovated spaces of encounter, where we have to rethink life in schools and cities - those spaces in which, knowing also as welcome dia logical personhood of each other, we mobilize lifelong learning processes from what depends on our own sustainability as a civilization.

*Productive Learning* allows school and city to lead a process of teaching and learning from these positive emotions (remember here Daniel Goleman dialogue with the Dalai Lama: "If we teach now these things to children, we will be able to prevent problems that will come later, especially the problems that result from the afflictive emotions - violence, suicide, ....") *Productive Learning* is just the announcement and the implementation of effective opportunities to settle an education able to combat fears, the source of all injustice, taking away discrimination, racism, xenophobia, ....

Badly informed citizens are easy targets for the tentacles of political, economic, financial and ideological powers: the cities will be either educational ones or they cannot aspire to be the scenario for democratic life of citizens. Here, *Productive Learning* appears with the necessary mobilization so that the city can adopt a pedagogical motion in a networking basis.

With *Productive Learning*, we don't speak about a formation of "making-believe", but about the concrete implementation of projects designed with the highest possible efficiency, to inter-relate multiple dimensions – personal and collective, social and historical references – towards an effective process of training and education.

Within the specificity of learning systems, context and units, *Productive Learning* allows:

- More rigorous pursuit of scientific method, because it is arising from active observation and establishment of aims, with intentionality and thereafter, the usefulness of a practical intervention;
- Learning and following values involving respect, complementarity, listening, acceptance of challenges and risk taking, ...;
- Self-clarification of personal identity is constantly questioned and adjusted, thereby preparing students to develop their life according to the various roles of working and social life;
- Opportunities to exercise and develop communicational literacy (verbal, written and informatics) with reports, advocating theses, promoting active research;
- To provide opportunities to reach autonomous decisions, assuming the intention of both personal and community projects.

Tocqueville had already alerted to the fact that democracy is able to dig its own grave ... and in this period of democratization in a forced march (which is largely the democratization of the failure of the model itself) there is evidence that politicians themselves have not yet understood some issues, especially those concerning the increase of individualism, a behavioral dimension able enough to destabilize the institutions needed by democracy, and so questioning the very social stability. It is clear that the emergence of the individual as a person is an extraordinary result of a democratic culture, but the harmful consequences of individualism tend to spread, including school in this process. On the other hand, the frenzy of egalitarianism also has important negative effects in school communities: It destroys the essential purpose of the school, which is cultural.

As a possible answer, *Productive Learning* has two dimensions highlighted as essential to replace this social ambiance by an individualism that reflects individuality and promotes the uniqueness of the individual and in order to balance and sustain our civilization: - a balance within one's self, a balance with each other, with the environment, the culture and transcendence (that's what I call "Penta-ecology").

Indeed, *Productive Learning* allows the organization and development of educational scenarios which combine respect for the personhood of students, teachers and families with a concern for the specificity of cultural geographic identities, and therefore helps to promote the historical and cultural vectors that support the indispensable prospective for a new development to come, a development not guided only by economic criteria, but a development that safely uses the spaces of encounter and dialogue inside the city to allow the construction of a collective self upon the utility each one gives to involve himself in order to participate with commitment.

*Productive Learning* allows promoting this wave of both diverse talents and skills needed to sustain the objectives of their application. *Productive Learning* permits to recover the dialogue that is missing inside schools, families and the cities, giving a new meaning to the synergies that are a constant in the complex scenario of our times. *Productive Learning* contributes to the flourishing of a responsible autonomy, assertive and purposeful. *Productive Learning*, with an open methodology, is configured by a spiral of actions that feed back to the concrete elements of each cultural geography, allowing not only the recognition of individual values as well as those which identifies communities along with the dialogue between the myriad of cultural expressions that make up reality nowadays. From individualism to an individuation dialogically and purposefully engaged with the environment, *Productive Learning* involves a new meaning for our social life, and this is a feature which, in addition to a strictly formative dimension, should be highlighted in the vision that *Productive Learning* offers us as co-builders for a common destiny.

In order that this discourse not avoids operability, we can also observe how *Productive Learning* offers concrete answers to the major challenges that are now central in our everyday interdependent and complex global social system. Indeed, diverse proposals are addressed by *Productive Learning* to countries, communities, institutions, organizations, individuals, given the challenges we face:

- Technological and social changes with the corresponding uncertainties about the management of political systems that shape our lives as citizens;

- Economic and cultural globalization (which has been matched with a growing uniformity, therefore de-characterizing the inherent value associated with each geography and, with this, the failure of the process of recognition of the individual as a valued person in his community);
- Increasing social differentiation (with the resulting tensions and dilution of the individual in the anonymity of the masses);
- Substantive inequality of given opportunities, with direct consequences, by increasing poverty and conflicts (do not forget which are the two greatest enemies of democracy: poverty and illiteracy);
- Ineffectiveness of the economy to interpret and respond to financial crises.

The answers to these challenges are based mainly in building a knowledge economy, making essential investments in human capital by both, individuals and states. With this in mind, we can argue that *Productive Learning* promotes a continuous learning process that involves both, individuals and institutions, with an essential dimension we must not forget: The value of education is not directly and essentially related to the diploma but to the educational process value added to the capabilities which are intrinsic to each individual. In fact, the economic benefits that are expected should come from the appreciation of the human resource and should be presented as the result of the functioning of an economic system based on a human economy, sustained by the valuation of scarce and valuable resources, and aimed at promoting the well-being of individuals and communities.

### **Evolution of the educational system in Portugal**

Portugal started the twentieth century with an extremely low level of literacy, and the process to overcome it only won a significant rate from the 40's but always late and slow compared to countries of northern Europe and others with similar characteristics such as Spain, Italy and Greece.

This delay regarding the level of qualifications there is still clearly visible when analyzing the structure of skills of today workforce: Despite the great expansion of the education system since the 60's until now, the country has not benefited greatly from this effort, and some people ask themselves if it will become even worse, questioning the resources allocated to spread the educational system, although several studies confirm the existence in the Portuguese case of a long-term stable relationship between human capital, productivity and innovation.

Perhaps the portuguese paradox is related to the fact that there has been more education along with less education, recognizing now that it is not enough to spend more on education to achieve significant results in terms of social and economic development. *Productive Learning* appears in this context as a methodology capable of making “the” difference: - curriculum design, meaning and contents of learning are directed to affirm and promote the individual’s abilities in line with the socio-economic reality with which they interact. This must be an inseparable component of the balance we have to look for concerning investments to be made in education.

Between 1960 and 1974, the debate regarding the educational backwardness of the country continued. During this period the idea of the need for studies became widespread, increasingly long and ambitious, and the government seemed finally to admit that social mobility cannot be limited by the low level of education.

International commitments obliged the Portuguese government to change the authoritarian politics of the 30s: Portugal participates in the regional project of the Mediterranean and efforts are made to establish a quantitative analysis of the Portuguese school structure in order to prepare qualified persons required by the dynamics of the economy.

During this period, there is the Ministry of Veiga Simão, who in 1970 tried to lay the foundations for an education system that in addition to effect compulsory schooling also aimed at the democratization of education. This experience became reality at the level of development of innovative programs, by connecting schools to families and the environment, and also by supporting the training of teachers, with the explicit recognition of these as a powerful focus of pedagogical innovation.

Veiga's reform was never fully implemented due to the military coup of April 1974, when the country was still struggling with a massive shortfall of education.

Despite the social conflicts and ideological debates inherent to a revolutionary period, there still existed a draw up of a consensus about the role of education in economic development and modernization. In fact, at this stage, there was a great mobilization and social participation concerning education, and we have some significant changes to signalize, especially regarding the amendment of the expected content for learning along all levels of education.

While presenting different perspectives, the concerns of successive governments after 25th April of 1974 were not so much focused on increasing the period of compulsory education but in areas such as improving the quality of education, the effectiveness of the school calendar and the widespread of access and success to students.

During this period, students in technical and vocational education were given conditions to access higher education. The industrial schools were converted into institutes.

The process of democratic normalization (1976-1986) is marked by three characteristics:

1. finished the revolutionary cycle, the focus is on curriculum, technical and professional aspects, with the detriment of ideologies;
2. becomes aware that the expansion of the education system can create perverse effects, particularly in relation to its quality;
3. the structure of the economy will constantly block the reform of the educational system.

In 1978, allegedly to reduce social differences and promoting equal opportunities, there was abolished the separation between technical education and general education.

In 1983, the need for skilled labour and the pursuit of an employment policy for youth leads to the creation of professional technical courses to be implemented after 9th grade.

In 1988, appears, under the Ministry of Education, the Office of technical and vocational Education (GETAP), which was responsible for coordinating and implementing programs and projects for the revitalization of education in these areas.

In general, the 80's and 90's were strongly marked by economical values, with the call for modernization emphasized by the need for closer links between school and working life.

It is also by this time when the ideology of inclusion prevailed, and from here it was inferred that the success of an educational system does not depend solely on its characteristics but also on the characteristics of teachers, who are expected to have qualities such as to be able to ensure respect and tolerance towards

differences as well as the domain of pedagogical and organizational qualities that can ensure an effective administration within school spaces.

According to this view, the training of teachers and the creation of alternative educational spaces appear as two important institutional arrangements. The new educational objectives emphasized the need to institutionalize alternative curricula that could replace the traditional one and in order to reduce the internal differentiation of curriculum and pedagogical spaces.

However, the incorporation of these multiple challenges in school life, often under the compulsive accumulation of tasks (done most often in an exaggerated way), contributed to the fact that the profession of a teacher was perceived as a profession permanently in deficit, due to the enormity functions assigned to it.

Given the expansion of education to all Portuguese society, it is important today to know what kind of mass schooling has been implemented and if its development is in progression towards an effective equality of opportunity or whether, on the contrary, factors associated with social origin remain a factor in the ability to progress successfully along the different levels of the education system as well as in what concerns future employability.

The questioning of school failure, which began in the late 70's, has gradually grown and taken a central importance in the debate related to democratic education: there are studies focused on dropout prevention since the late 80's, with a first generation of measures that evolved till nowadays to policies focused on supporting the initiatives of each school.

Other indicators, such as the distribution of school desertion, show how regional differences have been perpetuated in time, without showing a significant downward trend, and these regional differences are one of the most discriminatory aspects of the Portuguese education system with the consequent reproduction of low levels of educational qualifications for large sectors of Portuguese population.

### ***Productive Learning in Portugal***

#### *A historical revisitaton*

Between 1991 and 1993, the College of the Atlantic, in Peniche, through its Vocational School "CIRIUS", integrated *Productive Learning* with a set of proce-

dures in teaching and learning and that experience gave strong substance to the educational process of a group of students inserted on social animators studies.

Innovation thus introduced, the interaction and exchanges along with the quality of the proposals generated through the cooperation established with *IPLÉ* meant that we keep in memory the genuine positive benefits therefore introduced for students, teachers and families as well as all the community. In this regard, I recall the excitement that pervaded the times of training of teachers and meetings with families and local employers: The project was not only exciting for everyone, as it was always emphasized the contributions that went over with its application. I also remember the enthusiasm with which students independently promoted the design of their own learning process and the responsible and proficient way they approached the projects with what they actively collaborated within the community (hospital, social neighbourhoods, elderly retirement houses).

It was an irreplaceable time of encounters and challenges, a time still remembered with joy by all who were able to live it.

In addition to this project developed by “*CIRIUS*”, *Productive Learning* was also active in Portugal through its presence in a dynamic project developed by Professor Jorge Moniz at Lourinhã. Also in Funchal, “*Cine-Forum*” has inserted *Productive Learning* proposals in their activities. I must remind here how much these projects have proved fruitful regarding the positive engagement of children and young people who had left school, and how *Productive Learning* activities were able to sensitize the local communities to look more closely to the so needed complementary activities they have to tie with school and also it was gratifying to see how families were recognized by viewing to be possible to recover the interest of children and young people in learning.

#### *Looking ahead: The changes settled by the new Portuguese government*

The document where are stated the purposes of the present government starts acknowledging the need to grant more autonomy to schools, with the consequent recognition of the need to implement models of decentralized management of schools. It is also recognized in this document the need to launch new initiatives to reduce disparities, strengthening human resources existing in schools, municipalities and social networking viewed as a part of dropout prevention.

The current government says that it will take measures leading to the reduction of school dropout and to the improvement of performance in each cycle and increasing the employability of young people by linking these goals with more rigor in the assessment and merit of the results. The document explicitly states the availability of the government to support schools so that they can be opened to different and credible educational projects. There is also highlighted the need to evaluate objectively the role of teachers and other educators, investing in training as well as in integrating schools in their local communities.

Government has stressed the signing of contracts with civil society partners in the following aspects:

- Selection of projects / partnerships with high added value for schools;
- Management and promotion of excellence in teaching and knowledge;
- Introduction of methods to promote academic success and to prevent school dropout.

In this document there is also expressed the will to invest heavily in technical education and vocational training, stressing that companies should be encouraged to support the professional profiles, and also that they should be called to assist in the practical implementation of schooling in this frame.

#### *M'H and Productive Learning moving towards the future of education and training in Portugal*

The Association “MAR’HUMANO” (M’H) has signed with IPLE a protocol in order to disseminate and develop projects under *Productive Learning* structure in Portuguese territory, the Portuguese-speaking countries and in the Lusitanian diaspora. In order to respond to this task, M’H has promoted working meetings with various organizations - foundations, ministry of education, municipalities, schools, embassies - and in order to be able to pursue actions involving:

1. a permanent program of training and exchange of teachers, school administrators and local responsible deciders concerning education and development;
2. meetings with parents and employers;
3. production and exchange of materials to support teaching and learning in the frame of *Productive Learning*;
4. development of studies related to the design and development of curricula as well as those connected with the systems evaluation (of students and educational projects);
5. events promotion

We want to contribute actively to the pursuit of procedures that, we sincerely believe, will greatly contribute in a useful way to balance - socially and academically – the performance expected from schools, teachers, families, employers, and also from managers and policy makers at local communities in general.

We can say that this is a favourable time of inclusion and promotion of *Productive Learning* within the different geographies, and we aspire to be able to work with the spirit and the added value of *Productive Learning* that we have been stressing over this reflection. We know, however, that there also exist resistances profiled on the horizon of our action: The novelty starts to not be very welcome when so many innovations offered to education and training field determined less successful and consequently more doubts about the profitability of investments made in these areas. Nevertheless, we believe in a positive sequence we may give to the good receptions we have had and related to the presentation of *Productive Learning* principles and the actions we propose.

#### *A final note*

As established by the 2011 UNESCO report, “Although many countries have made significant progress on investment for the education sector, less attention has been paid to the results of teaching and learning and their quality (...). Also should be noted that the increase of enrollment rates was not accompanied by a corresponding increase in literacy rates ... and millions of young people drop out of school due to insufficient quality of the education system and the lack of relevance they have adopted. ‘To this, *Productive Learning* responds with an intentional focus on the usefulness of the specific curriculum design made by students sustained by a continuous training of educators (teachers, families and local decision makers regarding education and employment), along with a reflection-in-action that gives place to a continuous and dialectical adjustment regarding the results generated by practice.

On the other hand, as this report also acknowledges, “students should be the centre of efforts intended to improve education and learning and educational outcomes achieved.” Here again *Productive Learning* appears with the decisive contribution of being students the main responsible persons for their own learning pathway, along with a direct and continuous involvement with teachers and the wider social environment that welcomes them within real practical learning experiences capable to promote their own capabilities. The practical development of this essential component in the characterization of *Productive Learning* allows the development of a set of knowledge and skills which are also highlighted in this report: ensure the proficiency of teachers and curriculum

design altogether with the development of school working quality, in order to promote life skills and a smooth transition of students into the labour market, through sustainable investments in education towards the development in students of social qualities (involvement, commitment, cooperation).

The city is a reality historically situated in time. And, as it's underlined by Federico Mayor, we are nowadays deeply embraced by a multicultural environment, and the challenges facing education, being universal, imply measures to be taken in a way able to be addressed to the heart of each geography culture. And *Productive Learning* is not a prescription but an open proposition, flexible and configurable at the nature of local realities. On the other hand, and because without versatility there is no dialogue, *Productive Learning* is a real positive reference in the envisioned construction of the encounters between peoples worldwide, who have to configure their desired humanistic system we all are called to contribute to.

