

Changing schools, a utopia?

Educating, learning, succeeding together



COOPERATIVE APPROACHES #3

“The only way that offers any hope of a better future for all humanity is through cooperation and partnership”. Kofi Annan

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PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - CONGRES INDIANS

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Picture on the cover : Escola Nova 21 - Virolai

EDITORIAL

Changing schools, a utopia?

By Michel Seyrat

I started my career as a French teacher in France in 1967 and retired in 2003. Apart from a five-year break when I joined the national team of the French Scouts and one period of sick leave, I've always practiced it. Three things helped me in this: the examples set by teachers that had left their mark on me; my theatre studies at the conservatory; and my time as a Scout leader. Having role models, being a bit of an actor, knowing how to listen to young people, "adopting the pace of the slowest" and helping them to succeed are my main recipes.

From when I started at primary school until the end of my career, school has obviously changed considerably and frequently, even if there are still teachers and students. As a teacher, I went through at least six high-school reforms, not to mention changes to the curriculum, types of tests, etc.

Together with high-school or college students, I've shot films

(first with Super8 film), written short stories, novels, collections of poems and plays, acted out scenes, designed "audio-visual montages" of slides and photo-novels with Polaroid cameras, analyzed comic strips and TV soap operas, etc.

I've taken groups of teenagers on trips dozens of times, organized exams in prison several times, and had severely disabled students, severely addicted students and pregnant girls... For years we had a crowded movie club at high school all day long, we sold sweets to raise money for the hungry, and we had bomb threats and even an explosion!

Sometimes we worked in groups and at other times alone in silence, questioning each other, discovering computers and the Internet, and reading books. Sometimes we evaluated a speech, sometimes a written text, and sometimes the students arrived in class after a physical education

session so we started by resting "like at nursery school". At other times they were hungry or in a hurry to get out of the school at last, or ...

I think I had to open a classroom door and tell the children to "come in" 25 or 30 thousand times and each time it was different; things had changed since the last time. It's hard to understand this when you're outside the school and you come on a kind of "visit". You say to yourself: "*It's like last time*" or "*It's like in my time*", or even "*The teachers are really set in their ways*", but inside schools people live and change from one day to the next, from one hour to the next, and all the time.

Finally, like most teachers of my generation, I've read and practiced the recommendations of the "new pedagogues". In 1988 I heard the new Minister of Education say, "*today you must teach them to learn*" and now I see neuroscientists explaining what happens in the brain. Soon to be an octogenarian, the ones I want to thank for teaching me a lot are the "*bad pupils*", because they forced me to question myself, to change my routines in this unachieved and constantly moving utopia of free and universal schooling.

Because school itself is already a utopia that's permanently in progress and never finished. Who would have thought, 200 years ago in the enlightened and well-nourished environments of the great capitals, that in the year 2020 ALL the world's children, girls and boys alike, would be in a place of learning around a teacher every day?

Here children have walked a long way to get there, or crossed a river in a dugout canoe, or taken a bus at dawn, and they've put the right clothes on to go to school, just like the British Queen puts the right clothes on to go to the opera. School is sacred.

Elsewhere, in the city reduced to a field of ruins by the paranoid madmen who claim to rule their fellow men for their own good, a woman or man struggles to weave a way between the heaps of rubble and goes around families huddled in the shattered remains of houses giving a friendly greeting: "*Tomorrow we can reopen the school, we've cleared a room, Jo and Zette have to come*". The children's faces break into a smile - brightening up their night. The next day, on pieces of makeshift benches, or on the floor, with a piece of slate and a piece of chalk, B-A-BA and 2 + 2 make 4 start to

open up the future again in the devastated city. Later on, the wobbly door will open, and the children will go outside for their break and start playing together again.

There, in the middle of nowhere, lies a city of tents and shacks as far as the eye can see. Children wander around, the big sister carrying her little brother and teenagers exercising their muscles until they all head for a big tent where a bearded man and a big smiling girl are waiting for them: come in - it's time for the magic to begin again, looking to the future, when everything will be better.

Perhaps, the day after tomorrow, a child psychiatrist trained in Minneapolis or Shanghai will come and explain to the man and the girl how to deal with those affected by life's multiple traumas. They'll listen attentively and the man will set off again in his 4X4 for his university and, the day after that, the man and the girl will open the school door as they do every day and tell the children: "Come in - this is the House of Hope".

Who knows whether, in a few days' time, once the electricity is back on, the old man and the big girl won't tell the children: Come tomorrow with your daddy's mobile phone - we'll do

geography. The books have been burned but www's still answering!

School is an ever-renewed and never-ending utopia.



PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - OCTAVIO PAZ

 STORY

The Escola Nova 21 Alliance

By Eduard Vallory



Eduard Vallory², social analyst and manager of change initiatives, tells us how he came to design and carry out a project that mobilized civil society to rethink education in Catalonia.

The preliminaries

The Escola Nova 21 alliance resulted from many reflections and experiences that I had during my sabbatical year in New York after leaving my managerial post

at the Graduate School of Economics in Barcelona, which I held for six years until 2012 - the year in which I published “*World Scouting*”, the book of my doctoral dissertation.

During this sabbatical year, I intended to explore various things to give me time to think about what I’d do next. In New York City, by chance, I had the opportunity to visit several schools, especially in Harlem, where a project had been started to fight social segregation by attracting middle-class children to schools. In these schools, I discovered the strategies developed for the benefit of disadvantaged children. Several of them seemed to me to be very top-down, very directive. It was in the second half of 2013 and this experience led me to reflect on formal education.

My disastrous school experience

It must be said that my personal experience of school had been disastrous. During my entire high school studies, I had to repeat almost every year, and instead of finishing high school at 18, I finished it at 22. I very recently discovered Daniel Pennac, a French writer who wrote "Chagrin d'école" (School Grief). He describes exactly the feelings I had from the age of 10 to 18, the pain of a child who fails to learn. Clearly, for me, this failure was very frustrating. People would tell me:

- *"Look, it's because you don't want to learn that you don't learn, you're far from stupid. So you're either lazy or you don't care at all!"*

On the other hand, I excelled in my university studies - I did a master's degree, I got my doctorate and I've forgotten the previous era. It was like when you were sick at a certain point in your life, you had problems and now it's over and everything's fine. Well, my visit to the schools when I was in New York brought back the memory of that painful and humiliating past experience.

A reflection emerges

And then I was invited to the World Scout Congress on Education, organized in Hong Kong by WOSM (World Organization of the Scout Movement) to report on my research on Scouting. During a lively session with Dominique Bénard, we discussed the reasons why it was necessary to reform formal education. This discussion led me to make the link between my experience in school and my reflection on educational aspects of Scouting. And I realized that Scouting may have brought me more than I'd imagined.

After Hong Kong, I took a long Christmas break in South-east Asia. I took a course on meditation and took time to read a book called "How Children Succeed" by Paul Tough. I remember myself, on a small island in the middle of Indonesia, reading a chapter in which the author writes that he was always told that if a child fails at school, he's responsible for his failure. But, in reality, Tough explains, it's the failure of school because, as an institution, it hasn't been able to create an environment, a strategy or an action that can get the child to learn. It was a great shock to me because this reading



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was connected to my personal experience. And all the pieces of the puzzle were beginning to fall into place to launch a great mental conversation inside me.

Around the world, the same debate about education

I then went to Toronto to the annual conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, where I was first invited by John Farrell - the Canadian educator who wrote the preface to my book and who's also been very active in Scouting. Having discovered, when I was in New York, that he'd passed away, I contacted his former IOE co-

author, Vandra Maseman, who offered to organize a session to present my book in tribute to Farrell. So I attended this conference for three to four days and I discovered that the whole debate in the world of international comparative education revolved around the following questions: why is the education system worldwide not responding to today's problems, and why is it so difficult to change? The debate in academic spheres was exactly the same as the one we'd had in Hong Kong, and involved the same questions that I'd intuitively had when I visited the schools in New York.

Rethinking education

When I returned to Barcelona in the summer of 2014, two things happened: on the one hand, I was elected President of the UNESCO Center of Catalonia and, on the other, I was asked to develop a new approach to teacher training. In response to this request, I embarked, as in New York, on a visit to schools. And I discovered that many of them were doing things that were totally in line with what we'd said in Hong Kong and with what Paul Tough advocated in his book "How Children Succeed": active and cooperative learning, youth empowerment, etc., and all this began to make sense to me.