With *Productive Learning*, we can be authors of "the" change: this creative task for us to give consistency is correlated with the capacities we have to learn in order to know how to live within an irreducible and ambiguous contingency that we cannot ignore or quietly disappear into. *Productive Learning* causes scandal and surprise: a reaction is promoted facing the establishment, but with the enthusiasm to pursue a possible new way, with the necessary patience to learn to wait, we can make it possible.

With *Productive Learning*, each act of the educational process is a creative meeting of singularities. And creativity is essential here as well as in all pedagogical-didactic procedures, as it's also essential in the process of dealing with change that shapes our way of life, both, the personal and collective one.

With *Productive Learning*, there are active listening and effective communication, since it's an educational process that reacts to the student himself and not to a program previously established and closed. Thus, it allows students to think and express themselves, to construct their imaginary worlds and explore them, learn to learn (by observing, questioning, choosing routes and proposing strategic goals, building an interactive and continuous evaluation of procedures and results), being sensitive to the existing problems around them and inventing useful solutions.

We live times both of challenge and questioning. *Productive Learning* can help us, if we want to be vigilant for signs and active in the universal construction of new roads, not uniform, but in defence of a "we" that values each "I".

## **Productive Learning and School Development in Romania**

Mirela Beiu

The Romanian education system is undergoing continuous changes and improvements, according to economic, social, political and cultural changes identified within the society. During the last 20 years, the changes within the Romanian education system, as in the whole of Europe, and in many other parts of the world, were multiple and radical.

In discussing Romanian education, *it is quite important to provide an overview of education before the democratic revolution in 1989*. The political reforms in 1989 greatly shaped the education system today.

### **Education before 1989**

Education in communist Romania was a key component of the communist society and was centrally controlled. Every student from kindergarten to high school was taught in a socialist environment controlled by the state and school attendance was compulsory up to secondary school. The centralized education system provided one notable success: literacy rates were estimated at 98% during communist rule.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) set the curriculum which was heavily influenced by the communist doctrine. The MOE declared that all schools had the same quality of education, but it was clear that technical schools were the emphasis of the state. Despite the technical emphasis of education, the curriculum was well balanced, including, alongside technical training, courses in Romanian literature and language, two additional foreign languages, history, PE, geography, biology, and drawing. Schools used to teach English, French, German, Spanish, Russian and Italian. It is not surprising that international estimates of literacy rates were reported to be so high. Religious and private schooling was non-existent in communist Romania and so the state curriculum was geared towards communist indoctrination. Courses were taught on the politics and economics of capitalism and socialism. The MOE selected the educational curriculum and books. Teaching methods focused on memorization of material for state exams. Very little emphasis was placed on critical thinking.

## **Education after 1989**

Since the revolution of 1989 that brought down communism, the Romanian education system has been in a continuous process of reform that has been both praised and criticized.

In 1990, Romania put forth *objectives for educational reform*. The series of reforms were in line with other national reforms (constitutional, political, economic, and social). The following objectives had priority: *decentralization* of educational administration by delegating responsibilities to inspectors and school principals, creating boards to facilitate the participation of local officials, parents, trade, and industry and by increasing university autonomy, *modernization of education infrastructure; reorganization of teacher training, modification of curricula* including books. Along with granting more autonomy, Romania also prioritized higher education reform to include *academic evaluation, accreditation, and new financing systems*. New government institutions were set up to implement education reform. These included: the Department of Reform, Management, and Human Resources (under the Ministry of Education), the establishment of teacher centers in each county, regional managers of reform at the local level, a network of pilot schools organized by the Institute for Educational Services and the National Council for Educational Reform.

Shortly after the revolution, libraries were emptied of their communist writings - which were burnt in the streets. This left the system with a need for newer, reform-oriented books - a process that took some time, until 1992, when *democratic reform textbooks started being published for the new national curriculum*. The review of school curricula for *gimnaziu* (middle-school) and high school aimed at a shift to the skill-based approach in the curricular design and teaching, learning and assessment. The new curricula came into force in the 2009/10 school year. One of the objectives of the 2009-2012 Government Programme was 'the introduction of a school curriculum based on competences'. With a view to this objective, it was necessary to develop a curricular model of school subjects centered on competences, in relation to the eight key competences recommended by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. This new curriculum is now being implemented at all school levels, except in primary education.

The curriculum framework for compulsory school (primary and lower secondary education), set up by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, allows schools to design their own timetable schemes and includes: the core curriculum and the school-based curriculum. The core curriculum is the com-

mon and compulsory educational offer for all pupils, established at national level and made up of the same subjects, number of hours – for every year of study – to which the same curricula apply. The school-based curriculum is a set of educational processes and learning experiences proposed by every school directly to a class of pupils within its own curricular offer.

*Private schools* began to emerge from socialism. Included in this was a growth of private universities, some of them boasting a reasonable quality of the education process but most of them being simply ‘diploma-factories’, irrespective of their formal status, of accredited or non-accredited universities. Many graduates found out that their degrees were not valuable on the market. As reform continued, there were improvements made in private universities, and a lot of them became nationally accredited.

*Technology was integrated in the schools* in a ‘top-down’ fashion from secondary schools down to primary and elementary schools. A problem deriving from this, at all school levels, was that technology was integrated into the curricula by local teachers that were poorly trained in computer use and instruction. Finally, there were problems in obtaining software for computing. These problems have been overcome by training teachers in information and communication technology, providing computer technology to schools and creating partnerships with businesses and other organizations (e.g., NGOs and charities). As a result, the computer skills of young people have made remarkable progress.

As part of a wider reform process, starting with the school year 2003-2004, *schooling has been made compulsory up to the age of sixteen*, with the duration of compulsory education being extended by two years, which means that every youngster must complete 10 years of study.

The so-called ‘capacity examination’ has been replaced by *national tests at the end of the 8th grade*, after which 2 alternative routes of schooling develop: one called ‘*theoretical*’ (general training), taking place in high schools and a second one taking place in the ‘Arts and trades schools’ (specialized *vocational training*). Both routes lead to the final ‘baccalaureate’ exam, thus providing their students with the possibility of continuing their education (i.e.: by enrolling in higher education). Although the two routes were presented by officials of the Ministry of Education as being an alternative to each other, the truth is that the first actually constituted the upper-tier of the system while the second one constituted the lower-tier. Evaluated as non-efficient and non-desirable, the ‘Arts and trades school’ (lower vocational secondary level) is being wound up as from the 2009/10 school year.

From the 2003/04 school year onwards, pupils start compulsory education at the age of 6 (instead of 7). However, pupils may begin compulsory education at the age of 7 provided that their parents or legal representatives put forward a written request. They may also start before the age of 6 if they reach the age of 6 until the end of the year and their psychological development is adequate.

*The reform of early education, focused on children aged between 0 and 6/7 years* aims at promoting the new curriculum for pre-school education (children aged between 3 and 6/7) as part of the 2006-2010 national strategy in the area of early childhood education. The role of pre-school education was reconsidered in relation to the other levels of education. The new curriculum for pre-school education highlights several important elements, in common with the trends in this area in Europe, namely: the existence of a child-centered educational programme; conciliation between a child's development and the academic aspect; the educational programme is focused on cognitive and social development, early learning and socializing; emphasis, especially around the age of 5, is on the development of basic skills: reading, writing and numeracy, for a successful advancement to the 1st grade; engaging the child in the assessment process/ self-assessment; the teacher/educator plays the role of a guide.

A '*Second Chance*' Programme has been organized and implemented in order to redress school drop-out for people who are older than the legal school age for full-time education and have not completed compulsory education. This programme started within the PHARE Programme 'Access to education for disadvantaged groups' (2001-2007) and was extended until now and at national level. The aims are to reduce phenomena related to non-participation in education and school drop-out and to facilitate access to education and the possibility of lifelong learning. The purpose of the programme is to support young people and adults aged over 14 who have for social reasons abandoned compulsory education and help them to complete basic education and vocational training corresponding to 1/2 level of qualification. In the 2009/10 school year, the programme was implemented in 267 schools, 290 classes – primary education for 3527 learners and lower secondary education for 4802 learners. Methodologies for the organization and implementation of the programme have been developed, as well as educational materials for learners and teachers.

Because we are a tolerant nation, with respect for minorities, *students have the right to study in their native language*. In this regard, *teaching of the Romany languages* in Romanian schools has increased enormously in recent years. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education, in the school year 1996/1997, 445 Romani students at eight schools were studying Romany, at the

request of their parents; by the year 2010/2011, according to the Ministry for Education, there were 1200 teachers, both Romani and non-Romani, teaching Romany to more than 100 000 students.

There is new regulation for the establishment and functioning of *classes and groups of students who study an internationally spoken language intensively and bilingually*. Since the 2011/12 school year these classes can function from the 5th grade where the necessary human resources are available (teachers able to teach non-language subjects in the foreign language). A methodology concerning the *promotion of multilingualism in Romanian school education* has been devised. The intention is to have regulation concerning the way modern language departments are established and dissolved, that takes into account the general interest of promoting linguistic diversity. As shown by European recommendations and the needs of the labour market, there is a need for people who speak more languages. Every citizen should speak at least two modern languages. It is desirable that these languages are not always the same, and a diversity of European languages should be learned. This would improve the prospects of every graduate of school education.

In recent years, Romania has included the principles of lifelong learning in policy documents as priorities in the area of education, continuous training and employment. Examples of such documents are the strategy Education and Research for the Knowledge Society and the National Education Law. Because Romania did not have a coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategy, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports initiated in 2009 the development of a Lifelong Learning Strategy with the participation of specialists and all stakeholders. As a result of their activity, progress has been made in identifying strategic priorities and directions for action in the area of lifelong learning such as recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, educational and vocational guidance and counseling throughout life and in-service learning systems.

The National Centre for the Development of Technical and Vocational Education is developing and testing a methodology for the implementation of the *European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF)* in the Romanian vocational education and training. Its objectives are: to improve the initial vocational education and training system through the development of tools and methodologies for the implementation of EQARF in vocational education; to test the methodology for the implementation of EQARF in a national context; to develop the strategy for the implementation of EQARF in a vocational context and education.

The expected impact and changes are: the improvement of quality and efficiency in TVET, development of a quality culture in the TVET schools and a better correlation between the TVET offer and the demand in the labour market.

The new *National Education Law*, adopted in 2011, is trying to adapt the education system to European standards laws, being student-centered education. The new Education law is funded per pupil and stipulates student national evaluation at pre-university level every 2 years, starting with the second grade in the primary education up to the final high-school leaving examination (the so-called ‘baccalaureate’) at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> class. There is a portfolio which accompanies the student during school containing the results of all these exams. According to the new law, the teachers are employed on the basis of competition in schools and an individual labour contract is signed with the head teacher. School units are regularly evaluated based on two principles: *inclusion and performance*. They get ratings and those that are monitored will be classified as inadequate to remedy the situation.

Unfortunately, despite all these reforms in education, *our educational system is highly inefficient*, even if each year a lot of Romanian students return from international contests and Olympiads with medals. Each year we talk about the great performances of our youngsters in mathematics, chemistry, and physics. The academic potential of the Romanian students can also be measured by observing the great number of accepted applicants to some of the greatest universities in the world. Romania is often at the 1<sup>st</sup> place in Central and Eastern Europe regarding the number of successful candidates sent to American top universities, and also of top students at universities worldwide.

However, these great results should not invoke the thought that Romania has got a high performance education system. The Olympic winners must represent the peaks of a system that has at its foundation a mass of well prepared people. In fact, the good results are not relevant for the system: they only reflect the personal excellence of the few and the teachers that prepared them and not the status quo of the system.

The statement that our education system is highly inefficient is sustained by the results at the major international evaluations: PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS. With the exception of the results at reading of children in the 4th grade (PIRLS), all the rest of our scores are well below the international average. More concerning though is the fact that the results of Romanian students at these tests are also weaker than the ones of the neighboring countries, who benefit from the same socio-economic conditions as Romania does.

These results do not necessarily reflect the mediocrity of the Romanian students, but most of all the mediocrity of its management. A sub-financed education system, with an aging human resource and an over-loaded curriculum, couldn't have produced better results. I tend to wonder if, in similar conditions, the German or Finnish students would have scored better results.

## School life

Life in a city school is very different from life in a rural school. An urban school will have science labs and well-stocked computer labs, clubs based on different interests, teaching assistants and psychologists and academic programmes for gifted students, whereas rural schools are usually tiny, with some, in villages, providing only 4 years education — the rest being offered at a nearby larger village, having only one teacher for all students (generally under 10 students in total) - a situation almost identical to the one existing at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Transportation to and from school is almost never provided and in extreme cases, in remote villages, students as young as six must walk up to 10 km to school if there is no bus or train. Public transport for all students is in theory free, but, because of a very awkward system, students end up paying half the price for a bus or train ticket.

Teacher-student relations are quite formal, but this formalism has evolved in the past few years to a friendly, but respectful relationship. While elder teachers usually demand respect and are exigent, some younger ones, who better understand what it is like to be in school, are friendly and understanding rather than strict. Teacher-parent relations are also formal, with teachers calling parents to school only for administrative issues at the beginning of the semester and for reading the marks at the end of the semester.

There is no school lunch in most schools, as school either ends before lunch or starts after lunch, although few schools have an after-school program that may include lunch. The didactic process is still concentrating on the teacher transmitting the information, not on the pupils accessing and processing the information and not on their individual needs.

This kind of the educational process ended in the following results: *P.I.S.A evaluation: 2001- Romania is the 34<sup>th</sup> out of 42 participating countries, 2006: Romania occupies the 48<sup>th</sup> rank among 57 participants, 2009: Romania is the 49<sup>th</sup> out of 65 participating countries; school abandonment rate is one of the highest in Europe: 2.1 % in compulsory school up to 3.5 % in the last school years; early*

*leaving school rate:* 20.8 % compared to an average of 14 % in the European Union.

### *Why do students leave school?*

Because teachers are not interested and do not have time to tailor the curriculum according to students' individual needs; because school puts pupils under a lot of pressure; because learning concentrates on teachers, not on pupils; because school has become a burden for both students and parents, but also for teachers; because learning focuses on 'to know' not on 'to do', 'to be' and 'to live'; because 'teachers don't give us time to speak; they speak all day long' (a pupil's opinion); because school has no connection with real life situations.

### *What happens under these conditions?*

Pupils don't like learning; they come to school without pleasure; some of them abandon school because it is too demanding; even the pupils who learn engage in learning not because they like it, but because they have to learn.

*What to do then? The answer is:* 'let's try to implement new forms of education that could help students have a positive attitude towards school and learning and towards their future!'

### *Why Productive Learning (PL)?*

Because learning is tailored to the needs of individual pupils; because it extends the learning space into the city; because it is an inclusive education; because it offers a new chance to the pupils at risk or to the pupils who have already abandoned school; because it focuses on 're-discovering self-esteem and the joy of learning' among students; because it is directed at students' social integration; because it promotes cooperation, not competition among students and cooperation between different institutions, vocational schools and non-governmental organizations; because students take responsibility of their own process of education; because it creates the bridge between school and real life.

### ***Productive Learning ideas and Productive Learning practice developed in Romania***

In Romania, we first found out about *Productive Learning* in 2008, when the Center 'Education 2000+' Bucharest, in partnership with the Centre for Educational Initiatives Association, Bulgaria, Center Pro Didactica Chisinau and the

Institute for *Productive Learning* in Europe organized two seminars to introduce *Productive Learning* to experts in education from three south-eastern European countries: Romania, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova. The seminars were part of the project '*Productive Learning - The alternative to traditional education*'. The project aimed at creating an open expert debate forum around the implementation of *Productive Learning* as an alternative to the traditional education in the aforementioned countries. Ms. Ute Ohme, Mr. Jens Schneider and Mr. Michael Käselau, representatives of the Institute of *Productive Learning* in Europe, provided education specialists in the three countries with the concept of *Productive Learning* and its development in schools in Europe

The outcomes of the project *Productive Learning - The alternative to traditional education*' were: the creation of an informal network of educational specialists from Romania, Bulgaria and the Republic of Moldova, who were informed about the concept of *Productive Learning*; 3 curricula models on *Productive Learning*, designed at national level by the participants in each country; 3 *Productive Learning* projects developed by the specialists in education from the participating countries.