In 2015, UNESCO was the setting for two new events: firstly, the publication "Rethinking Education" – a major report on education following that of Jacques Delors in 1996 – and secondly, the World Education Forum organized in Incheon, in which I was able to participate. Following the Forum, my thinking took shape: we translated "Rethinking Education" into Catalan and presented it in Barcelona. I then contacted the schools I'd visited and said to them:

- *"Why don't we try to do something together? For the moment, through what you're doing, you're exceptions, why not become references? Why not do something to help schools that want to follow your example?"*

Creating the Escola Nova 21 alliance

That's how I started to form an alliance. I was already president of the UNESCO Center of Catalonia, I contacted a Catalan thinktank on education, Fundació Bofill, I started negotiations with the Open University of Catalonia, and I obtained financial aid from the "la Caixa" Foundation. All this took me from six to nine months. We arrived in March 2016, we had the necessary agreements and funds, so I launched the initiative.

Everything starts from personal experience

Reflecting on my personal experience, I realized, for the first time, something very important: what had saved me from failure at school, both personally and professionally, was my involvement in Scouting. As a teenager repeating all my classes and being told that I was unable

to learn, I was one of the leaders in my Scout group and I was beginning to be active in the international team and in my association's national educational team.

Everything that I'd experienced was now taking on its full meaning for me - from my experience and from the impact that Scouting had had on me. Not Scouting as an institution but through the concrete educational opportunities it offers. Failure at school could have destroyed my self-esteem, but the self-esteem I'd built up in Scouting was so strong that it had overcome my failure at school. The greatest danger that young people face at school is that they get stuck in a spiral of failure that destroys their self-esteem and sends back the message that they're unable to learn.

I then remembered what the teacher and educational referent Marta Mata told us in the 25 years of Escoltes Catalans:

- *"Too overwhelmed by the novelty of programs, evaluations and promotions, we teachers must regain the freedom to think about girls and boys like you do: Scouting, through its action in non-formal education, facilitates the*

whole process of formal education. We teachers must also think about children like you do".

At the root, a patient work of creating links

In order to succeed in designing and creating the Escola Nova 21 project, I visited 40 to 50 schools and spent whole days in dialogue with the children, principals and the teachers to make comparisons and understand. This allowed me not only to come up with ideas on what to do but also to establish a great capital of trust, which is absolutely necessary from the beginning to build cooperation and destroy any idea of competition. And this capital of trust was a key element in creating the great alliance of Escola Nova 21. This alliance is, in fact, based on two essential parts: an institutional part, which brings together the donors, the thinktank and the university, and the alliance of reference schools. Nothing could have been done without this preliminary work of establishing contacts and connections.

A strategy of change

Any strategy for change starts with a diagnosis. And this

diagnosis is also linked to my experience of Scouting.

The diagnosis

I'd discovered that certain schools, which had been in the vanguard and considered references at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, in the final period of Franco's regime – cooperative schools that had recovered the Catalan language that the fascist regime had wanted to eliminate, that had fought to revive the active learning practiced in the twenties and thirties – were no longer really references today.

It was a big question for me: why did these schools, which had been, it could be said, revolutionary in educational terms in the 1920s and 1930s and again in the 1960s and 1970s, appear to me today like museums?

I understood that they were doing things without knowing why they were doing them. That was the moment when we translated Rethinking Education into Catalan. Many schools were asking us to come and present this document to them. We were visiting schools where there was a lot of innovation and where

amazing things were being done and other schools where none of that existed. In the latter schools I was having this kind of dialogue:

- *"Why are you doing this?"* »
- *"Oh, we've always done it like this..."*
- *"But why are you doing this?"*
- *"We've always done this, it's part of our identity..."*

I couldn't help but react: "When I read the writings of your founder, I have the feeling that he was much more radical than you. It's like you've turned your school into a museum".

And I was making the connection to my experience of Scouting, to the contradiction that exists between Baden-Powell's very flexible and adaptable position during the 40 years he led the Movement and the large number of people in many countries and even at world level who are just repeating, "We've always done this, we've always done that".

And I realized that the same things that I'd detected and explained in Hong Kong about Scouting also existed in schools. They'd been turned into a museum because of a confusion between ends and means.



PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - CONGRES INDIANS

In one of these schools, the teachers organized groups of children and designated them according to colors. They said to the students: "You're the blue ones and you're the green ones". And when I asked for explanations, they would answer:

"Look, we've been doing this since the 1920s..."

The goal was to create small communities of young people sharing roles and responsibilities within the larger community. It wasn't a question of designating groups by colors or flower names; it was to create a dynamic with shared responsibilities. But

when we forget about the goals we're aiming for, then the essential question becomes that of the colors assigned to the groups. I realized that one of the main problems in schools is that the how - how we do things, the methods we use - is more important than the why. How to move schools from an obsessive focus on the how to thinking about the why?

Paulo Freire always used to say: when you don't have a critical mind, the political action you do is just action. You do things because you have to do something, but without the ability

to think for yourself, your actions are empty. You need to be aware of the goals you're trying to achieve and then evaluate your actions to see if the result you get is the one you're looking for.

This was exactly what was happening in the schools. When a school wanted to change, they would model themselves on the reference schools, but instead of realizing the why of things, they'd imitate the how. The teachers would say, "You put this on the floor... You put a poster like this on the wall... You make plans..."

Education is always threatened by forgetting the why. What fascinates me about John Dewey is that he always talks about the why. He used to say, for example: if I want to develop a democratic spirit in children, what experiences should I offer them? Elections? No, no, no, wait, wait, wait! I want to observe, I want to understand!

If you put together two schools that ask themselves the same why and opt for different hows, for example, one is more technological, the other develops learning on the basis of projects, one is more linked to the community, the other is not. You have two schools that are different from each other, but

have something in common: both are trying to define the why. They have to stop thinking about how they can be different, but they have to try and answer the main question: how do we learn? We learn when learning is active, when the learner is placed at the center of the process, when learning is cooperative, when we receive feedback on what we've done... These aren't the hows, they're the foundations of the hows.

It's also a way of avoiding disputes and conflicts about methodologies. A methodology isn't inherently good or bad, it's good when it allows you to achieve the goal you're looking for.

When we think only in terms of methodologies, the result is disastrous - we create recipes. Recipe books answer the how, not the why. People look for recipes because it's easier. It's easier to say, "You put this on and in three minutes you add that..." than it is to say, "Hey, look! Do this and test the flavor, decide if you want something sweeter or not... Add a little more water and see what it looks like..." Here's the problem. Antoni Zabala, educational referent and former Scout, used to say: in education,

you can't just give recipes because you don't want the educator to be a cook, you want him to be a nutritionist. The nutritionist wonders why.

So you have to know first of all what you want to achieve and then you find a way to go in that direction. Being a nutritionist is much more complicated than knowing how to make an omelet.

The implementation

So our idea of the strategy was: to develop actions to create public awareness of why schools need to change and to develop

procedures to make this change possible.

The first point is awareness: why change and what to change; the second point is the possibility of change. Now that I know why I need to change, how can I change? We've achieved this through four actions.

First action

The first action was the creation of an alliance of reference schools to help us define the why. So we said: what UNESCO proposes and what you see in these schools is the same thing. It's an education focused on the



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full development of the child: competencies for life, the four pillars of Delors, etc. This is what all these schools have in common. We don't want the whole education system to do exactly the same thing as these schools; we want it to strive for the full development of every child. That means an inclusive, equitable system, open to all aspects of education.

Second action

The second action was to create a sample of 30 schools representative of the diversity of the Catalan school system with the same percentage of public and private schools, primary and secondary schools, country and city schools, working-class and middle-class schools, large and small schools, religious and secular schools, etc. Then, to develop with this sample a procedure for systematic change. That is to say, to accompany these schools through stages of change. Not to tell them how to implement each change, but to support them in well-established change procedures, adapted by each school to its particular reality. We explained to them how to conduct a process of change, starting from reflecting on the why, then we helped them

to create a shared vision of the goal to be achieved, and finally we helped them to achieve the desired change by learning from the small things and then trying to build something bigger.