All the Romanian participants were very enthusiastic about this new educational approach and agreed that it could be a way to solve some of the problems we are facing in education these days: one of the highest rates of school abandonment in Europe and very bad results at Programmes of International Students' Assessment.

According to the principles of *Productive Learning*, some schools in Bucharest started new practice-oriented educational programmes. Thus, we have developed three projects connected with (out-of)-schools activities, in order to extend the learning space into the city and ensure suitable conditions for *Productive Learning*:

- a) *The project 'Centers for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds'* aims at preventing school drop-out among students from socio-economic disadvantaged families. This school year, the project is running in partnership with the City Council and School Inspectorate of Bucharest in 17 schools in Bucharest, each of these schools having its own center. The first objective of the project is to offer support to children belonging to poor families, who are at risk of dropping-out and becoming street children. The second objective is to prevent failure and institutionalization among these categories of students.

*The activities of the center:* free lunch for children; teacher support whilst doing the homework or preparing for examinations; psychological support

for children and parents; medical care; juridical counseling for parents; financial support for school objects, school uniforms, shoes, clothing or food.

*Outcomes:* reduced school abandonment rate; increased pass rates; increased student frequency at school; successful students' social integration; reduced number of institutionalized pupils; more parental involvement.

b) *Project 'Bucharest seen by pupils'*

The *aim* of the project is to extend the learning space beyond the school walls (using the city as a learning space). The concrete *objectives* of the project are: to develop pupils' pleasure in exploring the city, thus raising their motivation for History and Geography; to get students familiarized with the cultural heritage of the home town and of own country. The project is coordinated by the History Museum of Romania in partnership with the School Inspectorate of Bucharest. Thirty elementary schools from Bucharest take part in it. The *target group* is pupils from the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The children, coordinated by teachers, visit museums in Bucharest, then take a tour of the city, take photos and, in teams, participate in a contest about the history of Bucharest, its monuments, contemporary architecture, cultural sites, parks and gardens, streets and buildings in Bucharest. The photos taken by children are exhibited in the City Hall on the theme 'Bucharest seen by pupils' and rewarded on Children's Day, celebrated on the first of June. *Project outcomes:* increasing pupils' respect for cultural heritage; raising motivation and better results in History and Geography; getting children accustomed to use the city as a learning space.

c) *Comenius Regio Project 2011-2013'City as a learning place - where learning is an adventure'*

It *aims* at building a bridge between school and real life by extending the learning space beyond the school gates and exploring new learning sites of the city. Two European *regions* (*Bucuresti -Ilfov and Prahova*) will analyze, discuss, document and answer questions related as to how to use different learning spaces in their own cities to develop 10-15-year-old pupils' competences required by the school curriculum. Based on these investigations, the two partners will design models of good practices within the field of city learning integrated into the national school curriculum, and elaborate an in-service training modules for teachers and staff who will work with children at different city learning sites in each of the two regions; the external learning model will be then piloted in 2-3 schools in each of the regions and results will be published in a joint book. The project will help raising the pupils' motivation in learning (*by offering them a wealth of opportunities for learning*

*by doing, the entire city becoming our students' classroom)* and will improve the quality of education and training in both regions.

### **How Productive Learning could contribute to school development in future**

In the Romanian system of vocational training, learning is not sufficiently integrated with work. Usually, practical training is organized in groups of students within the school premises. The instructor responsible for the training in technological laboratories, school workshops or enterprises supervises the practical training of students. As alternative to practical stages in production, some schools have set up 'exercise firms', where real conditions from enterprises are re-created. In contrast with the Romanian vocational schools, which propose an unattractive and invalid vocational route on the labour market, *Productive Learning* proposes the incorporation of the labour market through attractive practical activities, chosen by the student himself/herself. Here are some differences between vocational education in Romania and *Productive Learning*:

<b>Vocational Training in Romania</b>	<b>Productive Learning</b>
■ practice placements are either in real or virtual firms;	■ practice placements only in real labour market;
■ a limited number of practice sites;	■ unlimited number of practice sites;
■ practice sites are chosen by the school; they are compulsory for the students;	■ students choose their 'resource places' by themselves;
■ the placements are merely for working;	■ the placements are 'resources places'
■ the placements are obligatory;	■ the young people become active in fields of activity chosen by themselves;
■ there is a gap between the 8 <sup>th</sup> and the 9 <sup>th</sup> forms;	■ smooth transition from the 8 <sup>th</sup> to the 9 <sup>th</sup> form;
■ only specialist learning;	■ the cultural aspect of learning is closely linked to the specialist side of learning;
■ involve students starting with the 9 <sup>th</sup> forms;	■ can involve pupils in the 8 <sup>th</sup> form, too;
■ no 'orientation period';	■ a six-week 'orientation period';
■ instructors;	■ practice mentors;
■ teachers;	■ learning methods assistants; educators in <i>Productive Learning</i> ;

<b>Vocational Training in Romania</b>	<b>Productive Learning</b>
▪ obligatory curriculum;	▪ students develop an individual curriculum out of their practical activities and experiences;
▪ students' assessment exclusively by teachers and practice instructors;	▪ students assessing themselves, their performances and achievements;
▪ slow connection between school subjects and the practice sites;	▪ students learn the importance of different topics in real life;
▪ one day/week in practice placements	▪ three days/week in practice placements;
▪ a single practice placement throughout the vocational training;	▪ three different practice placements each year;
▪ graduating certificates	▪ certificates after each school year + educational school report

Taking into consideration these differences, *Productive Learning* is for sure a needed innovation in the Romanian school not only for students and teachers, but also for schools and parents:

- *innovation for students*: connecting the learning with real life; individualised curriculum; tailoring of the educational path by the student himself/herself; learning „within” and “through” practical activity; the participation - within the *Productive Learning* programme - in international conferences for young people; getting attendance certificates from the companies/firms where they work during placements;
- *for teachers*: a new role; a new educational profession: “*Productive Learning* educators; acquiring new educational methods: “the learning workshop”, “the individual educational counseling”, “educational group counseling”; the inclusion in an international network of specialists in *Productive Learning*; the professional development throughout the international network; the possibility of participation - in other European countries - in training courses, conferences, congresses, seminars on *Productive Learning*; the opportunity of publishing articles, studies, educational work in the field of *Productive Learning*, with financial support and advice from *IPLÉ* and *INEPS*;
- *for schools*: the extension of the learning space beyond the school; the possibility of organizing international congresses, seminars and conferences with financial support and advice from *IPLÉ* and *INEPS*; the creation of a new space of learning in school -“ the learning workshop”;

- *for parents:* the possibility of offering practice placement to the young people who study *Productive Learning*; the possibility of participating in the evaluation of the educational path of their own children.

We think *Productive Learning* could contribute to the Romanian reform in education and could support our efforts to reduce the school abandonment rate, the decrease in motivation in students for learning, and to increase the rate of employment amongst the youngsters. It might be a solution to the bad results of the PISA study and a way for better preparing students for the world of work, and linking school to real life. Open and tailored to each individual's needs, *Productive Learning* will show the way to extricate schools from their past in order to respond more successfully to the requirements of the information age in which we live today.

## **Productive Learning and school development in Russia**

Mark Bashmakov and Larisa Lebedeva

### **Productive Learning in Russia**

Mark Bashmakov

#### **Introduction**

In the 70-80s in St. Petersburg (then Leningrad) a scientific and pedagogical team was organized, which started to develop the new educational systems whose initial premise was participating in the creation of a new type of schools. This work was to focus on the personal development of students on the basis of productive activity. These schools included specialized boarding school at the University of Leningrad, Anichkov Lyceum, a number of vocational schools in Leningrad (№ 24, 46, 90), the first higher technical school in Minsk, School 597 in Leningrad. Similar schools exist in other regions of Russia – Moscow (“School of Self-Determination,” combine “Khamovniki” center “Schoolboy”, etc.), Kemerovo, Murmansk, Syktyvkar, and Nalchik. these schools began to develop and new system could offer a solution to the new social demands in education.

The general concept of the educational system was based on the analysis of practice of In early 1991 and the idea of creating such a system was presented in the report of the Leningrad's delegation at the first congress of educational Cities (Educational Cities), headed by author who then became the head of the commission on education in the legislature of the city (the Leningrad City Council.). These ideas were very much in tune with the ideas of German scientists and educators Jens Schneider and Ingrid Boehm, who had created an international network of schools of this new type, called the *International Network of Productive Schools (INEPS)* by this time. The inclusion of the Russian schools in the network took place at the second meeting of INEPS in Peniche (Portugal) in the 1991.

The theoretical and practical guide of INEPS was created by the *Institute of Productive Learning in Europe (IPLE)*, which was opened by our German colleagues at the end of 1991 and is celebrated its twentieth year, which was the occasion of this writing.

A year later, the same Institute (IPL - Institute of *Productive Learning*) was opened in Leningrad, and became part of the Russian Academy of Education in 1993, and its director was elected a member of the Academy. For the next ten years, the IPL was the participant and organizer of several international and national projects aimed at using the methods of *Productive Learning* in the practice of education. It is worth mentioning that a large project "Vocational Teacher Update" (1991 – 1995), funded by the EU (1.5 million ECU) created 12 Teacher Training Centers for updates of teachers corps , most of which exist to this day. In 1995 – 1997 the tripartite project (Russia – Germany – Hungary) was implemented, which formed the basis of long-term scientific and practical links between teachers in these countries, working in the mainstream of *Productive Learning*. Project "City as School" was in Leningrad parallel similar projects in New York, Berlin and Pecs. We had gotten the idea of "*Productive Learning* workshops" which offered practical experiences from our German colleagues.

We can define the difference of PL between EU countries and Russia as follows. Our foreign colleagues have sought to implement a *Productive Learning* as an integrated system, which runs in a specially organized institution. "Productive school" while in Russia we focused on the integration of these techniques into the practice of mass schools. This required the development of a theoretical framework of *Productive Learning* in a much broader sense than is suggested by our foreign counterparts. To date, the Institute of *Productive Learning* (St. Petersburg) has formed a large structure with branches in other cities of Russia (Ufa, Novosibirsk, Krasnodar, etc.), which has acquired a mass of practical work.

Their slogan is:

- Productive education for all,
- Productive training to everyone,
- *Productive Learning* anytime, anywhere.

## **Predecessors and allies**

Education, training – these concepts undoubtedly share a common core, associated with the process of formation and development of human personality.

There are perennial debates about relations between different aspects of this process at the same time. In addition to each of these concepts a qualitative description can define the specific branch of the highlights of human development. In the Russian-language these formed such terms as vocational education or distance learning and concentrated attention to one side. National characte-

istics of education systems and education which have led to their combinations are well blended into the local language environment, but there are no exact counterpart in other contexts. Thus, the English term Distance Learning does not quite exactly match the understanding of «distance learning» in Russian and has not found its equivalent in Russian (as well as in the Russian reality.) The title of Flaubert's novel «Education sentimental» in Russian is translated as „Sentimental Education“ which does not meet the established communication education – education.

Introduced in the early 90s the term „*Productive Learning*“ or German „*Produktives Lernen*“ quickly found a Russian analogue, although its French version „Apprentissage productive“ leads strongly to one side. Starting as sufficiently small forms of teacher training activities, the experiences of *Productive Learning* gradually store up the solid scientific and educational knowledge and PL became a system that can offer its solution to new social demands related to education, upbringing and education of the younger generation.

Analysis of twenty years experience in the development and practical application of a *Productive Learning* in more than twenty countries, has led to the realization of its historical roots, identifying its key psychological and educational characteristics and growth prospects of its demand for both the theoretical and the applied aspect.

At the end of the XIX century American poet Walt Whitman wrote a poem «Song of the Open Road» which was incorporated into the famous book «Leaves of Grass» and quickly became known to Russian readers thanks to the brilliant translation of Korney Chukovsky. Separate lines of the poem give artistic images, many aspects of adequate *Productive Learning*:

I take to the open road.  
.....

Here is the test of wisdom;

Wisdom is not finally tested in schools;

Wisdom cannot be pass'd from one having it, to another not having it...  
.....

You road I enter upon and look around! I believe you are not all that is  
here;

I believe that much unseen is also here.  
Here the profound lesson of reception.  
.....

Here is a man tallied – he realizes here what he has in him.

Be not discouraged – keep on.

Allons! From all formules!

.....

Feeble, dissatisfied, desperate, they go!

I know that they go toward the best – toward something great.

Allons! Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten,

Let the school stand! Mind not the cry of the teacher!

I give you my hand! Will you come travel with me?

The name and contents of one of the first projects of *Productive Learning*, implemented in New York truly echoes with images of Whitman's. New York's projects have found counterparts at first in St. Petersburg, Berlin and Pecs and then in Krasnoyarsk, Stockholm and other cities. There were the projects «City-as-School», ««City-as-School (St.Petersburg) », Stadt als Schule», etc. In the center of these projects - the shift of focus from teaching at school to a real life, a compound of general education to work in the field practice (what we would now call an extension of the educational space, and the poet calls the „Open Road“). This transfer primarily awakens dormant powers of Students who frustrated and dissatisfied with school (be not discouraged!), offering them new ways of learning and self-development, provides a new perspective on the role of teacher - „the cry of the teacher“ changes for a teacher's hand. Teacher became a partners for a Student.

It would be a big mistake if the idea of a *Productive Learning* centered only on the idea of including social and individual practices relevant to the educational process. From the outset, a system of productive development of the intellect was included in a *Productive Learning*. Characteristically, one of the initial orders of productive activity has been named «Discovery as Learning». Publication of the material was prepared by Anichkov Lyceum in St. Petersburg. The German school „of Gestalt psychology“ should be called as a precursor of this *Productive Learning* trend. One of its active members M. Wertheimer named one of his major works which have appeared in the middle of the XX century, – «Productive Thinking». This book has been published several times in Russian translation. We will refer to the publication in 1987.

German psychologist clearly raises and explores a number of issues.

„What happens when the mind is working efficiently? What happens when in the course of thinking we are moving forward? What's really going on in this process?..

What happens when we really think, and think productively? What are the essential features and phases of the process? How does it proceed? How does a flash of inspiration happen? What conditions favor the installation, or do not favor such a remarkable phenomenon? What distinguishes good from bad thinking? And finally, how do we improve thinking? Your thinking? Thinking at all? Suppose we need to compile a list of the basic operations of thinking - what would it look like? What, in fact, should be guided? Is it possible to increase the number of such operations - to improve them and make even more productive?"

Remarkably, M. Wertheimer, introducing the term „productive thinking“ does not seek to define it, and focuses on the dynamics of the process, its goals and essential features. „Productivity thinking“ he illustrates with the indisputable (not requiring the definition of productivity) samples, analyzing the mechanisms of great scientific discoveries (Gauss, Galileo, Einstein ...). However, according to Zinchenko, in the preface [1, p. 18] - „psychological reconstruction of creative discoveries to Wertheimer is not an end in itself. It solves the main task - to show the fundamental structure common mechanisms of creativity in representatives of primitive peoples, students, the great scientists. This is further evidence of its pedagogical optimism. „

Of course, we are using the results of M. Wertheimer, in developing the concept of *Productive Learning*. Without them, it is not possible, to separate the teaching from the thinking. But we would like to draw attention to the fact that in describing the characteristics of productive thinking, M Wertheimer always goes beyond the thought as such, for example, including questions of ethics and morality, without which education is meaningless. As we said previously, we can't separate training from education. M. Wertheimer pays attention to the feelings and emotions, to the dynamics of emotions that displays the individual into the wider social field that certainly is valuable for the theory of *Productive Learning*. Rereading the example of the boys playing badminton [1, p. 201–205] it is very difficult to separate the moments of decision-making (the results of productive thinking players of the game) from the analysis of changes in the emotional, spiritual and social spheres.

Analysis of the psychological mechanisms included into creative work is very important for a productive using of methods of learning. We would not want that the graduating student of «productive school» evaluating the role of his head like that of an athlete from the well-known anecdote. This athlete having achieved an outstanding athletic performance answered a reporter question about using his athlete's head in training that he eats with help of his head.

Even more important than the ideas of the German school of „Gestalt psychology“ in the theory of *Productive Learning* are the ideas of school by Lev Vygotsky. Identified by the school, the mechanisms of formation of scientific concepts based on real experience of relating combination of thought and speech with the activities contain a rich and not yet fully discovered potential of ideas of creativity in the learning process.

The formation of concepts is one of the central issues of learning. The changes in school education have great interest, not only in practical terms at the methodical level of technique, but also in theoretical terms.

Note the three most significant changes that are beginning to affect teaching in schools:

- there are changes in the recognition of the values of education;
- significantly expands the information environment of study;
- changes in life orientation of young generation.

In the past, at least fifty years, the main purposes of schooling were the acquisition of knowledge and skills that were necessary for a successful life in modern society. Deep-developed pedagogical concept of teaching which were based on a student's activity has a sufficient basis for methodical equipment of pedagogical process and orientates at concrete results of education.

It becomes difficult to find a convincing answer to the sacramental question: „Who needs it?“ Students ask teachers about the need of most of the classic skills (for example, to multiply the number of multi-valued column or add fractions).

A modern Student is sure that he does not need this skill. At worst, he will find what button to press if he really does need it

In these conditions, we should expect increasing importance of theoretical knowledge, their greater inclusion in the common cultural and historical context. So, we must appeal to the results of the psychological development of adolescents and thinking and begin rethinking the ideas of the great scientists about the fundamental core of schooling. In this respect, Vygotsky's figure is the most emblematic.

First, Vygotsky criticizes the method of introducing the concept of using the verbal definition. According to him, in this case we emphasize the „finished product“ and ignore „the process leading to the formation of the product. Depen-

ding on the determination of the ready-made concepts we are dealing not so much with thinking but with reproducing the knowledge and finished definition. „In addition, „a method for determining operates almost exclusively with the word, forgetting that the concept is connected with the sensuous material of perception and processing of which it is born.“

At the same time it seems untimely that other methodological procedure based on a slow, linear, „phased“ shaping operations without an „explosive“ point , without the awareness of new knowledge, which opens new possibilities. This stage in the formation of the concept is inevitably bound up with language, word or symbol. This dual role of language is needed to make a substantial body for thinking that will not only help to keep it, but make it a tool for further work. And at the same time language can obscure meaning and become a dead barrier. Vygotsky remarkably noted, citing poetic quotes from two Russian poets - Mandelstam and Gumilev:

I forgot the word that I wanted to say  
And the idea of disembodied shadows back hall.  
(Mandelstam)  
And like bees in a hive deserted,  
Reek dead words.  
(Gumilev)

The main psychological ideas which are in the base of PL belong to Leontiev's scientific school. They were accepted and developed in detail in the theoretical works of Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider, who are the main promoters of the widely international recognition of education and productive scientific schooling.

The name of the central works of Leontiev's „Activities. Consciousness. Person“ [2, p. 94–231] already contains the sort of triad, which is the basis for *Productive Learning*. According to Leontiev [2, p. 141–142], „activity is not a reaction or aggregate of reactions, and the system that has structure, its own internal transitions and transformations, its own development.“ The „activity of the human individual is a system that is included in the system of relations in society. Outside of these relations of human activity does not exist. „And further: „In society, one finds not just the external conditions to which it must fit in its activities, but that these very social conditions carry the motives and aims of its activity, its means and ways, in short, that society produces the activity of its constituent individuals ..“

Speaking about the role of consciousness, Leontiev directly connects it with nature, „the same features of human activities that create the need for it: in its objective and objective, productive nature“ [2, p. 168]. The „main thing is not to indicate an active, controlling role of consciousness ... Activity is not simply a carrier of expression and mental image, which is objectified in its product. The product is not imprinted image, namely the activity, the subject content, which it has an inherent .. Lastly, „implementation activities richer truer than anticipating her mind“. These words express one of the most important aspects of *Productive Learning*, which can be formulated as follows.

At the basic of *Productive Learning* is the sequence of activities (productive) whose wealth provides individual development of personality, which is essential for learning.

In Leontiev's work [2. 185] can be found the idea of motion, which leads us to the notion of individual educational itinerary essential for *Productive Learning*: „Man's consciousness, as well as its own activity, not additive. This is not a plane, not even a tank filled with images and processes. This is not due to individual „units“, and the internal movements of its generators are included in the general movement activities, performing real-life individual in society. „

The most important contribution to the psychological foundations of the theory of *Productive Learning* was made by a modern psychologist, M. Holodnaya.

M. Holodnaya in his monograph devoted to psychology of intelligence [3], used the term „productivity of the intellect“ several times. And it is important for us not only in the terminological similarities, but much more important in the similarity between the author's analysis of the structure of mental (mental) experience with our position on the structuring of *Productive Learning*.

M. Holodnaya in the analyzing of the dynamic properties of the process of intellect (which has long advocated the major focus of research of psychologists), highlights as a consequence of this approach the features of productivity [3. 225]: „Accordingly, the assessment of intelligence productivity was associated with characteristics of intellectual activity, such as: (1) measure the influence of motivation and emotion on the success of the solution, (2) Formation of basic cognitive actions in relation to the achievement of certain cognitive goals, and (3) Formation of operations analysis, synthesis and generalization of the conditions and requirements of the problem. „

Primarily in our concept are converged intellectual abilities. We emphasize the most important traits such as reproduction of intelligence, combining and pro-

cedural properties, which form an important part of the structure of its productive activities. However, we highlight blocks of creativity and learning in this structure, which exactly correspond to the two other types of intellectual abilities, given by M. Holodnaya. Her analysis of cognitive styles can be used as the basis for the much needed of classification of individual differences in the implementation productivity in *Productive Learning*.

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## **Our way of *Productive Learning* in St. Petersburg**

Larisa Lebedeva

### **History**

*Productive Learning* in St. Petersburg was started from the Project “City – as - School” of IPL by M. Bashmakov (SPb). *Productive Learning* organizers were teachers, a physiologists, Professors of the Universities so they were the people who had the experience of *Productive Learning* and wanted students to become more successful in their education. We can define three periods in the development of the *Productive Learning*.

#### *The Romantic period*

We were sure that the ideas of *Productive Learning* would be disseminated very quickly because they are very interesting for the traditional school and help teachers in successful education of unsuccessful students. We organized the meetings with the Deputies of Legislative Assembly of the City, the leaders of the Districts, the Principals of Schools. They told us that the ideas, the methods of *Productive Learning* were very well but nobody wanted realize them. So, we failed but were not defeated. We started finding the informal ways. This period was very short.

### *The Realistic period*

On the one hand, the traditional system of school education in Russia regulates the process of training in comprehensive schools strictly enough. On the other hand, changes in modern Society require individualization of learning. Traditional School has been searching new methods and *Productive Learning* can give good opportunities for it. At last, we have found Principals and teachers - adherents of *Productive Learning*.

### *The Practical period*

Now we realize various projects using *Productive Learning* methods in different educational institutions: Schools, Colleges, Lyceums, Pedagogical University. We have desire, force, helpers and we are full of hopes to develop the *Productive Learning* further in our country.

After the reorganization of the IPL in St. Petersburg was organised Center of *Productive Learning*. Employees of the Centre continue theoretical and practical activities to develop ideas of *Productive Learning*. The main areas of activity: working with students in the project's activities (as further education), participation in international projects, work with teachers, promoting a *Productive Learning* experience.

Unfortunately, the funding of our activities is minimal, so the teachers are the center work mainly on a voluntary basis.

### **Key competences and the ideas of *Productive Learning***

Council of Europe defines, which competences "should be equipped the young Europeans":

- the political and social competence, such as ability to accept the responsibility to participate in acceptance of the group decisions;
- the competence to resolve conflicts in nonviolence way;
- the competence to participate in maintenance and improvement of democratic institutes;
- the competence connected to life in a multicultural society.

Competences are got only from personal activity and experience. Authorized traditional School using reproductive learning can't ensure process of taking them.

Educational process is realized within the framework of an individual way built by a sequence of steps, where each step has well-determined result, as productively focused activity in a real vital situation ( I. Böhm, J. Schneider). The efficiency of education is defined by internal parameters of independence of creative work instead of conformity to the standard (ideal average level of education (N. Krilova).

### **The purposes of activity of the Centre of *Productive Learning***

- *Educational*: Distribution of knowledge, items of information on ideas and methods of *Productive Learning* in pedagogical community, among the parents.
- *Practical*: Realization of ideas, methods of *Productive Learning* in educational process at school, development Student's base competences.

#### *1. With the Productive Learning Students*

The practical activity with the Students is realized in several directions:

##### *Educational:*

- Educational activity (during the lessons, for the lessons);
- Educational activity after classes (expansion interests in education, development of the person, organize the success in any activity and ext.).

##### *Social:*

- Development of communicative skills ;
- Development of skills of intercultural dialogue, tolerance .

#### *2. With the teachers*

##### *Dissemination the methods of PL:*

- Organization the acquaintance seminars, the work-shops for the teachers;
- Organization the leaning seminars;
- Consulting of the teachers;

#### *3. With the parents*

- Explanation the goals of PL;
- Organization the Recourse places for the Students ;

#### *4. With the University's students*

- Organization the acquaintance seminars;
- The work-shops, model training seminar;
- Taking part at the YOUTH exchange (as organizers, tutors);
- Including at Herzen University's programs PL material.

### **Organization of *Productive Learning* and ways of realising the project plan**

*General Education:* We've been training teachers to methods, technologies of *Productive Learning* that they use at their lessons at school: creative activity, oral and written work with the text, reflection. Using PL methods changes the role of a teacher – the activity becomes co –operative, teacher stands close to the Student. Students choose the theme of the project independently. Also, they are included in presentation of the projects on themes they are their interested in. The projects, which pupils carry out in PL groups, are represented in different school subjects. For example, in Computer Technology and Word art culture; History and English and others.

*Extra-curriculum activity:* After classes Students continue working at the Projects discussing individual, social, educational problems, producing new ideas, reflecting. The psychologist of the PL organizes individual and group consulting.

*Individual Education.* We organize learning individual route not only for failed Students but for those who need advanced level of education. Such Students take part in various educational contests with PL projects. Our PL teachers consult them, lead individual work, teach to do scientific work. PL teachers released the manual book supporting such activity.

### **Practical work with students**

In the course of technological progress in society is increasing the need for active, activity-related people who are able to adapt and rapidly changing conditions of work, interested in self-development. To fulfill this social contract teachers are turning to teaching methods that allow combining the interests of society and the individual. Currently, more attention is attracted by project method; its use helps to solve the problem.

At a time when traditional school is still working for the “average” student, any of the projects focused on particular individuals. It operates with an important

principle, involve young people in planning, preparing the project, in conjunction with the teachers. Traditional school education plan from the top down, that «forcing» student to go to the goal, regardless of his own desires, abilities, capabilities. In individual education plan developed in accordance with the desires, needs, and interests of young people.

One of the founders of the ideology of *Productive Learning*(PL) - the German Professors and Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider believe that the essence of *Productive Learning* - stimulate interest in student's learning through their self-employment, setting their goals and problems that leads to new knowledge and skills. In *Productive Learning* the method is used for projects promoting creativity, cognitive activity, independence, and builds individual educational routes students.

In the newsletter of the Ministry of Education project method is characterized as a way of organizing the cognitive work of students to solve problems related to the design, development and manufacturing of a real object (a product of labor). Educational projects based on the subject between all participants in the pedagogical process. The teacher in this approach - a consultant, partner, it does not lead students in the learning process for him but accompanies them.

Analysis of the experience of German colleagues showed that the preparation and implementation of the project includes the following phases and problems:

1. Orientation phase: depending on the direction of the project (school, extra-curricular, re-educated), it takes 3-4 weeks; individual and collective discussion of the project, it is important to show the difference from traditional school education; creation of communication groups that discuss various topics and any projects they may be who introduced new forms of work. It requires teachers' intensive teamwork, and that created an atmosphere of trust.
2. Stage of development: development of individual tasks; analysis of the personal experiences of students; development of collective tasks; definition of goals and resources.
3. Stage of the project: choice of research methods and information retrieval; independent work of students on tasks; intermediate discuss progress; design project.

4. Stage presentation of the results of the project: training presentations; protection project.
5. Evaluation phase of the project: relevance nominated challenges the adequacy of their study subjects, the correctness of the methods used research and treatment results; activity of each participant according to his individual needs; collective decisions (in the team project); nature of communication and mutual support of the project participants; necessary and sufficient penetration depth of the problem; bringing knowledge from other areas; conclusiveness of decisions, the ability to argue their findings, conclusions; design aesthetic results of the project; ability to answer questions opponents, conciseness and validity of answers.

External evaluation of the project, as an intermediate or final, takes on different forms depending on many factors. German colleagues believe that by using the method of the project students will acquire:

- the skills associated with the development of interest: to analyze their interests, identify new interests on the basis of the former, and compare their capabilities to defend its interests;
- ability to find practical and interesting student activities: to determine for themselves the cognitive activities, ask questions;
- ability to choose a practical activity: to find a potential place of practice, study their characteristics, to find answers to questions about the place of practice, to make an informed choice of place of practice;
- ability to investigate the conditions of practice: to notice, to formulate and relate practical activities, and its terms, to discuss practice, to find its new features („niche activities“) ;
- ability to prepare for work in practice to define and justify their activities in practice in the context of self-interest, clearly define the objectives of its activities, to substantiate the specific steps to implement the activities;
- ability to carry out work in practice to carry out practical work in specific conditions, to plan and implement targeted her, finding pros and cons of their own practice;
- ability to assess performance in practice: to present the results of practice, evaluate the results based on the original objectives;
- ability to draw conclusions from the results of practice: setting goals for future activities on the basis of experience, explain the positive and negative results, to evaluate and change their behavior in accordance with the objectives of practice;

- ability to establish personal relation to action: to recognize, assess and take into account the importance of practice in the development, in an individual educational route and choice of profession;
- ability to establish a social value of practice: to recognize, assess and take into account the importance for society as a whole;
- ability to establish the cultural value of the profession: to recognize, assess and take into account the cultural aspects of the practice;
- ability to establish professional value of practice: to recognize and take into account the aspect of professional practice.

Since 1995, educators working with students of 9-11x classes according to the method of projects within the framework of further education.

Before students begin work on a project at the stage to guide teachers familiarize students with the projects that were implemented during the international project “The City-as-school” in Russia, Germany, Hungary, France and the United States. Much attention is paid to the choice of the proposed theme of the project. A theme can be anything related to academic subjects, professional interest, hobby. Teacher it is important to make sure that the topic is flexible enough that it can be viewed from different angles and positions that reflect a student’s personal experience and psychological characteristics of his personality.

The group discussed and students are determined by the purpose and format of the project: essay, video, Web-site, the combination of genres. With the students held classes where they learn techniques for working with different information: text or audio-video- information. Students search for information for the project through the Internet, in libraries, local practices, in press. Or project summary to be circulated when it is presented in the form of video, Web-site, photo album, etc., are done on the computer. For the guys attend classes in the computer lab.

During the project, students can take the help of consultants. It's professionals on the issues that are addressed in the project, or staff of the Center of *Productive Learning*, to serve as experts. Students keep a diary of personal achievements, which allows the teacher to evaluate the intermediate stages of the project. After completion of the project and its design guys are prepared to defend the project. Protection by means of presentations on the computer, which students create their own and under the guidance of a teacher of computer science. Before the defense with guys offer classes to prepare for action, and the group is pre-protection project.

The teachers in the students' work on a project supported their initiative and answer questions, share experiences and ideas. Jointly discuss the criteria for the protection of individual projects on various parameters: match the content of the submitted topic, logic of presentation, level of independence and mastery of the material, design aesthetics, literacy, emotion, culture, language, presentation and quality of computer handout. Students who are doing the project, not only acquire the necessary knowledge and skills (including social). They develop as a person, getting the real experience of self-determination.

Groups of students are equipped with software from schools, colleges of St. Petersburg. For information on the Center's work they get in promotions, teachers who spend Center. A group of students usually consists of 15 persons and is divided into two groups to work more effectively psychologist.

Alternative education - is a laboratory where tested new methods of education and training (in particular, this happens and techniques). Traditional school sometimes uses them in their activities. Here is an example of such influence. In the summer of 2002 Department of Education and the Chukchi Autonomous District Centre provided training 150 students in Chukotka. The students spent 6 weeks in the summer educational camp, on the Karelian Isthmus Semiozere.