Third action

The third action aimed, through this mobilization, to generate complicity and alliances with public administrations, which are the ones ultimately responsible for developing actions to ensure that educational change affects every school. In this sense, we worked with the Catalan Ministry of Education, the Barcelona Education Consortium and local administrations

Fourth action

But then the need for a fourth action, which we'd not initially foreseen, became apparent. It was the creation of networks. At the beginning we thought: "OK, we'll make a call, some schools will respond." We thought we'd bring together about 150 schools. From there, the intention was to create a representative sample of the school system, and to offer distance learning, for example in the form of a webinar.

But what happened was that at least 500 schools applied to join

the program and it was gigantic! We didn't have the capacity to handle that number and we didn't know what to do. That's when several municipalities approached us to ask us to accept their schools. We couldn't do it, but we came up with the idea of changing our program

We didn't foresee this system of school networks; we introduced it when we saw it as an opportunity to achieve greater impact.

Overcoming resistance to change

Our education system has been



PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - ITAKA

and creating an alliance of provincial governments, which were sort of networks of municipalities, and from there we created networks of schools. Sixty school networks with a total of 500 schools, focused on an educational paradigm shift.

greatly influenced by French and German models - very bureaucratic, very vertical models. Schools were seen as administrative entities. So we had to face the same resistance to change that exists in the French system, for example.



PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - EDUMAR

The memory of Catalan education

To overcome this resistance, we've used other characteristics of our education system. First of all, the memory of Catalan education. Catalans have always been very proud of the great New School movement (Escola Nova) that developed early in the 20th century in our country and throughout Europe. The first Montessori schools to be established outside Italy were in Barcelona, created by the *Mancomunitat*, the Catalan autonomous government of the time. In 1913, the *Mancomunitat*

also created summer schools to update teachers' active methods, under the guidance of a person who'd studied with John Dewey. There was also the important experience of the modern school¹ of Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, who was shot in 1909 by the authorities.

During the time of the Republic and even earlier in Barcelona, schools practicing active methods were created. This experiment had been stopped in 1939 with the victory of fascism, but it remained present in the memory of thousands of people who'd interacted in these

schools, and at the end of the sixties, when new schools opened using the same methods, the ambition of the new school was reborn. This ambition transcended political divisions because in the first 30 years of the twentieth century it had been supported by both conservative and progressive governments. In Catalonia, contrary to what was happening in Spain, the conservatives themselves put forward John Dewey, Montessori, etc., as the main protagonists. There was a kind of consensus in our society about what quality education was, and I'm talking about what existed 100 years ago.

The Power of Families

It's thanks to this consensus that we were able to overcome resistance and also thanks to families. The power of families is enormous. If families discover that instead of fighting to enroll their children in this or that school they can take action to help their school change, then you can grow a great movement for change.

The commitment of teachers

In this movement, many teachers have also played a decisive role. The network of schools has been

of great help in empowering teachers to take responsibility for change. Networking has enabled us to activate the system and allowed thousands of teachers who wanted change to ally themselves with each other. We enabled them to take power through a large coalition.

The future of the project

The project finished at the end of 2019. Provisional results of the evaluation have already been presented, showing a significant impact of change in the different profiles of the sample. Our objective now is to get the school administration to adopt our procedures and take over.

The reluctance

There is a will in this direction, but also two great forms of resistance. The first is that of immobility camouflaged behind ideological excuses: some accuse our project of being neoliberal, or anti-democratic. The second is more political: civil service legislation must be changed to allow the administration to update the objectives and procedures of a 21st century public education system. During the course of the project, we managed to overcome resistance

because we were very quick in designing and implementing the program. The system reacted much more slowly than we did, and when resistance took shape, we were already at the next stage. Now, the problem is that the public administration is also very slow and therefore risks giving time for opposition to take shape. We hope that we'll obtain a clear commitment from them to continue the project. We're hopeful because now thousands of schools are engaged in the process and it will be very difficult to stifle the movement we've created.

A change grid

Together with a team of school principals and inspectors, we've developed an "educational change grid" which lists 18 criteria for a quality standard of schooling in all its dimensions (the four dimensions of the change horizon: educational purpose, learning practices, evaluation and organization). It's a tool designed in such a way as to enable each school, according to its particular context and professional development, to detect successive challenges in the context of continuous improvement. It's based on three elements: schools' experience;

the normative aspect; the international reference (UNESCO documents, the seven OECD principles of education, etc.).

And our main role now is to make this grid for change and its 18 criteria the quality criteria of the Catalan Ministry of Education. This is how we'll break relativism, that attitude that makes some inspectors say: "But these schools are already good, you just have to look at the results they get in exams". Examination results are not sufficient criteria, they don't take inclusion, equity, quality of guidance, student accountability, etc. into account. This is why we've proposed the change grid.

Lessons from this experience

The Escola Nova project has been a huge learning experience for me. I've learned a lot and I'm still learning. It's a metacognitive experience: I'm constantly thinking about how I learn new things.

School and society

Whenever I find a contradiction, and in education there are many contradictions, it's an opportunity for me to reflect. For example, we want a school that encourages



PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - INSTITUT MATADEPERA

cooperation, but the social system is designed for competition. We want an education system that's fair and capable of giving all children the same opportunities in society, but when people leave school they encounter situations marked by great inequality... With my training as a social analyst, I can't help but reflect on the relationship between school and society.

The project has also given me a better understanding of the relationships among many things:

the understanding of education, strategies for change, the kind of society we want, how to build a coalition between people and create shared leadership, how thousands and thousands of people can decide to move towards a common goal and understand why things don't change and how to make them change. All of this has been a huge process of personal training and professional development for me.

The value of the current experience of young people

Reflection on education has also led me to reflect on life, on existence: what kind of life do we want to have now? How do we want to spend the days of our lives? One of the things that John Dewey explains is that traditional education is conceived as preparation for life; so what happens now, the experience of the moment, does not matter.

–“You did badly in class, so you won't be going to scout camp!”

Many of the remarks we make to young people mean that the time they're living in now is of little value to us. What matters to us first and foremost is their future. But for young people, it's the present that counts, with the experience they're living, the emotions they're feeling.

The profound experience I've had with this project is the emotional connection I've felt with my own life. Every time I walk into a school classroom, every time I have a conversation with a young person, I make a connection with my own childhood, my own youth. We don't just have to prepare young people to be active and responsible citizens when they grow up, we have to

see them now as free and responsible people whose present counts and who need to have a say in the decisions that affect them now!

1. Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia, who was born on 10 January 1859 in Alella and died on 13 October 1909 in Barcelona, was a Catalan freethinker, freemason and libertarian pedagogue. In 1901, he founded the Modern School, a rationalist educational project that promotes diversity, social equality, the transmission of rational education, autonomy and mutual aid. It was the first of a network of schools that numbered more than a hundred in Spain in 1907. It inspired the American "Modern schools" and the new pedagogical trends. In 1909, following the events of the tragic week in Barcelona, when the organization Solidaridad Obrera called a general strike against the sending of troops to Spanish Morocco, which ended in riots, he was accused (notably by the Catholic clergy) of being one of the instigators. Sentenced to death by a military court after a mock trial, he was shot on 13 October 1909. His execution provoked a major international protest movement.
2. Eduard Vallory is a social analyst, expert in change management. President of the UNESCO Center of Catalonia, founder and director of the program for educational change



PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - LA MAQUINISTA

"Escola Nova 21", which brings together 500 Catalan schools, he also directs a university program for the professional development of teachers (UVic-UOC). Holder of a PhD in Political and Social Sciences (UPF) on "Education for Global Citizenship", a Master's degree in Social Sciences (Chicago), and a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy and WPA (IESE), he is the author of the book *World Scouting: Educating for Global Citizenship* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012). He was the Director of the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics (2006-12), Visiting Scholar at New York University, Research Fitzwilliam College,

University of Cambridge and Chief of Staff of the Ministry of Universities and Research of the Catalan Government.



DECIPHERING

The industrial age school

BY Dominique B nard



The industrial revolution changed the world and education

The first industrial revolution, which began at the end of the 18th century in Great Britain with the use of the steam engine, was to revolutionize the economy and social life. Factories were to replace workshops. Productivity increased exponentially. In order

to obtain the raw materials and energy sources needed to power factories, Europeans set out to colonize the world to exploit its agricultural and mining wealth.

The emergence of compulsory public education

Industrialization caused enormous labor requirements. Farmers left their land "en masse" and moved to the cities



to work in the factories. This labor had to receive a minimum of education (reading and writing skills, ability to obey instructions) in order to meet the demands of operating and maintaining the machines. Compulsory public education was therefore introduced at the end of the 19th century in most European countries and in the United States.

Just like the assembly line

The educators of this period borrowed their new conception of the school from the business leaders they admired. They copied the "scientific" architecture and organizational methods of factories to ensure a standardized product and to create more efficient educational institutions.

"The result was a school system of the industrial age, just like the assembly line, the icon of the burgeoning industrial era. Like any assembly line, the system was organized in discrete stages. Called classes, they separated children by age. Everybody was supposed to move from one stage to the next at the same time. Each stage had local supervisors - the teacher in charge. Classes of 20 to 40 students would meet for specific periods of time on a scheduled day to practice for tests. The entire school was designed to operate at a uniform speed with bells and rigid daily schedules. Each teacher knew what to cover to keep the chain moving, even though he or she had little influence on the pre-set speed, which was determined by school

boards and standardized school programs."¹

The result was a model of teaching separate from everyday life - children spent most of their time in class and no longer saw their parents' activities. The factory-school was governed, and operated, in an authoritarian, standardized and bureaucratic manner, particularly in France and Prussia.

A widespread model around the world

With colonization, this system gradually spread to all countries. The old education systems based on tutor-disciple dialogue and cooperation among age groups were everywhere replaced by the new factory-school model. Even today, this model remains largely dominant in the world.

Credit must be given to the school of the industrial age for having given the entire population in a short period of time a correct level of basic knowledge: reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling - whatever industrialization required. But, as Peter Senge points out, it also created many of the most intractable problems that



students, teachers and parents still face today.

Assumptions of the factory-school

The school of the industrial age is based on a number of preconceived ideas, almost all of which have been disproved by recent discoveries in the cognitive sciences.

A transmitting pedagogy

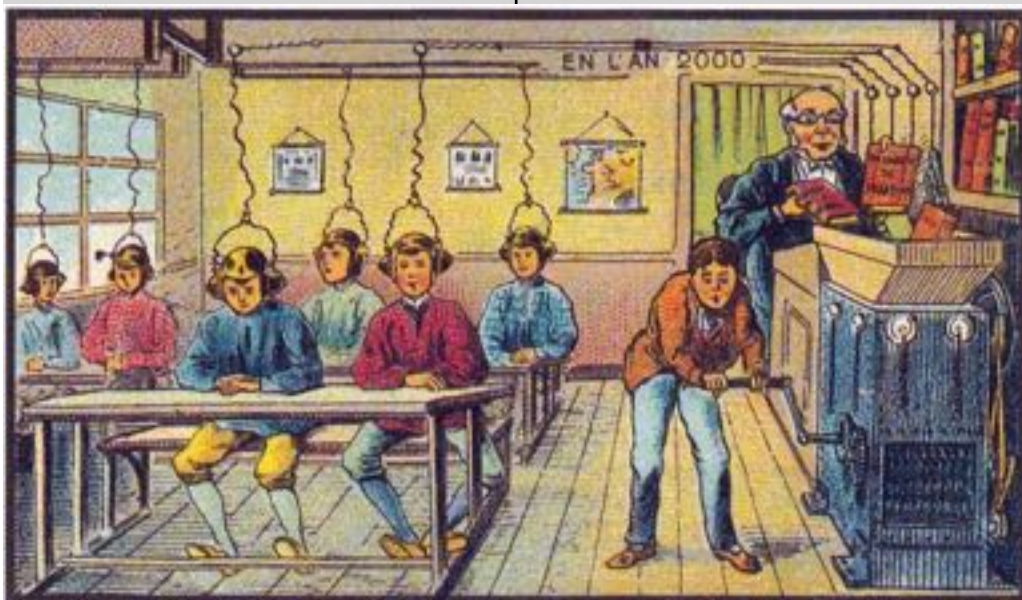
It implements a transmitting pedagogy, based on the naive belief that the teacher can transmit knowledge through the spoken word. Paulo Freire, the famous Brazilian educator, called this approach "banking education". Instead of being the result of research, of experience, knowledge is deposited by the teacher in the heads of the learners, who are seen as empty containers that need to be filled.

Children are deficient and schools correct them

The school of industrial age sees children as poorly developed "raw materials" from which it has to create "finished products". Instead of trying to identify children's abilities and qualities, it focuses on their shortcomings and needs, starting from a "deficit perspective". Teachers are trained to be attentive to students' faults, and students

Learning takes place in the head and not in the whole body

Western tradition views the ability to reason as a function of the brain, independent of perception, movement, action, emotions or any other aspect of the body. The discoveries of the cognitive sciences have shown, on the contrary, that learning is inseparable from action and emotions, and that the



gradually internalize that there is something wrong with them. Educational guidance is based on failure.

acquisition of cognitive skills requires the mastery of psychosocial skills: knowing how to organize oneself, setting goals, persevering despite failure, cooperating to learn better, etc.

While learning occurs with the whole body, the factory-school is based on the assumption that learning is purely intellectual.

Everyone learns, or should learn, the same way

Intelligence is not only verbal, nor logical, it is also musical, kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and emotional. Some children can only learn when they act and move their bodies, others need to experiment, still others need to communicate with others and cooperate. The factory-school has great difficulty adapting to this diversity. It has established uniformity of product and process as the norm, naively assuming that all children learn in the same way. The assembly-line model tacitly identifies students as passive objects to be shaped by an educational process outside their influence. The learning disabilities noted in some students by the school are often simply an inability of the school to take the existence of a multiplicity of intelligences into account.

There are smart kids and dumb kids

The Industrial Age School categorizes children according

to their degree of adaptation to the system. Those who do not learn at the speed of the assembly line are labelled "slow" or "poor learners". They are responsible for their failure; school has nothing to do with it. In fact, all human beings are born with unique gifts and school's role should be to help children identify and develop them. But the school of the industrial age does not seek to adapt to children's diversity; it requires children to adapt to the system it has put in place. Beyond basic education, it remains based on the objective of sorting and selecting the "best". It has established teacher-centered rather than learner-centered learning - the opposite of what Rabelais and Jean-Jacques Rousseau advocated.

Learning takes place in the school classroom, not in the world

The school of the industrial age places the classroom at the center of the learning process. But our ability to learn in any formal setting such as school depends largely on being able to apply new ideas or perspectives to challenges that are meaningful to us, in the

context of our lives. There are many places where young people find opportunities to learn - at home, playing with friends, on the sports team, in the Scout group or on the Internet. All these places of experience and learning are not sufficiently taken into account by the school.

Knowledge is inherently fragmented

The school of the industrial age is based on the assumption that knowledge is fragmented and that it develops according to distinct disciplines: literature, mathematics, natural sciences, geography, history, philosophy... The more one progresses in academic knowledge, the more specialized and narrower the field of knowledge becomes. But real life is different; the problems we encounter in it are multifaceted, they are systemic. The fragmented theory of knowledge is antithetical to the systemic vision that action on reality requires. What counts for understanding a system is not the study of its different parts but the study of the interactions among the different parts. In a world where systems thinking becomes a categorical imperative to penetrate the

complexity of situations, the school of the industrial age shows its limits.

The school communicates "the truth"

In the school of the industrial age, teachers tend to communicate their knowledge not as the result of a social construction but as an absolute truth. This is the consequence of believing in a transmissive pedagogy. Students are not called upon to explore the object of knowledge with a critical mind, but just to memorize the content presented by the teacher as truth.

Learning is first of all individual and competition accelerates learning

The school of the industrial age views knowledge as something that is possessed by individuals. Teachers have knowledge and students are supposed to acquire it. The underlying assumption is that learning is most effective when it is individual and that competition between individuals promotes learning. However, a Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, has shown that complex mental processes begin as social activities. Children manage to



perform difficult tasks with the support of adults or other children, and then, when their skills are stronger, they become able to perform them on their own. Lev Vygotsky developed the concept of the "zone of proximal development", which he defined as the range of tasks that the child can perform with the help and guidance of others, but cannot yet perform independently. Learning is therefore fundamentally a social activity: one learns best by cooperating with others.