It was planned to combine leisure and *Productive Learning* in certain subjects. Even before his arrival in camp, the children selected the profile of future learning - humanities, natural science or physics and mathematics. Group (team) were formed in accordance with the age and the selected profile. Each group consisted of 8-12 people.

The students who chose the humanities -learned English and Russian, English and Russian literature, and science. Those who chose the mathematical profile - studied mathematics, physics, computer science and English. The program groups of the natural cycle includes the following subjects: biology, chemistry, geography, English and computer science.

At the beginning and end of shift for all groups were held "intellectual marathon." The first "marathon" marked the beginning of an unusual summer teaching of students, and intellectual marathons at the end of the shift were logical to sum up all the learning activities.

Form of organization - the lessons, but not at the same way as in traditional school. Each student had the opportunity to earn points for themselves and

their team. Acquisition and enhancement of knowledge took place in the process of creating the team project. Project Title correlated with the profile of the group, with the interests of students. The core teaching method was the use of projects coupled with modern information technology. The project was implemented with the support of a team of teachers.

The training was designed not only to improve knowledge, but also the development of learning motivation. According to our observations, the project activity: enhanced the interest to the subject and related areas of knowledge, encouraged independence and initiative of students. It allowed to distribute responsibility in teams, each participant learned of the project team to take responsibility, allowed to show creativity, helped unite the team, taught their students to work in the peer group, developed the ability to cooperate.

During training, psychological support for children was carried out. Its objectives were: to facilitate the process of adaptation to the conditions of teaching children at summer camp and providing the experience of reflection and study of interpersonal interaction. The success of training at a summer camp influenced, above all, the atmosphere created by teachers. At the preparatory stage of the competition was held among the teachers. "In the selection of teaching staff took into account not only the qualifications of teachers, their ability to work with different age group of students, but also the ability to use new technology, training, flexibility, focus on cooperation with colleagues and children. Representation and protection projects have caused great interest in children and adults: assessment of their project work and team work was very high.

The feedback of students:

*"When I first heard about what we learn here 6-8 hours a day, I presented the teachers with glasses as evil professors who conducting the experiment on children. All turned out differently. "*

*"Lessons are often held in the form of games, which helped to master the material. He gave practical knowledge. In general, I think I was very lucky that I was in this camp. "*

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*„All pleased with the singing of contemporary songs in English. I wonder of developing classes in English literature, when we watched films: “Romeo and Juliet,” “Hamlet” “Notre-Domme-de-Paris” or the whole group went to the teacher in the forest, meadow, conducted various games and tests of scholarship. All teams were OK organized.“*

*“Learning is much easier than in a regular school. We are very interested to learn new things, like the teacher from whom we can learn a lot.“*

*“Teaching load was normal, the teachers - the good and responsive, more importantly, to engage in even more interesting, because the classes are conducted not only by profile subjects but also in other subjects. Education in the summer is not burdensome, if all in moderation.“*

Experience of *Productive Learning* we must to distribute in order to make the school more attractive to students and meet the needs of the time.

### **Participation in international projects**

One of the interesting part and important work of our Center has been involved in international projects. For nine years, Youth Exchanges were organized between German and Russian Students. We can say that approximately 185 Students (German and Russian) took part in this program.

An international exchange showed that the combined modalities allow young people and teachers know each other better. They are useful for the development of *Productive Learning*. Educators learn the experience of youth training in Germany and Russia, and adapt it to the cultural environment of their countries. For the Russian teachers - this way of enriching their educational experience, the ability to compare the Russian way of development of *Productive Learning* German. It is very important for the development of *Productive Learning* in Russia because the closure in its own shell, inevitably leads to stagnation.

Experience in the techniques of *Productive Learning* allows us to maintain and sell in Russia striving for innovation in education. We compare the results to achieve more.

In Germany, students are learning two days a week spend in school, and three days working in the field of professional practice, they choose and find your own. Place of practice varies each term. During the internship students learn the basics of the profession, perform tasks associated with the school program (unfortunately, in Russia, *Productive Learning* has no public support and is implemented within the framework of further education, it makes unnecessarily complicated way of organizing groups of *Productive Learning*. We constantly do monitoring of the results of this work. After the first exchange having analysed Students' Portfolio we found out that almost all of them had felt a cultural shock - strong emotional experience which is connected to a difference between the Russian and German cultures. To overcome this phenomenon we began to prepare both teachers and pupils for perception of other culture. The international exchange of the pupils is a good method of development of tolerance. Russian students suppose this Program is interesting, helps their self- determination, cooperation, avoid misunderstanding between people and would like to go on participating in Youth Exchange. One of important sources of information to analyze is Students' Portfolio.

#### *Some extracts from Students' Portfolio*

*E.Kate.27.11.08.* The first day I started with studying the neighborhood. The Metro in Berlin is much bigger than in St. Petersburg and maybe in Moscow – the capital of Russia. There are many special things which differ this European city from my native St.Petersburg. Firstly, the streets are clean but they don't take the leaves away. Secondly, the architecture is very beautiful. The houses like toy: practically every balcony has flowers. Everything is cosy like at home. I can't believe that I'm far away from my home and there are some unknown corners in the world. The final is: I like everything very much. The next thing I need meet Students from PL School and know the time and place of our practice.

*K.Goar. 01.12.08.* We had practice today. I was really ashamed we (Kate and I) were 10 minutes late. It was our fault -we did everything too slow. We met Ditmar and went to Fitness Club. I couldn't contact Tobias but I adore Jenny. So sweet girl! She took care of us. I loved working there. Then we went shopping. At last I bought necessary things. That day was wonderful as well.

We analyze Students Portfolio of Youth exchange, entry and exit questionnaires to correct pedagogical work with them. We have found that many Students are not able to allocate main idea in personal activity, expressing their opinion, reflecting and planning. The analysis of educational work with the pupils has opened the same problems. According to the situation we plan work based on

PL ideas to improve personality through the activity. We create real situations for it and use technologies let Students develop oral and written speech.

For example, work with the text in groups, pairs, teams with using such active methods as "Critical Thinking", "Brainstorming", "Fishbone". It helps them collect information, combine and represent. Such work is integrative and used in different school subjects, different activities (at lessons and after classes) and project making. It helps improve their skills.

International exchange has helped us to look the part on the quality of schooling. For example, our students during a conversation in a foreign language are afraid to make mistakes, so they prefer to remain silent or explained in sign language, they can not overcome the language barrier. Many believe that the gesture makes them ridiculous in the eyes of others.

To realise this purpose *Productive Learning* organises regular training Seminars, Work-Shops for teachers which are not involved in *Productive Learning*; exchange PL experience in doing projects at City competitions.

It is very important for the *Productive Learning* to expend international cooperation with INEPS Schools. We are ready to organise International Seminar in St. Petersburg to interest teachers, Principals, Leaders of Educational Departments, to form public opinion, attract Parents of Students, sponsors. Information about work of PL has been spread through articles, speeches at Scientific Conferences, Parents meetings and we have positive response and suggestions of cooperation (Schools, Luseums, Gymnasium of Russian Museum, School Department of Russian Museum).

In 2008-2009 educational years *Productive Learning* has joined the new project called «City as a museum, museum as school ». The age of PL's participants in this project is not limited. Everybody from 9 to17 can try their abilities in improving their knowledge of City history, world Art and culture; presentation of results by various ways (computerized graphics, collage, posters etc.).

Our Students wrote the words bout *Productive Learning* which look like the Japanese hokku :

*Productive Learning!*  
*Useful, unknown*  
*Develops, helps, connects*  
*I open new opportunities*  
*Experience!*

## **Productive Learning and School Development in Catalonia/Spain**

Josep Alsina-Rosell and Mercè Marcé Cumplido

### **From intuition to institution - A certain case of PL project**

Josep Alsina-Rosell

Many people are lucky enough to spend a considerable part of their life sitting in classrooms, learning or pretending to learn, before the time arrives to take a job. Then, those who can manage to work in the profession of their dreams are the privileged ones.

Nevertheless, some youngsters suffer at school –as their teachers do– because they feel misplaced, until they drop out of the system. Only if they are able to resist their confinement, stay the whole time which is required, they'll finish ‘successfully’, which means without enough skills to go forward in their studies or to get a decent job, which is even worse. And they are far off from reaching their dream profession.

It must be clear that it is still necessary to read some books in order to become a genius in any field we can imagine: maths, sciences, philosophy and so on – maybe not in pop music-. As may be expected, not everybody is willing to be a genius, since there are many other pleasures around us. For similar reasons, we have elite schools to shape our future leaders as well as regular schools to shape the rest of us, regular people. But something is going wrong when regular schools also produce drop-outs.

My dream profession was to be a writer or journalist. In fact, it's better to read than to write, but if you can't find the way to earn your living by reading, it doesn't seem to be any bad solution having to write.

For some odd reason, when my journalism studies were over, the first jobs I was offered weren't about writing but about teaching, something that had not entered my thoughts. Once, I was asked to teach maths, grammar and so on, in a City Council's training project for young unemployed people. They had several of them – I mean training projects (unemployed people also and very useful ones!). But I declined the invitation. Some months later they offered me to be in charge of a new communication project. It wasn't about writing either, but it sounded better to me. Therefore, I took this job.

This communication project was part of a bigger one intended to offer practical experience to unemployed people with university degrees, mainly young historians and scientists. We produced some videos, exhibitions and a periodical, as well as other printed works –so I could write something at last–.

After a while, in 1990, our City Council decided to set up a TV station, as did some other municipalities in Catalonia. It was a logical step forward for cities that already had public radio stations since the early eighties. In our case, we used this opportunity in order to start a new training programme, aimed at offering practical experience to unemployed people, with or without official degrees in television. Could there be a better way to learn television than producing and broadcasting programmes? Moreover, it enabled our participants to gain experience in working in a real TV station, which was the best reference to find a job.

That same year, the *International Network of Productive Schools (INEPS)* was created, with the participation of our City Council. But I had just heard about it. We started this new project with six people, a couple of computers, two professional second-hand video cameras, an old analogue editing equipment, some lamps, a table and other stuff, all placed in a single room. In short, we had few resources, a small team –most of them untrained–, and no teacher. Not bad.

Our lack of space wasn't any problem because we realised we already had a huge set provided with cheap and natural lighting, which was the whole city. So, we went all around the city taking pictures and making documentaries. In the city, we found some well-equipped sets as well. Why setting up a kitchen at the studio, for instance, if you have plenty of restaurants all around you?

To broadcast, we rented a nearby TV station for hours, which allowed us to reach not only our city but the whole region as well. Soon we had the equipment required to broadcast through our city's cable network, as well. In fact, we were one of the first TV stations in editing and even broadcasting through an Apple computer.

The six people that constituted our team had different levels of skills. So, they were put to work in pairs, always one having more experience than the other, like it happens with most couples. One of these little teams was in charge of preparing a news programme, the second one made documentaries, and the third prepared a magazine. They did everything by themselves, from the script to the editing, including the presenting.

During that time, there were several changes among our participants, mostly because their experience allowed them to find a job or even to create their own enterprise. Each participant who left us was replaced by another one, always trying to balance the levels of skills of each couple of participants. They were 'working' even though they were supposed to be 'learning'. But to work proved to be the best way to learn.

Since we had no teacher at all, nobody taught anything, but every day the whole team met to evaluate the work already done –the product–, to analyse the processes and to plan new productions. I wanted to know why and how these videos were made, and the reason for each success and error. My questions made them think about their tasks, reflecting upon different ways of doing things, and correcting mistakes. Since I wanted to know, I was teaching them, although nobody noticed it. In fact, we were learning all together. And everybody's motivation was very high since the products were broadcast to a large audience and we received some feedback from citizens.

As it may be expected, we had some huge difficulties from time to time. For that reason, we used to invite professionals to run practical seminars about several aspects we couldn't find out more about without any help, ranging from how to improve lighting to how to deal with ethics. The participants asked to have those seminars, more than myself, and they enjoyed them immensely.

It took a whole month to prepare our first broadcast, of about two hours. But soon we were able to broadcast weekly some beautifully crafted productions. Later on, in 1995, we managed to broadcast daily, until the City Council decided that it was time to stop this training project and to professionalize its members, joining them with the radio station team. So, at the end, our working students became real employees. That happened at the beginning of 1997, after having trained people *very productively* during six whole years.

In 1992, our country received a lot of visitors, mostly interested in Barcelona's Olympic Games. Our TV project received some visitors as well: a nice couple from Berlin who kindly told us that we were delivering '*Productive Learning*'. If they, as experts, said so, it had to be true. But it was the first time we heard these two words uttered together.

This visit was the beginning of a lasting friendship. Then we met in wonderful places such as Annecy, Lourinhã, Peniche, Saint Petersburg, Paris, New York, Berlin, Helsinki, Kuopio, Liverpool, Lisboa, Funchal, Krakow, Durrow, Stockholm and even in Oxford. In each of those places I found new good friends and people

with projects and ideas to improve my work. I began to learn about PL, as did my team, and we started to think in a more profound way about our job. Needless to say that those years were the happiest and most productive of my life.

The first thing I realised was that *Productive Learning* is something so natural, so logical and so intuitive, that you can use it even without knowing it. It's also true that during the very first *Productive Learning* meeting I attended, my feeling was to be very out of place. Everybody seemed to be teacher, professor, educator, social educator, pedagogue and so on, while I was nothing but a TV journalist. When I was told that this was not a handicap at all, I began to love PL.

As I always use Apple computers because I like communication but not informatics, I also deeply like a teaching method where one doesn't need to be teacher. In fact, it's not a teaching method at all, but a learning method, which is quite different. All in all, this method impressed me as much as the Socratic one.

Suddenly, I realised that *Productive Learning* was just the opposite of all that I had experienced in regular school. At school there is always a teacher and we hadn't had any. At school there are students sitting passively inside rooms, but our participants were working actively, mostly outside. To discuss, we sat around a table, because it makes it easier to communicate and exchange knowledge, instead of sitting in rows like in a classroom. Well, teachers also sit around a table, but only when they are among themselves, so this counts for little.

Nobody among us taught any boring lesson, as most teachers must do, at least from time to time. Instead, we took out lessons from our daily practice, whilst sharing our common knowledge and experience. The amount of subjects one can learn by producing videos is astonishing –although books are still better-. We were working and learning in a logical way, using our talents instead of listening to a teacher.

Since nobody taught anything not needed, not wanted or not asked for, we had no major problems. There was no lack of knowledge either, because everybody was willing to learn what was needed. The issue was to make them need to want to learn. For instance, I never studied English at school or at university –it's quite evident, I'm afraid–. That's amazing, but it wasn't available at that time –it was even worse for Catalan, my own language, which was forbidden–. At school, I just studied –and suffered– Spanish and some French, but I started to learn English with pleasure as soon as I needed it in order to communicate with some nice people. Motivation, not obligation, is the best tool to learn.

In short, in our TV project we had a goal, a team and a leader - just the same as in every classroom. The difference was the way of interacting. And it seemed that the way my team and I were working was very close to *Productive Learning* methods. Consequently, we were very interested in going forward and became involved in several PL European Programmes : I had to write quite a lot, definitely.

In January 1994, we started our first student exchange with some youngsters from Paris and some very enthusiastic people willing to help their students. It was a great and extremely enriching experience –which would be even better in the following years–, much better to live than to explain.

If my experience shows anything then it is the fact that even though if one has no or little idea about how to teach, like me, one still can be a PL educator by just having some logic, intuition, enthusiasm, curiosity and a wish to learn. And that, in case of any lack of resources, it's possible, at least, to produce and broadcast TV programmes.

After four years of running the TV project, in 1994, our City Council wanted to extend PL methodology to several areas of knowledge, in order to be useful to the very different needs of young unemployed people. To do that, we tried to imitate our Berlin friends and we created a *Productive Learning Institute* to develop two different training programmes: a new one in the field of television–there still were some unemployed youngsters willing to do that– and a City as School project open to any kind of learner. This one was aimed at unemployed people of all ages because we estimated that to have youngsters, middle-aged people and even old people, all together, could be some form of enrichment, as it turned out to be.

We had a practical reason as well to put them all together, since we could only afford to have a single group of about 20 students. They were working through individual plans, with different timings, accompanied by educators. We participated in several European events, training seminars, congresses, youth congresses and student exchanges. We also made some videos about projects, congresses and youth meetings.

The most difficult task, and the most important for us, was to encourage the self-esteem of our youngsters. Since their childhood, parents and teachers made them believe that they were incapable of studying or even of doing anything good at all. These youngsters truly believed to be failures. For that reason, first of all, we had to try to show them that not being good at school doesn't mean

anything and that within a few months they would be very skilled professionals, responsible and happy people too. Once, when I asked a student what he would like to do, he stayed quiet, surprised, until he said that it was the first time somebody asked him such a question.

Apart from working successfully with students, we were fighting to spread *Productive Learning* in our country, but mostly with disappointing results. In 1995, we created a local Network of Productive Schools, in order to gather experiences among schools and educators, but very few of them got involved. This network did some good things but it really never took off successfully.

In 2003, after a long period of negotiations and preparations, we started a special module inside a public high school, thanks to its clever and enthusiastic principal. This *Productive Learning* module had some difficulties mainly due to the fact that some school teachers were not interested in it, because they preferred to exclude every student that annoyed them from school. In spite of all of this, the module succeeded in helping some youngsters to avoid 'school failure' – it seems correct to call it this way, because it is not at all the 'student's failure'. But that's somebody else's story because that same year I was required to be in charge of both regional TV and radio stations.

Fortunately, a very good and enthusiastic team is still fighting at the front line of *Productive Learning* in our city. And I hope our politicians will allow them to do this for a long time to come.

By now I'm out and far away from this *Productive Learning* business, but I'm still very happy if I can encourage some people in joining this marvellous way of thinking and of doing things.

Twenty years ago, whilst making TV programmes, we produced something meaningful for our society, extracting some knowledge from the process. It was intuitively done until *Productive Learning* gave us the tools needed to go from rational thinking to conscious reasoning.

Working in a rational way is nothing unusual, by sheer good luck. In many real life activities, when there is a team and a leader that pursue a common goal, people work in a practical way by rational thinking. Otherwise they would fail.

The key to the success is the pedagogue's role, which *Productive Learning* emphasizes a lot. A *Productive Learning* pedagogue works as a football team's coach, encouraging, analyzing and sharing knowledge with players. Not just

teaching them, but playing and learning with them. In Catalonia, we have the Barcelona Football Club –we call it Barça–, which is very successful not only because it has very good players, but also because of their present coach, Josep Guardiola, whom somebody called ‘a philosopher’ –in a pejorative sense, by the way–. He prepares tactics, trains and encourages his players, but also protects them absolutely. When they play well, the coach praises the team’s work. But when they are not good enough, he assumes all the responsibility. So, he liberates players from pressure and makes the team stronger, increasing its cohesion. I’d quite like to see teachers doing that.

It’s impossible to stress the importance of the leader in a group, in order to make sense of the common work. We have many examples in real life situations, books and movies. The great German anti-war film *Die Brücke* (1959) presents precisely a real scenario of what happens when a group of enthusiastic and untrained young soldiers have a goal (to protect a bridge), but not a leader.

Another good example of a team working in a logical and productive way is *castells*, which we have had in Catalonia for centuries. That’s something that makes us proud enough, as Barça does. Recently, *castells* have been recognised by the UNESCO as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

According to the UNESCO, ‘*Castells* are human towers built by members of amateur groups, usually as part of annual festivities in Catalonian towns and cities. The traditional setting is the square in front of the town hall balcony. The human towers are formed by *castellers* standing on the shoulders of one another in a succession of stages (between six and ten). Each level of the *tronc*, the name given to the second level upwards, generally comprises two to five heavier built men supporting younger, lighter-weight boys or girls. The *pom de dalt* – the three uppermost levels of the tower – comprises young children. Anyone is welcome to form the *pinya*, the throng that supports the base of the tower. Each group can be identified by its costume, particularly the colour of the shirts, while the cummerbund serves to protect the back and is gripped by *castellers* as they climb up the tower. Before, during and after the performance, musicians play a variety of traditional melodies on a wind instrument known as a *gralla*, setting the rhythm to which the tower is built. The knowledge required for raising *castells* is traditionally passed down from generation to generation within a group, and can only be learned by practice.’

I like the last sentence: ‘The knowledge required for raising *castells* (...) can only be learned by practice.’ That’s the point. You can’t teach the *castells*’ complicated structures. You must do hands-on work in setting up a *castell* to know pre-

cisely how to do it, how to equilibrate it and how to make it stable. It's exactly the same as what happens in many real life situations, from cooking to riding a bike. *Productive Learning* is intended to create real life situations within a learning context, while regular school still insists on just teaching.

*Castells* can fall down, of course, although they are not as dangerous as one would imagine just by looking at them. Failure is also possible in *Productive Learning*, but this may also be something positive if you can learn from it. Every activity has its risks. And that's precisely their charm. If *castells* couldn't fall down, nobody would be interested in doing or witnessing such a thing.

As we all do in real life, in order to succeed, each *Productive Learning* participant must choose an objective, define it as precisely as possible, and go for it, taking on responsibility, following an itinerary under the guidance of a working plan. *Productive Learning* educators inspire students and facilitate the way to achieve their goals, motivating, encouraging and coaching them during the entire itinerary. Motivation with no purpose doesn't make sense. Everybody must have a clear objective.

Steve Jobs, the CEO of Apple Computers, a genius who just passed away, never graduated from college. In his well-known address to Stanford University students in 1995, he stated that he dropped out of college because 'I couldn't see the value in it. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life and no idea how college was going to help me figure it out.' (...) 'It was pretty scary at the time, but looking back it was one of the best decisions I ever made.'

'I was lucky — I found what I loved to do early in life. Woz [Steve Wozniak] and I started Apple in my parents' garage when I was 20. We worked hard, and in 10 years Apple had grown from just the two of us in a garage into a \$2 billion company with over 4000 employees.'

'You've got to find what you love.' (...) 'Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle.'

Hopefully, *Productive Learning* will stay here for a long time to help people in their path towards a better world.

## **Productive Learning in Catalonia and Spain**

Mercè Marcé Cumplido

### **The prevailing malaise in the Educational System**

It was during a long and dark period in Spanish History, that education was merely a tool for political indoctrination of Franco's government. It was an especially hard time for Catalonia because it was a systematic attempt against its culture, tradition, language and educational ideology. Since the early twentieth century and up to the Spanish Civil War (1936), Catalonia had an important tradition in school innovation and educational reform, following the theories of Dewey, Decroly and Montessori. These were applied in the movement of New School in Catalonia (1900 -1939). Also had the foundation of the Modern School of the important Catalan pedagogue Ferrer i Guardia, in 1901.<sup>5</sup>

The process towards democracy in Spain after Franco's death in 1975 brought the beginning of a new administrative structure in the country<sup>6</sup> as well as educational reform – which still exists today – which occurred in different ways depending on the Spanish Community in question. In fact, the education system is common for the all of Spain, but the administrative structures of each state allow differences in the application of its principles according to the cultural and linguistic characteristics of each Autonomous Community. In this sense, a single and unique Spanish education reform does not exist. It started with the implementation of several laws which were following ones to the others (LODE -1985, LOGSE - 1990, LOPEG - 1995, LOCE - 2002, LOE - 2006). LOGSE is both polemic and the most important. Enacted in the 1990's, LOGSE, meant the beginning of a big change to try and implement European standards.

LOGSE applied a comprehensive and inclusive system which allowed forward integration and social cohesion promoting equal opportunities for all citizens. The most important innovation was the enlargement of compulsory education

5 Ferrer i Guardia was executed in 1909 by Franco. After his death several Modern Schools inspired in his pedagogy were opened in the world. One of the most important was the Modern School of New York, founded in 1911.

6 From the New Spanish Constitution in 1978, Spain is a state divided in 17 Autonomous Communities which have a complete legislative and executive authority as well as the faculty of administration through their own representatives. With this process of decentralization, the central government transferred educational competences among others. In Catalonia, for example, the process of transferences finished in 1981 but it was enlarged again with a new Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia in 2005.

up to 16 years - before that it was up to 14 - and the challenge was to face the educational needs of a big diversity of students trying to insure, at the same time, quality and equality of conditions. It was a law focused on the student's profile and on his/her possibilities to acquire competences - a new pedagogical concept – more than with only theoretical knowledge. Old disciplines (History, Literature, etc.) disappeared, being substituted for new ones in the curriculum (Environment Knowledge, Body Education, Transition to Adult Life, etc...), at least to a theoretical level. Consequently, school centers became more autonomous in the management of its organization and pedagogical approach. The law was more permissive in new strategies and formulas to help disadvantaged students, organizing curricular adaptations or modifications in the evaluation criteria, for example.

LOGSE was a systemic conception, open and flexible, which recognized the new role of the school and teachers, moving away from exclusiveness of knowledge and of its pure transmission. It promoted a different vision in the way to educate, based in key psycho-pedagogical principles like Constructivism (Bruner, Vigotsky, Piaget, etc...) and Cognitive Theory, Meaningful Learning (Ausubel), Learn to learn, etc... But an important part of the educational community thought that this law was too theoretical and not based on experience. It was seen as more idealistic than realistic. Ultimately, it seemed clear that its application required both an open mentality of teachers and administrators as a bigger economical investment, and although some tried to open their minds and invest more in their projects, it was not enough and new problems appeared in the educational setting.

Finally, and with many difficulties, the LOGSE implementation was finished in 2000. Due to the political alternation in the government between opposite ideologies, characteristic of the time, other educational laws followed to LOGSE, which in some cases were trying to complement it positively, but in other cases they were discrediting its bases. In fact, none of these new laws made a deep analysis of the failures and successes of their predecessors.

Laws, laws and laws... The later ones continued mentioning the necessity of support for students with special needs, as well as the necessity of developing programs of initial professional training addressed directly to them, from the last stages of compulsory education. They also started to demand the responsibility and implication of all social agents in the education of our young people (business sector, municipal administrations, families, etc...).

But the academic level of the students fell lower and lower every day and the average rate of school failure started to rise - it has been located at 30 % for some years now. The PISA results in 2000 were also a new signal, locating Spain under the OCDE average, although the Catalan marks were a little bit above that. At the same time, the continuous and quick changes taking place at a technical and social level and the immigration phenomena - 18 % of the citizenship are immigrants - were exceeding the capacity of schools to adapt. A prevailing malaise of teachers, students, families and people belonging to all social sectors was appearing in the last decade all over Spain and, at last, several social demonstrations took place.

In 2002, the National Conference of Education, which was promoted for the Department of Education, was celebrated in Catalonia. This event was joining voices of different social sectors which were claiming that "another education was possible". As a way of debate and adding to the framework of participation and effective collaboration, all social agents (economics, intellectual, etc...) were implicated. It was the first systematic effort of analysis and reflection which claimed a change of direction in the Catalan Educational system. This social debate lasted four years and finished in a National Agreement for Education in Catalonia, in 2006, which was pushing the Catalan government to solve, definitively, educational problems achieving quality and effectiveness in our educational system. Due to this movement, that same year the Law of Education of Catalonia – LEC was implemented. This first integral Catalan educational law, aimed to make possible a significant development of the educational action in a framework of innovation, and consolidation of good practices. It wasn't possible for this law to change the general state's regulation in education, but it could study in depth some of its parts and takes some new decisions: to promote shared responsibilities between school and local administrations, emphasize the concept of Educational Cities and create the Agency of Evaluation of Catalonia with the purpose of guaranteeing the required level of excellence. The most important point of this new law was that it undertook the compromise of a progressive economical investment during a period of eight years, until reaching the European average near 6 % of GDP.

At present, the LEC is in process of stabilization in the middle of a storm. Although this law was approved by the Catalan Parliament by a high consensus, a political change took place two years ago in the Catalan Government and one of the first governmental actions in this crisis' time was precision budget cuts in all fields, including education. Nowadays, the situation is far from being satisfactory and the educational community is skeptic, in the best cases, but angry in the worst ones.

### One step ahead of law

But reality is as it is. Students' problems must be solved immediately, they cannot wait. It is evident that not all students have the same learning rhythm and style or the same educational needs. Not all of them have the same range of life experiences, knowledge and skills; neither do they all want to continue their academic studies. **In this sense**, when the LOGSE law was implemented with its new leaving age of compulsory education, what could schools do with drop-out students of 15 years old?

Responsible secondary schools decided to act and help students, but also school life in general. They began thinking about innovative ways to educate and solve the increasing problems that young people with a risky background had. These experiences tentatively appeared all over Catalonia, without regulation or a common criterion. These projects were isolated from each other, like mushrooms in the forest, each school having the unique responsibility of its design and function. These experiences were based on a different approach and structure of educational action, which entailed a different organization of curriculum, learning activities, timetables, teacher-pupil relations, etc...

Later on, these experiences were called **Open Classes** and they were first regulated by the Education Department in 2005. During the same period, a meaningful number of these initiatives were called **Singular Projects** because they already included practical activity outside the school like in firms, workshops, and other places in the city. However, this was a big problem because before 2007 there had never been an education law in Catalonia that allowed students younger than 16 years old to participate in a professional environment at all, even if it was with an educative aim. But schools continued with their projects and tried to disguise the concept of apprenticeship behind words like training stages or observations stages, at the same time the educational authorities were probably turning a blind eye.

Nowadays, around 180 Open Classes and Singular Projects exist; all of Catalonia applying different models, it is possible that some of them share many similarities with the *Productive Learning* model. These classes are led by voluntary teachers, belonging to the team of teachers in the school, who have a great altruist conscience and sensitivity. Most of them are working without a clear methodological approach and without the support and understanding from other teachers.

By the year 2000, the Institute for *Productive Learning* - IDAP, a municipal institution created in 1994 in Vilafranca del Penedès to apply and promote *Productive Learning*<sup>7</sup>, had a long and satisfactory record in its implementation of vocational training programs addressed to young people. Although not exclusively. *Productive Learning* had as its main premise, the development of practical experiences outside of the school, in real-life situations.

Following the proximity of policy and shared responsibility with the schools in Vilafranca, *Productive Learning* was proposed to the three public secondary schools to help them in their growing problems. These problems were in the education of students with special needs, which were outside the school's walls for their lack of motivation and difficulties of adaptation to the traditional school system. This initiative became a reality through "**Productive Learning in Secondary Education**" IDAP's program.

This proposal was supported by the approved resolution of the Cultural Policy Commission of the Catalan Parliament, which encouraged the administrations to class and fund *Productive Learning* experiences.<sup>8</sup> Also, it mentioned the possibility of introducing this methodology into secondary education.

The first pilot experience of *Productive Learning* was in the Institute of Secondary Schooling, Milà i Fontanals, in the course year 2002-03, in order to overcome its difficulties. After this experimental phase, the excellent results were successful year after year in this pioneer *Productive Learning* module. Four years later, the remaining schools, that is to say, IES Eugeni d'Ors and IES Alt Penedès, claimed this same educational resource. In the last course 2010-11, a new *Productive Learning* module was implemented for the first time in a semi-private school called Saint Joseph's School. All these *Productive Learning* modules were inside a **Curricular Diversification** program from the center, which at the same time belonged to the **Attention of Diversity** program – concepts introduced due to the above mentioned LOGSE - focused on avoiding the discrimination of disadvantaged students.

These modules were called **MAP Classes (Metodologia de l'Aprendentatge Productiu**, in the Catalan language) and in each of them, 12-13 students could at-

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- 7 The Economic Promotion and Labor Department of the Town Hall of Vilafranca del Penedès get on to *Productive Learning* in 1990, through the Institute for *Productive Learning in Europe (IPLE)*, from Berlin, and its directors, Ingrid Böhm and Jens Schneider.
  - 8 Resolution 620/VI about *Productive Learning*, in session 05.04.2001. It was based in the non-law proposal presented by Mr. Roberto Labandera, deputy from Vilafranca and great father of *Productive Learning* in the region, next to five other deputies of the Socialists Parliament Group.

tend, from 15 to 17 years old belonging to the last stage of Secondary Education, which presented a great diversity of profiles. A percentage of them could be handicapped students for psychological and mental health disorders (dyslexia, immaturity, etc...) or for problems associated with immigration or extreme social disadvantage. Furthermore, some of these students were intelligent, with a highly critical attitude; perhaps because of both personal features, they rebuffed the academic environment and as a consequence, were showed bad behavior.