A bureaucratic system with little capacity to adapt

The school of the industrial age, like its model the factory, developed a multitude of different functions: teachers of the various disciplines, principals, inspectors, educational counsellors,

guidance counsellors, etc. The underlying assumption is that this division of labor is a necessity in order to develop strong skills and work well together. But often there is no perceived need for these various specialists to cooperate, nor is there a sense of collective responsibility. It seems that many people think that if everyone works well in their own corner, everything will be fine.

Children and parents often experience a very fragmented system where teamwork does not exist.

The reality of the industrial-age school is that it operates as a bureaucratic system that is closed in on itself and whose main purpose, as in any bureaucracy, is to ensure its own sustainability. This is why the school system is so difficult to change.

The Industrial Age School and School Failure

In the PISA³ surveys, while about 50% of French students are among the best in the world, 25% to 30% are in great difficulty. These are those from disadvantaged families. Now,

pupils in difficulty tend to gradually withdraw from school work. In France, nearly 100,000 young people, mostly from disadvantaged backgrounds, leave the school system each year without any qualifications.

Should it therefore be said that if the poor do badly in class, it is because they are less intelligent and lazier than pupils from more privileged classes. Do they deserve to remain poor?

According to the National School System Evaluation Council (Cnesco), the atmosphere in the classroom, the relationship with teachers and other students, the pleasure or boredom one feels in learning, the sense of belonging and cultural closeness to a community are key factors in school success. The school system, which is the heir to the industrial-age school, pays limited attention to these factors:

- Students are not involved in assessment and decision making regarding the regulation of school life;
- There is little encouragement for self-help and group work;
- On the contrary, in a logic of progressive sorting, it is



competition that is encouraged: there are those who "succeed", those who succeed less well and those who fail. This situation is considered "normal" by the system; it is the logic of « meritocracy ».

- Everything leads the less successful students to feel low self-esteem and to self-censor themselves in the choice of orientations.
- Failure, which is associated with less effort and work, is accepted. The responsibility for failure is shifted to the student and not to the system.
- The pupils who succeed best are those who adapt best to the system because they have some sort of cultural connivance with it and have integrated its codes, i.e.

children from the privileged and middle classes and especially teachers' children.

Emphasis on cognitive skills is not sufficient

Paul Tough², citing the results of numerous research studies in the United States, highlights this phenomenon and the role played by school segregation. One of the ideas for remedying school failure had been to set up "classes by level" by grouping together pupils in difficulty to enable them to do better by allowing them to go at their own pace with greater support from teachers. This trend was spontaneously reinforced by the attitude of parents from privileged backgrounds who naturally wished to send their children to the "best schools", i.e. those that practiced social segregation.

Research has shown that homogeneous classes have a positive effect for those in the "good classes" but a negative effect for those in the "weak classes". This is because teachers tend to adapt to the level of the class and have lower expectations and demands for "weaker" classes. On the contrary, heterogeneous classes

had a positive effect on "weak" students, encouraging them to progress, without having a negative impact on more comfortable students.

Tough further emphasizes that school culture tends to overvalue cognitive skills and neglect psychosocial skills, which tends to accentuate educational inequalities.

Indeed, middle- and upper-class children tend to do better in class, not because they are smarter, but because they have a better command of life skills. There are two types of skills:

- "Hard skills" are theoretical and academic skills, which are easily assessed through school tests;
- Soft skills are psychosocial skills or "life skills": communication skills, problem-solving skills, emotional skills, ability to bounce back after failure (resilience), skills for interacting with others, self-confidence, sense of organization and planning, etc. These are the skills that make up what is sometimes called "character". They are more difficult to assess.

Young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds, marked by family difficulties and stressful situations, have fewer opportunities than children from more advantaged backgrounds to acquire these "soft" skills, hence their greater vulnerability to failure at school.

In order to facilitate success at school, schools should therefore facilitate not only the acquisition of "hard" skills but also the acquisition of "soft" skills, which are not acquired through lessons but through cooperation and experience.

One of the elements, on the other hand, that underpins the value of Scouting as an extracurricular educational Movement is that it is essentially oriented towards the acquisition of psycho-social skills. Therefore, it is an excellent complement to school: it promotes academic success. Eduard Vallory in his "Story" at the beginning of this issue explains it very well.

Notes

1. Senge P. Schools that Learn, 2000.
2. Paul Tough, How Children Succeed, 2012

DOSSIER

Cooperative pedagogies

By Dominique B nard



The New Education Movement

In reaction to the school-factory, the new education movement was born at the end of the 19th century in Europe and the United States. It was inspired by a long tradition, from Renaissance humanists such as Rabelais and Montaigne, who believed that "the child is not a vase to be filled, but a fire to be lit", to Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Johann

Heinrich Pestalozzi, the Swiss thinker and pioneer of modern pedagogy.

The precursors

From the end of the 19th century, an extraordinary flowering of pioneers of pedagogy appeared in Europe and the United States.

- In 1889, Cecil Reddie opened the school of Abbotsholme with the aim of ridding English

schools of teachings that he judged to be irrelevant to reality. He challenged the spirit of permanent competition in which the British elite were trained. Sport, a competitive tool, was replaced by manual labor and field work. Moral education had an important place, with the older pupils supervising the younger ones.

- In France, Edmond Demolins was inspired by Cecil Reddie to found the *Ecole des Roches* in Verneuil sur Avre in 1899, which was to be a long-lasting reference for the practice of active methods.
- In 1904, Sébastien Faure created *la Ruche*, a libertarian school and community living space operating according to the concept of an integral cooperative.
- In the United States, John Dewey founded the Laboratory Schools at the University of Chicago in 1896, where he experimented with his ideas in pedagogy - particularly education for democracy and learning by doing - which he exhibited in a series of articles collected in his main work on education: "The School and Society" (1899).



John Dewey

- In Spain (Catalonia) in 1901, Francesc Ferrer i Guàrdia founded The Modern School, a rationalist educational project whose objectives were to promote co-education, social equality, the transmission of rational education, autonomy and mutual aid.
- In Italy, Maria Montessori, one of the first Italian women doctors, created a pedagogical method for pre-school children and in 1907 opened her first *Casa dei Bambini* in the popular San Lorenzo district of Rome. The key components of Montessori pedagogy are free choice of activity; self-discipline; respect for the individual's rhythm; and learning by experience.
- At the same time, Scouting, founded by Robert Baden-Powell in 1907, developed



**Maria
Montessori**

similar pedagogical principles in the world of leisure activities outside school: active and cooperative education based on young people's interests and their empowerment. Baden-Powell would develop ongoing contacts with Maria Montessori.

- In Germany from 1908 onwards, Georg Kerschensteiner, a disciple of Dewey, promoted the concept of the active school (*Arbeitschule*) - a school that teaches through practical experience.
- Paul Geheeb opened the *Odenwaldschule* in 1910, where he practiced the coeducation of boys and girls, the organization of teaching within the framework of a flexible system of courses, and

the implementation of co-management by the pupils.

- In Poland in 1912, Janusz Korczack, a Polish Jewish doctor, created his first orphanage, Dom Sierot, which functioned as a "Children's Republic" with its own parliament, court and newspaper. In November 1940, Dom Sierot was transferred to the Warsaw Ghetto. A true hero of pedagogy, Janusz Korczack disappeared in 1942 along with his children, deciding of his own accord to accompany them to the gas chambers of Treblinka.
- In Switzerland in 1912, Edouard Claparède, a Swiss psychologist, founded the School of Educational Sciences in Geneva, which became the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute. He showed that intelligence is an active function of adapting to new situations. Pierre Bovet, the first director of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute, also took an interest in Scouting and translated Lord Baden-Powell's "Scouting for Boys" into French. Then in 1921 he published a small book entitled "The Genius of Baden-Powell". Together with Adolphe Ferrière

and Edouard Claparède, Pierre Bovet founded the International Bureau of Education (IBE) in 1925, which became an integral part of UNESCO in 1969.

The driving forces of New Education

Little by little, the New Education movement grew and expanded, drawing on recent discoveries in medicine and child psychology to build a body of doctrine:

- New Education is by definition opposed to transmissive pedagogy - adopted by the school-factory - in which a teacher, supposedly having all the knowledge, transmits it to the pupils, supposedly ignorant. It defends the principle of active participation by individuals in their own training.
- It declares that learning, before being an accumulation of knowledge, must make it possible to learn how to learn. The spirit of exploration and cooperation should therefore be encouraged, based on pupils' interests.
- It advocates a holistic education giving equal importance to different

educational fields: intellectual and artistic, physical, manual and social.