Nowadays, MAP classes continue with these same student profiles and it means for them an alternative to their negative experiences at school, an alternative to learn in a different way, closer to their desired learning style and rhythm, a last alternative through which to stop their failure at school. *Productive Learning* methodology offers them a combination of learning activities in class, alongside to this is practice learning outside of school, in real-life work situations two days a week, which must be reflected in the individual training plan of each student.

In MAP Class the whole activity is focused to obtain results. They could be material results (a table, a cake, a special thing, a cupboard, etc...), products of documentation through multimedia resources, research, group projects, etc... Through which, they learn curriculum subjects and about their chosen professional field.

The students can choose among more than fifty professional fields where they have a real experience of learning and also where they feel close to respected adults and qualified workers. There the student can observe and participate in the labor activity under the mentor's guidance. This choice must take place in each term and the activity is varied and different from one term to the next. Luckily, IDAP collaborates with more than one hundred local firms, shops, schools, restaurants, and other educational environments; additionally, more than one hundred contracts are signed up with them annually. These experiences in practice placements are enjoyed by the students a lot. The lost motivation returns to them little by little, as they see their protagonist role and new attitudes develop, such as being active, participative and responsible. These experiences permit them a progressive personal development, sometimes in a spectacular way, and a clearer vision of their professional future.

Until now, near to 250 students have been beneficiaries of *Productive Learning* in schools; students who have had a new opportunity to straighten out not only their academic pathway but also their own lives. Of the whole group, 85 % have

achieved graduation at a secondary education level, in doing so, opening up professional careers, and vocational training of their choice, or the labor market.

The implementation of *Productive Learning* in each school in Vilafranca has required an IDAPs educator to work with the team of teachers. The spirit of collaboration and joint learning between them has been developing positively for nine years; however, at the beginning not all school institutions were receptive to the program. However, the objective in the long term has always been that schools could implement *Productive Learning* methodology independently to IDAP. At the moment, each school has a different level of autonomy going from methodological advisement to the establishment of insurance and contracts with the firms for the practical stages of the students on charge to the IDAP.

Only the veteran Secondary School, Milà i Fontanals, has preferential treatment, maintaining the IDAP's educator in class, because it is the school which has placed the biggest bet on *Productive Learning*. An example is that four years ago the staff decided to put into practice its application in lower age groups, helping children who are already showing school integration problems. In this initiative, a group of voluntary teachers expressed their proposals for an interdisciplinary task where the different subjects were related around the students' production, giving priority also to the individuality of each curriculum. The results were very good and the excitement of all the professionals was increasing every day. Since the last course, some IDAP educators are collaborating in this experience.

MAP classes are receiving many visits annually from other school teachers or municipality workers coming from other cities who want to see its process first hand. Conversely, IDAP educators and teachers of collaborator schools, mainly from the Secondary School Milà i Fontanals, are introducing their experience and spreading *Productive Learning* methodology through Teacher Training Programs through participating in meetings, workshops and conventions. All of these activities are important because in this way *Productive Learning* is becoming more and more well known.

Nowadays, the Department of Education of the Catalan government is considering the MAP model in Vilafranca del Penedès as a good model of Singular

Project, one of the best examples of organization, function and methodological approach, which is inspiring other experiences.<sup>9</sup>

However, it is only in the education of disadvantaged students where *Productive Learning* has had its opportunity in the Catalan Educational System, and not further in general education; at the time being, it acts as the last opportunity for these students. The Catalan education system itself is given to spread good practices systematically just as other paradigmatic European educational systems would.

Even though society is demanding a new educational model, good ideas and new approaches all of these are difficult to implement. The outlook in education is not promising in Catalonia and Spain or for *Productive Learning*. But it must trust in the potential of the educational system, which must be in a permanent effort to adapt to the contemporary moment; it must trust in the potential of the professionals who are behind it, very often without the recognition that they deserve, and it must trust overwhelmingly in all those young people who are clinging seriously to everything they need, both inside and outside of school.

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9 Study “*Shared educational experiences between secondary schools and other institutions giving answer to the educational needs of students in risk exclusion in compulsory education*”. Mite Ferrer, 2005. Department of Education. Analysis of 24 Catalan experiences being the *Productive Learning* model one of the four best models of the Attention to the Diversity in the schools.

## ***Productive Learning and School Development in Sweden***

Gun Nilsson and Olof Persson

### **A disconnected school**

Gun Nilsson

I would like to express a personal reflection after twenty years as a career counselor in Swedish schools.

*Impressive, confusing and political dynamics* – which summaries my impressions from the last twenty years.

#### *Impressive*

because never before has the school been researched this extensively. Never before have so many research reports been published about the Swedish school. In addition, reports have referred to an enormous amount of research reports released from many other countries. Moreover all public debate has focused on the school. Everyone has an opinion about the school and it has always had to endure much criticism. Now it has been proven that the Swedish school system has major flaws. Judging from international comparisons, the knowledge of Swedish students has decreased, and this has particularly been the case with regard to mathematics and science.

- It is a paradox that the development has gone into the wrong direction despite the alarming reports from school researchers. Segregation has increased both within and between schools and a large number of students do not reach their targets.

#### *Confusing*

because the reports use different scientific methods and varying sources of information. In addition, there is no control over the complex changes taking place, which makes it difficult to assess the actual situation. Some reports make international comparisons, while others report changes over time. The basis for drawing firm conclusions is, therefore, very limited. Facts that are published one day are proven to be untrue the next. Some reports claim to prove that Swedish pupils perform worse than 20 years ago - some say the decline is due to international students doing better today than 20 years ago.

- The confusion is great - the school must meet many needs, but the result of the research is left hanging in the air.

### *Political dynamics*

because political interests determine which story should be told/published about the school. The researchers have chosen to avoid some of the politically charged questions - it is dangerous territory. Education policy is used as a weapon in the political debate.

- School has been discussed extensively during the last decade and major school reforms that have changed the structure of the school have been implemented. Political compromises have caused some reforms to be very modest. Other reforms have been more radical in nature; new curriculum, new grading system, the main responsibility for the school has shifted from the state to the local government and the introduction of a new law has made free schools appear everywhere.

### **Looking back with gratitude for *Productive Learning***

School has an important role to play - but the implementation of this role leaves a lot to be desired. I am grateful and happy that I, over the past years, have had the opportunity to encounter *Productive Learning* and to work in a productive and different way in the school. The introduction of *Productive Learning* has meant a lot, both to me as a person, to the school's staff and to the many students I have met. Suddenly, we were able to abandon the 'right-response pedagogy' and found that the focus was no longer on delivering the right answers, it was no longer important to be right - the most important thing was to be able to figure things out and thus develop thinking as a specific skill that can be practiced and improved. To be able to think outside the box of the 'right-response pedagogy' is the skill required in the future. Gone are the days when education and competencies can be explained in detail - not even changes are what they used to be. Nothing is a foregone conclusion; there are no finished answers to learn about the future. They do not exist and they are not needed. Skills and attitudes will be more important than the right answer - and it is those important skills that are practiced in *Productive Learning* - a school that is connected.

Young people today exhibit a 'can do'-attitude. They are not fixed in the present. They can find their way around in a world we do not even realize exists. They know that social media can change the world, that your hobby can earn you big money. Today's Swedish school should know better than to feed these young

people with the same old 'right-response pedagogy.'

## ***Productive Learning in Gothenburg***

Ole Persson

### **Introduction**

*Productive Learning* in Gothenburg began when we took part in the *INEPS* congress in Hungary in 1991. It became the start of *Productive Learning* for ungdomsverkstaden, a school for young people with special needs in Gothenburg.

Ungdomsverkstaden was a part of Youth Center in Gothenburg. Youth Center was a division of upper secondary school, which was a contribution for young people who were out of work and did not go to regular upper secondary school. As ungdomsverkstaden and Youth Center already used practice placements as a method, the idea of *Productive Learning* suited us well.

The initial problem was to mix the cultures of school and practice placements together. Practice placements and school used to be two parallel roads, with lack of interaction. *Productive Learning* became a method for us to solve this problem. The part of our organization, which started with *Productive Learning* in Ungdomsverkstaden, included a group of 12 young people with special needs and four pedagogues. Primarily, the staff was supported by their manager who was employed at the administration of education in Gothenburg.

### **Development of *Productive Learning* in Gothenburg within the Swedish school system**

A few years later, the individual program for young people was created for students who did not have enough competence to be accepted in regular upper secondary schools (in Sweden called nationella program). In Sweden, all education is taking place in upper secondary school, both the vocational program and the theoretical program, which is a preparation for studies at the university. An individual program was to be formed out of the needs the student have. The goal was to give students the help and opportunity to graduate in Swedish, English and mathematic, which was necessary to be accepted to a regular upper secondary school.

Ungdomsverkstaden became a part of an upper secondary school called Angeredsgymnasiet. We still had the same target group and were allowed to continue with *Productive Learning* as a method and were supported by the principal,

who had an understanding of this method and its positive influence on these students.

At Ungdomsverkstaden we started one more *Productive Learning* group called Bildningsverkstaden. This was an opportunity for a group of 12 young people to study religion, Swedish and social science; *Productive Learning* as a pedagogical method. The graduation was at upper secondary school level. In 1998, there were 24 students who had the opportunity to use *Productive Learning* as a method at Ungdomsverkstaden/Bildningsverkstaden

In Gothenburg, we noticed that the studies within the individual program were not so successful. Perhaps due to the fact that most schools educated the students in a very traditional way and the students had already tried traditional education for nine years in comprehensive school without any success. Around 20 percent of the students in Gothenburg studied in the individual program, and it did not change over the years. About 30 percent of these students graduated so they could continue at the regular upper secondary school (Nationally program). Only 15 percent of those who entered the upper secondary school graduated from regular upper secondary school.

At ungdomsverkstaden we decided, as a test, to take *Productive Learning* one step further. We tried to use *Productive Learning* also as a method in vocational education. Before this we had only used it as an alternative method when we worked with the students' motivation for their studies.

In Gothenburg, we decided to divide the Individual Program into two parts. We started one school named studieförberedande centrum (study preparation center) with the goal to help the students to enter upper secondary school. The intake increased to approximately 240 students. We also started our school named Yrkesförberedande centrum (vocational preparation center), consisting of about 300 students, who had two possible goals. Either to get a certified vocational education or to enter upper secondary school, all this was based on *Productive Learning*.

*Productive Learning* fulfills two tasks in our school. It provides an alternative pedagogical vocational education for around 145 students. And we also use it as an alternative pedagogy for giving the students another tool to support their motivation.

In July 2011, Sweden got a new school law. The aim is to provide the students in the theoretical programs with an improved preparation for university studies.

The students belonging to the vocational programs will have a more modern education, thus they will be better prepared for working life. It has become more difficult to enter upper secondary school. Previously, the students were able to enter upper secondary school with grades in Swedish, English and mathematics alone. The new school law makes the qualifications harder. To enter vocational upper secondary school the students have to graduate in eight subjects including Swedish, English and mathematics. To enter upper secondary school who prepares for university, the students have to graduate in twelve subjects including Swedish, English and mathematics.

The individual program is replaced with five different introduction programs, namely:

Vocational introduction: The aim of this program is to offer the students a vocational education which makes it easier for them to get established in the labor market or to give them the possibility to enter a vocational program at an upper secondary school.

Individual alternative: The aim of this program is that students are able to enter a vocational introduction program, continue other forms of education or enter the labor market. This introduction is for students who have to work to increase their motivation and self esteem.

Preparatory year: studies so that within one year the student graduates so that he/ she can enter upper secondary school. The student is only allowed to take part in this program for one year.

Program directing individual choice: the aim is that the student shall have an education that is directed towards a vocational upper secondary school. The student shall, as fast as possible, start at the regular upper secondary school. This program is run at different regular upper secondary schools depending on which profession the student choose.

Language introduction: Swedish studies for newly arrived immigrants.

Our school in Gothenburg works with two of these introduction programs; vocational introduction and individual alternative and we use *Productive Learning* as a pedagogical method in both of these programs. We are the only school in Gothenburg who employs *Productive Learning*, but we work with around 300 students. Gothenburg city council is happy for us to employ this method.

### *Productive Learning* in Future

In the future, I think it is possible to influence regular vocational upper secondary schools with *Productive Learning* methods, for two reasons. Firstly, we are going to be part of a regular vocational upper secondary school despite our target. Number two, the economic crisis makes it necessary for school to be a part of real working life and society. It must be the way forward for school to contribute and to act in a crisis situation. The integration between school, trade and industry will become important in the future.

So I think there is a huge need for *Productive Learning* in the future.

## The role of *IPLE* and *Productive Learning* for the future

Bret Schlesinger (USA)

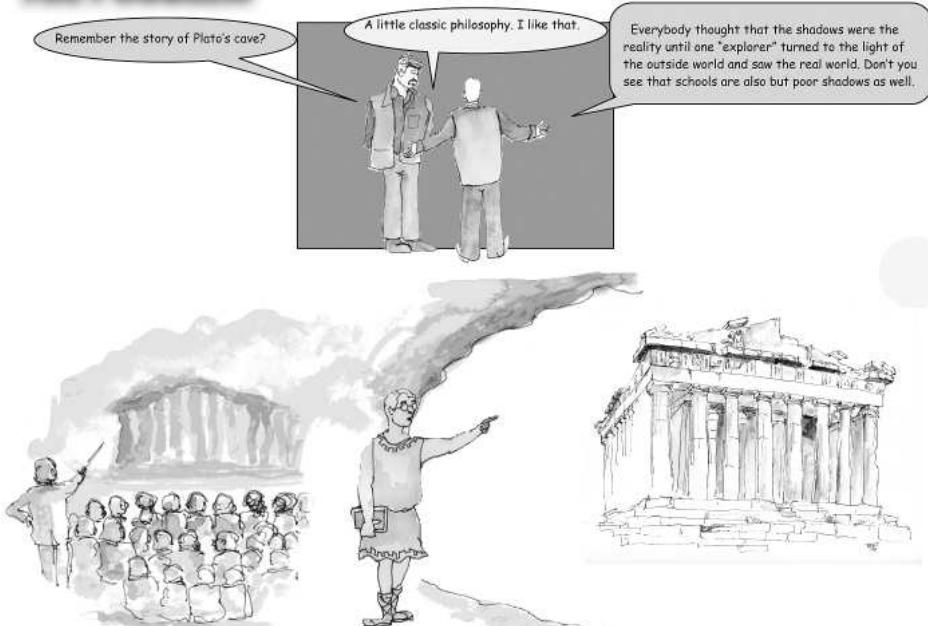
The creation of *INEPS* and *IPLE* has made my retirement as exciting if not more so than my years working in the New York City school system. It has given me a wonderful excuse to visit the great cities of Europe and meet so many remarkable and dedicated people. For a number of these years I have been the lone voice representing the great tradition of City As School and I am happy to say that those days are over because a new generation of CAS leaders has decided to join the fray and play a more active role in promoting our philosophy of education.

Already we are beginning to initiate some new ideas and plans and in 2013 we hope to introduce them when we host the *INEPS* Congress. It is amazing that with all the furor about why our education is failing, nobody has examined the system itself. Only this small group of innovators and reformers has dared to question the very structure and aims of the traditional system and set out to change it. You are the lonely pioneers up against the entrenched establishment which has failed to see that its very success of “universal education” has been crippled by a mode of operation that was created for a minority of citizens. To truly reach everyone it must be redesigned to meet the multi needs of everyone in a very complex society. The classroom with a single teacher is dead but unfortunately no one is ready to face that reality. Keep up the good work and someday we will reach success.