- New Education is based on the principles of active pedagogy. For John Dewey, we learn by doing (experiential learning); Célestin Freinet spoke of learning through "trial and error ».
- Learning about social life is considered essential. Respect for the child implies that the rules that govern his or her life should not be defined by adults alone but by a system of governance in which the child him- or herself is a stakeholder.
- In 1921, Alphonse Ferrière, a Swiss educator, created the *Ligue Internationale pour l'Education Nouvelle*/ International League for New Education (LIEN), whose charter he drafted. Until the Second World War, this league's congresses enabled many educators from different countries to meet. He wrote a striking criticism of schooling in the industrial age:

"And on the devil's instructions, school was created... The child loved nature: they parked him in closed rooms. The child likes to see his activity serving a

purpose: it was made void of purpose. He likes to move: he was forced to stand still. He likes to handle objects: they put him in contact with ideas. He likes to use his hands: only his brain was involved. He likes to talk: he was forced to be silent. He would like to reason: he was made to memorize. He would like to discover science: it was served to him ready-made. He would like to be enthusiastic: they invented punishments... Then the children learned what they would never have learned otherwise. They learned how to hide, they learned how to cheat, they learned how to lie".¹

From New Education to Cooperative Pedagogies

For the libertarian pedagogues of the 18th and 19th centuries, such as Joseph Jacotot, Sébastien Faure and Paul Robin, cooperation was essentially a subversion of the power relations between the "teacher knowing everything" and the "pupils ignorant of everything". As Paulo Freire² would in turn assert, they believed that these relations prefigured and legitimized the relations of domination within a profoundly unjust society. It was therefore necessary to do away with them starting at school and to replace

them with a permanent co-learning process in which each person cooperates with the others in order to try and learn what they do not yet know. Instead of trying to sort the students into good, less good and dunces, school should set itself the goal of making them all succeed.

School cooperatives

In France, cooperative pedagogy is rooted in the "*mutualité scolaire*" movement, which appeared in community schools at the end of the 19th century. Pupils were invited to contribute towards a common fund for contingency and solidarity purposes. They engaged in activities designed to generate a bit of money, such as raising rabbits or beekeeping. The pupils gradually changed from being members of the school cooperative to being co-managers and became involved in decision-making about how school life was organized.

The cooperative school was launched by Barthélémy Profit, Inspector of Primary Education in Charente and promoter of New Education (he attended the founding meeting of the International League for New Education in 1921). In 1936, he wrote:

"Through school co-operation, the school, hitherto a meeting of individualities which constraint and excessive subjection set against one another, has become an association of children disciplining themselves to take charge of improving their living conditions and the general progress of the class, both materially and morally".

Célestin Freinet

In France, the designer of cooperative pedagogy is undoubtedly Célestin Freinet. Born in 1896, he took part in the First World War and was seriously wounded in October 1917. Having become a teacher at the end of the war, he was unable, as a result of his injury, to speak for more than 10 minutes to his pupils. He explained that he therefore had to invent other ways of teaching than talking.

Célestin Freinet wanted above all to give children the desire to learn:

"Any method that claims to make a horse that is not thirsty drink is regrettable. Any method that whets the appetite for knowledge and sharpens the powerful need for work is good".³

To foster this need to learn, Freinet used students' daily lives and their environment. Freinet's pedagogy is based on four pillars:

- free expression, which allows children's representations to be taken into consideration;
- cooperation, which enables learners to be involved in learning and the regulating school life;
- educational techniques (outings to explore the environment, school correspondence, printing at school) which encourage real and lively activities;
- and experimental trial and error, i.e. education through action and experience, which makes it possible to promote the anchoring of knowledge through multiple experiences.

In 1926, Célestin Freinet created the *Coopérative de l'Enseignement Laïc* (CEL) in order to produce, disseminate and test the educational tools that were needed in as many classes as possible.

In 1932, as a schoolmaster in the village of Saint-Paul de Vence, Freinet came up against the opposition of an extreme right-wing municipality. Realizing that

everything was now being done to prevent him from continuing his action of pedagogical reform, he decided to set up his own school in Vence. He took in poor children from the Paris suburbs and many young Spanish refugees who did not speak French. He invented many teaching tools including self-corrective individual worksheets, the "work plan", an individualized work contract between the teacher and pupils and the Cooperative Council to involve pupils in evaluating and taking decisions affecting school life.

During the war, Freinet was arrested and sent to a concentration camp by the Pétainist regime. His school was closed.

After the war, Célestin Freinet resumed his activities and in 1947 he created the *Institut Coopératif de l'Ecole Moderne* (ICEM), which brought together teachers, trainers and educators around the principles of Freinet's pedagogy. Célestin Freinet became well-known abroad and in many countries movements like the ICEM were created.

In today's French school system, thousands of teachers are ICEM activists and implement the Freinet pedagogy. Freinet's pedagogy has diversified and influenced numerous attempts at educational reform. It is now arousing renewed interest in view of the recurring problems that the French school system is failing to solve.



PRINTING AT SCHOOL, PHOTO TAKEN FROM THE FILM "L'ÉCOLE BUISSONNIÈRE" ABOUT CÉLESTIN FREINET'S PEDAGOGY.

The cooperative classroom

"To engage in cooperative pedagogies," wrote Guillaume Caron and his co-authors⁴, "is to defend a certain vision of school and society. The establishment of cooperative classrooms is a political goal in the noble sense of the term...".

The cooperative classroom reaches this goal through three elements: values, institutions and techniques.

Values

"Cooperative classrooms", explains Guillaume Caron, "are based on a number of fundamental values that the teacher affirms and shares with the students".

Freedom, equality and benevolence

The teacher-student relationship in cooperative classrooms is based first and foremost on equality, trust, listening and benevolence.

- The cooperative classroom breaks with ordinary models of teaching that place an adult in a position of control over young people who know nothing about the subject being taught. In the

cooperative classroom, the adult accepts that some of the decisions about children's activities are beyond his or her control. Power is shared with the students. The students are placed in the position of co-managers of the classroom.

- Benevolence is expressed by rejecting determinism and fatalism: each student is considered capable of succeeding regardless of his or her school background.

Fraternity and cooperation rather than competition

- Success is collective while relying on individual progress.
- The logic of competition in which so-called meritocracy is camouflaged is discarded.
- Cooperative pedagogy emphasizes mutual aid and collective work to enable everyone to progress.

Heterogeneity as a strength

Cooperative pedagogy does not fear differences in level. In a heterogeneous context, peer-to-peer tutoring and teamwork (mutual aid) find their full meaning. Children take more pleasure in being at school and

are encouraged to progress and learn from each other.

Institutions

In the traditional classroom, the teacher is alone in front of a group of students. In this situation, he/she spends much of the time controlling the group and maintaining discipline. The teacher has little control over the emotional reactions of the students as well as his/her own. In the cooperative classroom, the teacher sets up institutions⁵ as a space for mediation between him-/herself and the students. This mediation makes it possible to regulate interactions - moving from imposed discipline to desired discipline - and fosters cooperation.

Three main institutions can be distinguished: the Cooperative Council and spaces for expression, responsibilities and teams, laws and rules of life.

The Cooperative Council and expression spaces

The cooperative classroom defines several spaces of expression where students have the opportunity to speak while being listened to and respected by others. These are democratic forums where everyone has an

equal right to speak, and where students develop skills in expressing themselves, listening, thinking and democratic decision making.

The Cooperative Council

The Cooperative Council is a regular meeting of the whole class, during which the pupils manage group life and institutions. "It is the keystone of the system", writes Sylvain Connacó. The Cooperative Council, in primary education, meets once a week. Chaired by one of the children, elected by peers, the Council is simultaneously a body for evaluating school life, making proposals and taking decisions. Each member of the Council speaks in an individual capacity and has an equal vote, whether as a pupil or a teacher.