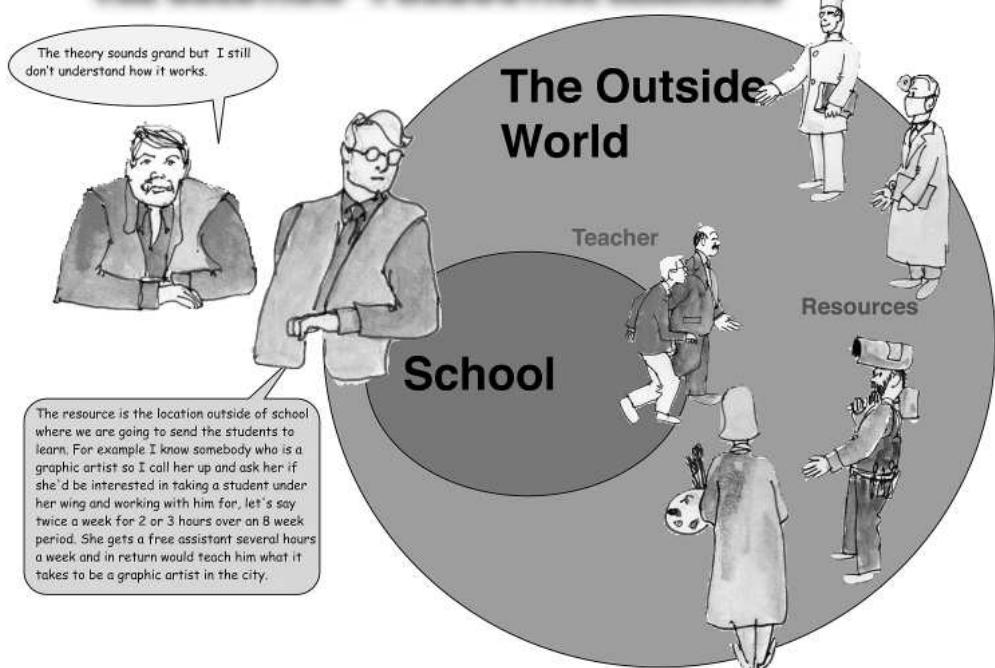
I give you a cautionary tale based on our experiences with disenfranchised American minorities. The first group was brought to America as “guest workers”- well not quite guests since they were sold as slaves. They were non Christians and considered biologically inferior in intelligence and were not counted in our constitution as full persons but as property. In the middle of the 19th century we fought a bitter civil war to free them. They were given the vote but in at least 1/3 of the country they were separated or segregated from the rest of the population. In the middle of the 20th century they fought for their equality and acceptance as full citizens. In 2008 one of them was just elected as President of the United States. A second group were a group of Christians who were deeply distrusted by the Protestant majority in America so much so that they were often denied work because of their beliefs. When one of them tried to run for the presidency in 1928 he was rejected largely because of his religion. Finally in 1960 one of them was elected but only after he had to clarify his stand on

his religion, Catholicism. When the Chinese came to our shores they were also “guest workers” and discriminated against. The Japanese had better luck until World War II they were universally interned because of Pearl Harbor. In each of these cases we have managed to overcome our differences and misgivings. Today there is controversy over our Muslim and Hispanic minorities, because they are different as well. These so called “others” in Europe are here to stay as well and what the future holds will depend upon how they are treated, accepted and integrated. It will not be easy but it must be faced and dealt with. Good luck!

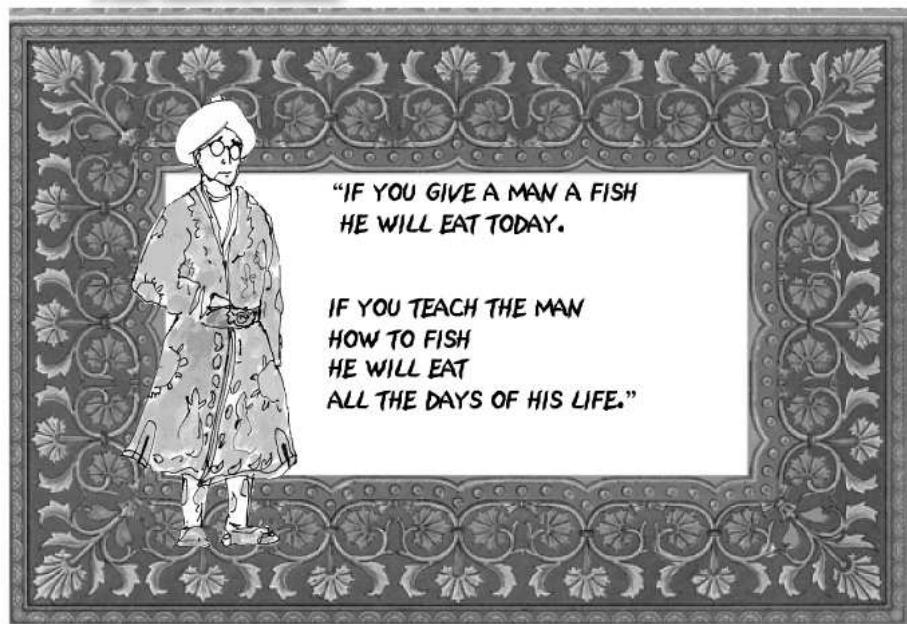
## THE PROBLEM



## THE SOLUTION - PRODUCTIVE LEARNING

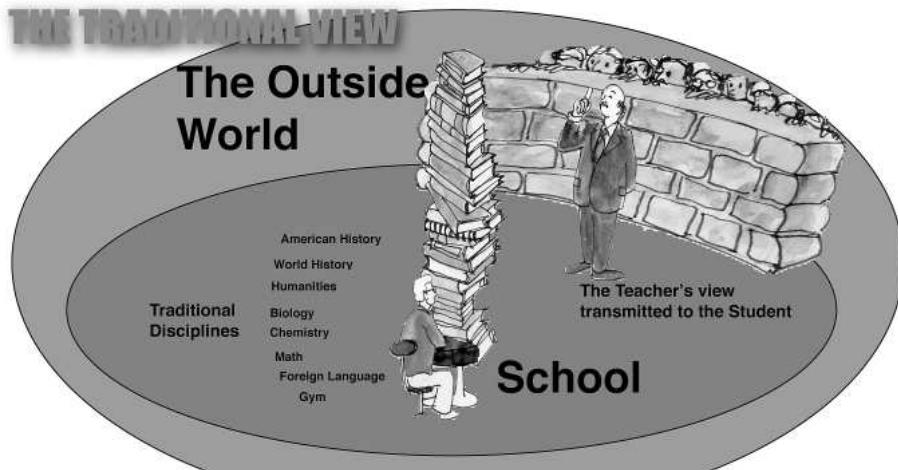


## THE RAYONNE

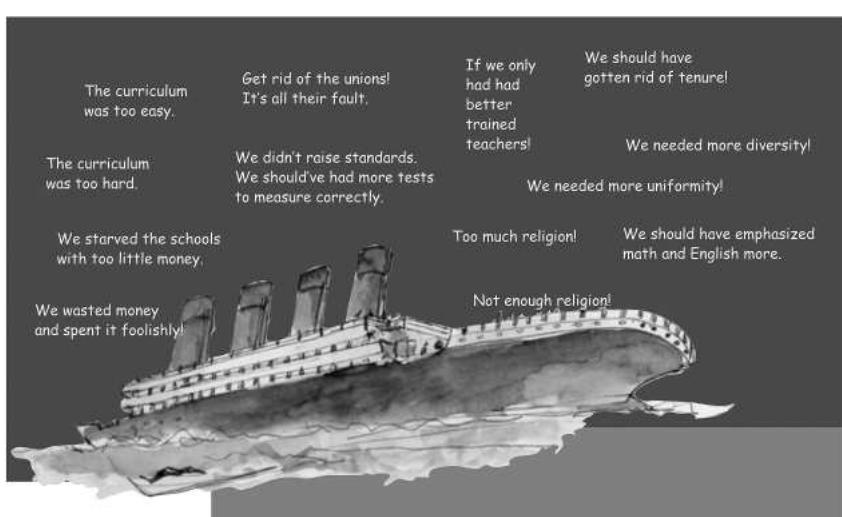


## THE TRADITIONAL VIEW

### The Outside World



## THE ENEMIES



## THE NECESSITIES



## The Authors

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is Master of Applied Linguistics and teacher at the Ivan Vazov High School in Bourgas, Bulgaria. Since several years she has been involved in implementing and developing Productive Learning at her school.

### **Juha Lahtinen, Finland**

has a Master of Arts in Education. He worked as a teacher and career counselor at different schools, as education advisor, coach and career counselor in vocational education, as school reformer at the National Center for Professional Development in Education (OPEKO), as director of development and vice CEO at Ecucode LTD, and as expert-partner at Sininen Kolmio LTD. He is a Member of the Administration Council and former vice president of INEPS.

### **Jacques Bonnisseau, France**

has been a science and media teacher. Most of his teaching career took place in alternative schools. Inspired by Celestin Freinet and Janusz Korczak, he has contributed to the development of new model in education based on "active pedagogy". He has been member and president of INEPS and still support the action of the network as educational manager at Conseil Régional Ile-de-France.

### **Ingrid Böhm, Germany**

Dipl.-Päd., social worker and social educator in schools, master of educational science, university lecturer in education, co-founder of *Die Stadt-als-Schule Berlin* (City-as-School), the *Institut für Produktives Lernen in Europa (IPLE)* and the INEPS network, 20 years of co-direction of IPLE, development and national and international dissemination of *Productive Learning*, many publications

### **Heike Borkenhagen, Germany**

director of IPLE together with Holger Mirow, vice president of INEPS. University degrees in educational sciences and in qualitative methods in evaluation, certification as systemic supervisor and coach (SG). Since 1998 scientific member of IPLE: research, counselling, project evaluation, organisation of national and international seminars and congresses, project leadership and management. Prior to 1998: researcher at Max-Planck-Institut für Bildungsforschung, lecturer at the Freie Universität Berlin, teacher at *Die Stadt-als-Schule Berlin*.

**Holger Mirow, Germany**

directors of *IPL*E together with Heike Borkenhagen. He graduated as a teacher and worked in school, youth work, adult and political education before he came to the Institute in 1998. Besides taking part in research, training and counseling in different states and internationally he worked part time in a school project of *Productive Learning* in Berlin. His commitment is to increase the contribution of *Productive Learning* to school development significantly.

**Prof. Dr. Jens Schneider, Germany**

was teacher of Mathematics and Music, graduated in education, sociology and philosophy, university professor in school education, co-founder of *Die Stadt-als-Schule Berlin* (City-as-School), the *Institut für Produktives Lernen in Europa (IPL)* and the *INEPS* network, 20 years of co-direction of *IPL*E, development and national and international dissemination of *Productive Learning*, many publications .

**Angela Passa, Greece**

works as a teacher and was one of the founders of the Movement “PROTASI” in 1988. Since 1990, she has been working at the Movement “PROTASI” as director of the Youth Center in the areas of innovative educational approaches, training in the prevention of addictive substances and behavior, health promotion in school communities, multicultural training in youth exchanges, leadership, administration, animation of teenagers, community education, *Productive Learning* methods etc. She is the President of *INEPS* since May 2003.

**Dr. habil. Idikó Bárdossy, Hungary**

is Chair of the Department of Theory of Education and Head of the Institute of Education at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pécs, Hungary. She was the very first person in Central Eastern Europe who implemented the City as School model in the outskirts of Pécs following the political transition in Hungary. Dr Bardossy is a supporter of *Productive Learning* and has been applying its approach both in teacher training and in in-service teacher training for two decades.

**Dr. Renata Anna Dezsö, PhD, Hungary**

is a lecturer/researcher at the Department of Theory of Education at the Institute of Education at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Pécs, Hungary. Having been one of Dr. Bardossy’s students, an EFL teacher for different levels of public education and adult education, she is now offering courses using *Productive Learning* both in teacher training and in in-service teacher training at the University of Pécs.

**Simona Plienaitytė, Lithuania**

recently started working as a Head of the Alternative Education Project and some other projects in the Education Supply Center of the Ministry of Education and Science of Lithuania. She is coordinating different projects and overcoming challenges. She is responsible for inventing new teaching and learning methods in the education system in Lithuania.“

**Co van Houten, The Netherlands**

is working for the Regional Opleidingen Centrum van Amsterdam (ROCvA), location MBO College Hilversum. In this school with about 5.500 students, he is responsible for the smooth educational (content) transition from secondary schools to vocational education and from the MBO College Hilversum to higher education. In his responsibility as chairman of the International Department of ROC v A he became acquainted with the *IPLE*, Berlin.

**Aaltje Veen, The Netherlands**

graduated in Dutch language at University of Amsterdam, certificate of Woman and Management APS Netherlands, teacher at primary school and at Comenius College of VMBO, manager of Productive Learning at the Regional Opleiding Centrum van Amsterdam (ROCvA), Hilversum

**Dr. Ana Paula de Campos Leitão, Portugal**

graduated in Finance and in Education. She worked as a teacher and was the former principal of the College of the Atlantic in Peniche, Portugal. It was within this context that she first worked with *Productive Learning*. She is President of Mar'Humano, an association dedicated to promoting the Portuguese language and culture in the Portuguese-speaking countries and in the Diaspora, trainer of teachers in Mathematics, differentiated didactics and educational leadership. She believes that Education (with Schools, Families and Educating Cities) will bring about a new direction for the development of every individual and every community within structured and renewed alliances towards a democracy of knowledge. She also believes that *Productive Learning* is a relational and methodological way to accomplish this.

**Mirela Beiu, Romania**

is Head Teacher of a school at pre-university level in Bucharest. She is an expert in evaluation and accreditation of schools at pre-university level; coordinator of the Comenius Regio project „City as a learning place-where learning is an adventure“; teacher trainer at national level; teacher mentor and European Commission trainer of the Comenius course „Helping students to develop life skills“.

**Prof. Dr. Mark Bashmakov, Russia**

is professor of Mathematics and Didactics of Mathematics at the University of St. Petersburg and director of the Innovative Institute of *Productive Learning* (St. Petersburg). He is a Member of the Russian State Academy of Education, head of the national program «Productive Education for everybody», and author of more than 50 manuals and textbooks for school.

**Josep Alsina-Rosell, Spain**

is journalist and director of Radio Vilafranca and Penedès TV, two Catalan regional stations. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in Communication, in 1980, he worked in some newspapers from Barcelona and taught drawing and painting. Between 1989 and 2003 he managed several projects from the Vilafranca del Penedès City Council, such as Layret TV (LTV), the Institute of Productive Learning (IDAP), and the Information and Communication Technologies Centre (CTIC Vilafranca Virtual). For some years he was secretary of the International Network of Productive Learning Projects and Schools (INEPS) and its Catalan branch (XEPS).

**Mercè Marcé Cumplido, Spain**

is a psychologist, graduated from the University of Barcelona. She works at the Municipality of Vilafranca del Penedès, Catalonia/Spain. Since 1994 she is *Productive Learning* Educator and advisor in occupational training programs and in secondary schools. Since 2005, she is director of the Institute of *Productive Learning* – IDAP, in Vilafranca.

**Gun Nilsson, Sweden**

*is teacher in Stockholm. She has been involved in implementing and developing Productive Learning at Fogelströmska Gymnasiet together with Lennart Dahlberg. Most of her teaching career took place in alternative schools as coach and career guide. For many years she had been taking an active interest in the development of the International Network of Productive Learning Schools and Projects (INEPS) as member of its Administration Council especially by initiating and realising a number of international student's exchanges.*

**Olof Persson, Sweden**

*Is developing leader at Ungdom Yrkesförberedande Centrum. He is developing educational methods and co-operating with companies for designing curricula for students. He also works as a school leader*

**Bret Schlesinger, United States of America**

started out teaching history in an all girls' public high school called Washington Irving in New York City in 1959. Whilst working there he was always looking for ways to improve the methodology of teaching. When the city and country were going through dramatic changes throughout society Bret seized the opportunity to open a mini-school within Washington Irving for those students who were not performing in the traditional school set-up. Through this he joined the alternative school movement that was growing throughout the city. As a result of his success there, he was offered a position at the Board of Education dealing with school management. While there he joined City As School as a resource and part-time teacher. He later joined City As School full-time as an in-house teacher and later as Assistant Principal. After he retired he became an Adjunct Professor, initially at Pace University and later at Fordham University - training teachers to become supervisors. Whilst at City As School he met the Berliners who wished to replicate the CAS model in Europe. He has remained an active participant within the organization which grew out of that initial experiment, *The International Network of Productive Schools (INEPS)*, serving on their Advisory Board for many years.