According to Fernand Oury⁷, the Cooperative Council is at the same time the eye, brain, kidney and heart of the group:

- As the eye of the group, the Council makes everyone's behavior visible to everyone else. During a Council meeting, one can hardly lie to others or lie to oneself;

- As the brain of the group, the Council analyzes the functioning of the class, collective life, problems and conflicts, brings out solutions and approves them;
- As the kidney of the group, the Council purifies relationship difficulties and conflicts by making them pass through the spoken word, thus facilitating the search for non-violent solutions;
- As the heart of the group, the Council receives information, shares it and allows projects to be developed. It creates new dynamics.

Prior to the Council, the children prepare the agenda by writing their name on a wall newspaper and the subject they wish to discuss. The meeting's chairperson will use this document to give pupils the floor and move the Council forward. The typical Council agenda includes the following phases: introduction, review of the week, decisions of the last Council, problems, proposals, congratulations and thanks, end of the meeting.

The Council enables children to develop skills of democratic expression and debate, critical

thinking, problem-solving and conflict resolution, collective decision-making, project development and management. These are all psychosocial skills that are essential for academic and social success.

In cooperative classes, students are young citizens who build together and regulate their mini-society. Democracy can be learned and built; it cannot be imposed. The Cooperative Council allows this learning; it promotes self-esteem and a sense of belonging to the community.

"What's new?"

This is a moment of exchange that usually takes place early in the morning. It allows the teacher to avoid being the one who solves all the problems. Whenever a child asks a question, the teacher can answer: "You'll talk about it in the What's new? session". It is a place to present issues from which activities can be drawn for the class. A chairperson and a secretary are chosen on a voluntary basis.

The "weather report"

It takes the same form as the What's new? session but takes place at the end of the day. It is a free space that allows children to



COOPERATIVE COUNCIL IN A COOPERATIVE CLASSROOM (OCCE.COM)

take stock of the day and prepare for the next day. The "weather report" begins with a "temperature reading" of the day. Each child expresses through a gesture how happy he or she is for the day. If the child has had a good day and learned well, he/she raises a hand with outspread fingers to represent a sun. If the child is unhappy with the day, he/she raises a hand with fingers pointing downward to signify rain. If his/her feeling is intermediate, a fist is raised to represent a cloud. The chairman counts the suns, clouds and rains, making the "weather report" of the day, then gives the floor to those who wish

to speak - first the rains, then the clouds, and finally the suns. The problems raised are noted to be discussed at the Cooperative Council later.

Responsibilities and teams

Jobs

"The teacher", says Sylvain Connac, "must be careful not to do everything in the classroom. By staying in the background, he/she draws out functions necessary for the cooperative life of the classroom that he/she cannot carry out alone". These are responsibilities or tasks. When the need for a new task arises, the

Council questions its usefulness, defines the nature of its functions and then looks for volunteers. After a few weeks, each pupil is allocated a task that he or she has thought of or been offered. Examples of jobs include: helping to type texts, switching computers on and off, distributing work plans, managing the classroom library, taking care of the wall newspaper, putting away teaching materials, checking emails, etc. The set of skills that children develop by engaging in their tasks contribute to their cognitive enrichment.

Tutors

At the beginning of the year, any student who feels the need to choose a tutor among those who have volunteered for this position is offered the opportunity to do so. The tutor agrees, for a given time and with a precise objective, to accompany a classmate in order for him/her to become autonomous in the tutoring field. Tutors must obtain a tutor's certificate and respect the tutorship rule: there cannot be a dominant-dominated relationship and the tutor is forbidden to give solutions, he/she must help to find them. Research has shown that in tutoring, the main beneficiary is the one who helps - the tutor -

because in order to help, one has to reformulate one's knowledge, reorganize it, and better understand the essentials. The function of the tutor allows one to learn how to learn. It is important to give each student the opportunity to play the role of tutor.

The chairman of the day

The children take turns in being president of the day. The role entails presiding over all the meeting moments of the day: "What's new?", "weather report", etc... The president has to remind others of the collective rules and help those who face problems.

Teams and team leaders

Teams are sustainable groupings, such as working groups, that are not formed only around one activity. They are based on the idea that you learn best by being able to rely on interrelationships and mutual support. In team work, collective discussion leads each person to review his or her mental models and representations of any problem and thus to approach it from a new angle with greater creativity.

The team leader plays a key role: putting his or her skills and time at the disposal of others to enable

them to work better together. Sylvain Connac recommends defining a teamwork charter and training team leaders by having them prepare a special certificate.

Laws and rules of group life

"School", explains Sylvain Connac, "has abandoned humiliating punishments (corporal punishment, donkey hats, chores, etc.) but often no longer has anything to set limits, and children need symbolic limits between themselves and their environment".

Defining the limits

In order to define these limits, a two-level protocol must be put in place:

1. It is up to adults, the teacher, to present the fundamental laws, those which form the foundation of all social life. These are not legal laws, but rather symbolic laws that allow humanity to live. They relate to universal values, democracy and human beings. They include, for example, the rejection of violence, the rejection of injustice, respect for the dignity and wholeness of each person, non-discrimination, etc. The teacher demonstrates the

importance of these principles, while being careful not to negotiate them, as they are immutable and unquestionable.

2. On the basis of these basic laws, children are called upon to discuss and define rules of life and codes of conduct, which state what is forbidden, what is allowed and the sanctions that may be incurred if they are not respected. The rules of life are proposed, discussed and decided upon by the Cooperative Council to regulate and improve the life of the group. They facilitate living together. They can therefore be modified.

"The rules of life and codes of conduct are not imposed. They only have value if they are constructed with the children, with a view to optimizing the limits between what affects individual liberties and what affects collective life." (Sylvain Connac⁸)

Sanctions

Sanctions serve to ensure that rights or obligations are enforced effectively. It is the Cooperative Council that determines sanctions in the event of non-compliance with laws or rules. To prevent children from falling into the trap

of drawing up a set of inappropriate and degrading punishments, benchmarks must guide the development of a sanction system:

- No collective punishment. All punishment is directed at one person;
- Sanction is about actions and facts, not intentions;
- A sanction is accompanied by a restorative procedure aimed at the victim proving that the guilty party has understood his/her mistake;
- A sanction may result in a right being withdrawn for a certain period of time...

Educational techniques

Cooperative pedagogy puts a number of educational techniques in place to promote learning. It is impossible to list them all here, but let us mention a few.

Work plans and personalization of the learning process

Cooperative pedagogy aims to adopt its methods to students' different learning styles. It tries to help students learn on their own, in a cooperative context, at their own pace, following a diversified path. To this end, it uses individual

work plans, completed every week, which allow students to participate in desired activities, corresponding to their abilities, and to plan the work to be done without waiting for others.

Free text for lively language learning

The practice of free text consists in letting the students write "when they want, where they want, how they want". Above all, free text allows individuals to express themselves. Later, children will have the opportunity to appropriate the codes of written expression. A rule is applied: "While you're free to write everything, you can't just publish anything anyhow". The texts, written spontaneously, are then edited and corrected, individually or collectively.

School correspondence and newspaper to broaden your horizons and interests

- Inter-school correspondence, introduced by Célestin Freinet in the 1920s, aims to open the classroom to the outside world, to other realities, other cultures. Each class is paired with another with different geographical and cultural backgrounds. Every fortnight, each child writes to a

correspondent in that class and develops friendships with him or her.

- School newspapers, once produced in Freinet classrooms on a small printing press, are now done so on a computer. Pupils are invited to produce texts for the newspaper with the aim of encouraging the learning of reading and writing. Any proposed texts are published. However, the school newspaper also has a communicative purpose: it has to be read and the children made aware of it. Readers outside the school can obtain it by subscribing to it.

Mathematical creations

In an approach similar to that of "free text", each student is invited to make a mathematical creation, then to exchange it with those of the others in order to react, question and research together. Based on the mathematical creations studied, with the help of the teacher, the class identifies laws or tools.

Documentary research, children's conferences and discovery trips

- Documentary research is an activity that students develop to

look for answers to questions that motivate them, rather than receiving answers to questions that they did not ask themselves. It leads them not only to learn a certain amount of declarative knowledge (country capitals, historical dates, definitions) but also to develop skills relating to research methods (learning to learn).

- Children's lectures are a similar exercise, but this time oriented towards preparing a presentation to the whole class on a chosen topic.
- Discovery trips are outings outside the school, whose aim is to bring back objects, sounds, smells, sensations, images, and all sorts of elements that can be used in class.

Discussions with a philosophical goal

"The greatest strength of the cooperative classroom", writes Sylvain Connac, "is undeniably its ability to welcome life, to build on it and to treat it in such a way that the events in children's daily lives and in school become sources of learning and emancipation".



Some of these events are questions that children bring to the table that can be answered by the Cooperative Council or What's New?, through research or presentations. However, sometimes pupils bring more difficult questions, philosophical ones, which cannot be answered through personal research or class presentations. The teacher may then propose a "philosophical discussion" that is not intended to provide knowledge but to encourage the development of personal thinking.

The operating rules of the discussion are those of democracy: everyone has an equal right to speak, one listens to

the speaker, one builds on what has just been said and avoids repeating it... The teacher introduces and explains the intellectual requirements of philosophy: conceptualize (define the terms that are used to avoid differences of interpretation), problematize (research and formulate what creates doubt in the assertions developed), argue (explain through reason what proves the truth or inaccuracy of the defended theses).

Evaluation through competence belts

Assessment aims to measure changes in student performance so that students can assess their

own progress and identify areas where they need to focus their efforts. It is also important to give families an opportunity to monitor what is being learned at school. Finally, it allows the teacher to adjust his or her learning materials to the characteristics of the pupils.

Cooperative pedagogy is wary of grades that create a relational climate that is more conducive to competition than cooperation and do not give a precise picture of what the student has mastered.

Fernand Oury proposed a different evaluation technique, inspired by the belts of judokas who are able to cooperate despite differences in levels within a group.

A belt represents a level of mastery corresponding to a set of identified skills. They come in several colors: pink, white, yellow, orange, green, blue, brown and black. The belt system enables the teacher to take the skills acquired by the students into account, while making the group's heterogeneity contribute towards learning rather than fostering competition. Differences in level drive cooperation dynamics, in particular through the practice of tutoring.

It is also a question of allowing children to participate in activities that correspond to what they are capable of undertaking, that is to say, what is in what Vygotski calls the zone of proximal development: that which the child is not capable of achieving alone but which he or she can achieve with the help of others.

Conclusion

Over the past decades, cooperative pedagogies, developed in the wake of the New Education movement, have proved their worth in motivating pupils to learn, enabling them to learn to learn and combating school failure.

Why are they not yet applied? To make them more widespread requires school authorities to reinforce teacher training to make teachers capable of implementing an active and cooperative pedagogy. It is within reach.

In the extracurricular field, Scouting, for example - whose method is surprisingly similar to that of cooperative classes - proves that it is possible, without a lot of resources, to train volunteers to implement a pedagogy that can help young people acquire the skills they

need to find their way in life and make a significant contribution to society.

The school of the industrial age is incapable of meeting the educational requirements of modern times. The advent of New Education and cooperative classes is now needed more than ever.

Notes

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THE GREAT PLAN TREE ASSOCIATES

The accusation

By Michel Seyrat

The adventures of the Associates of the Great Plane Tree (AGP) began at the school of Les Collinettes, which resembles many others, built on a small hill overlooking different neighborhoods. There's the area of family houses with a workshop on the ground floor and accommodation upstairs. The school looks like those houses with the courtyard and the classrooms upstairs.

On the other side of the hill is the district of new buildings, with numbered apartments, large stairwells, and lots of balconies to wave to friends across the street. And then, there's a new housing estate, with almost deserted dead-end streets, very convenient for cycling.

To bring these three districts together, a square stretches out in front of the school, with a public garden. A large, old plane tree has towered over the center of the garden since the school was built.

To reach around its trunk you need at least three or four people holding hands with outstretched arms. Benches have always surrounded it, on which generations of schoolchildren have played, climbed, sat, argued, rested and eaten their snacks.

One day, in this school in Les Collinettes, a substitute teacher arrived to replace the usual teacher of the fifth-grade class who had had a motorcycle accident. The pupils at once saw that she knew what she wanted. She had short brown hair, severe glasses and a clear voice, and avoided any discussions. She said her name was Madame Champoussin and that that was no laughing matter. That was good, because no one felt like laughing! At first, we'd observed each other, but soon enough tension had grown. This Madame Champoussin found the school old-fashioned, the pupils slow, and she didn't like this neighborhood "far away from everything", and then she'd



decided and announced that it was necessary to "raise the level; with Mr Duroc, you really didn't go fast". The pupils, on the other hand, thought that Mr. Duroc had been going very fast on his motorcycle, but that was another story.

Until the day when Mme Champoussin announced that the following Monday she was planning tests and that everything we'd learned had to be revised accordingly.

Joshua had raised his hand and asked:

- "Everything since when, please, ma'am?"

- "Everything you've learned, everything you should have known ever since you started school."

- "Even what we've forgotten, ma'am? "

- "Everything, that's all, and then that's it! Study, and I'll see you on Monday!"

There was no joy in the classroom. Some people said they didn't care and that they had football on Saturday anyway. Others thought that after the tests, they'd get the results and that always caused problems at home...

On the way out, a small group of pupils was sitting on the bench of the big plane tree and chatting loudly. There were six of them: Abel, Boris, Chérif, David, Eric and Farouk, who'd been together at this school since the first grade. As soon as they could read, they'd noticed that the initials of their first names started the alphabet, and that had brought them a little closer each year. Not only did they know each other well, but each one knew where each other's strengths and weaknesses lay at school, at games or in sports. For the time being, they were worried about Madame Champoussin's test, especially since at the end of the year they had to pass it to get into the sixth grade and start middle school.

- "Let's get together to study, it'll be more fun and then we'll help each other..."

- "Do you really think we're going to study if we're all together?"

- "If we put our minds to it... My big sister, who passed the middle school certificate, did that with two girlfriends and she got good marks in everything."

- "What were her girlfriends like?"

- "Stop it! Are you stupid or what?"

-"You can come to my house, says Farouk, there's an empty garage - my mom will agree and my dad's at work".

-"Come on, OK, let's join forces to resist Champoussin who thinks we're chickens".

-"Long live the Associates of the Great Plane Tree", cried Farouk.

-"It's not much of a tree, the plane tree..." remarked Boris.

-"Surely a sycamore would be cooler", said David, who was crazy about nature, "but we don't have any in the neighborhood!"

-"And what we do have is a hundred-year-old plane tree".

There was some doubt about it being a hundred years old, but when you sign a pact to help each other against Madame Champoussin's tests, you don't have to be too demanding, and anyway The Great Plane Tree sounded good, didn't it?

That's how the Great Plane Tree Associates (GPTAs) were born. And they didn't have to wait long to find themselves embroiled in their first great adventure! The first in a long series!

The six Associates of the Great Plane Tree had organized

themselves on Saturday to "review everything they needed to know" at the request of Madame Champoussin, their substitute teacher who'd decided to "raise the level" of the class!

When they wanted to, the Great Plane Tree Associates knew how to do it, especially when they were allowed to do it in their own way. In Farouk's garage, there were camping tables and chairs that were only used on holidays. With the tables arranged in a square, a schedule had to be organized.

-"We're not going to study all the time, though, are we" asked Boris, who found it hard to sit still".

-"Don't worry, we'll stop every half hour, and change the subject. It was my sister who told me that their teacher at school had advised them to do it like that".

-"Okay, well then, let's start..."

Sometimes, a quarter of an hour's play lasted half an hour and the half hour of revision barely a quarter of an hour, but, well, the GPTAs revised, studied, laughed, and imitated Madame Champoussin...

The one who had the most trouble was Boris. He'd always struggled at school. He was available to help out, but he wasn't into getting in

trouble. Since the first grade, he'd had bad grades. But there, with the others explaining things to him in their own way, he'd learned things he'd long since given up understanding.

In the end, the Great Plane Tree Associates were quite proud of themselves; they'd decided to study together, they'd done it their own way. Of course, Farouk's mother had encouraged them, she'd brought some old holiday homework books for them to practice, she'd given them something to drink, prepared sandwiches and when everyone had gone back home, she'd given a big hug of relief, waiting for the other mothers' phone calls...

Monday morning, 8:30 am, THE first test! Rather easy for the six GPTAs. The second part of the test was set for the afternoon... At the beginning of this new sequence, the six had looked at each other, delighted. They'd done the same as the new exercise proposed by Mrs. Champoussin in a holiday homework book that Farouk's mother had brought. Now, Champoussin was finally going to be happy with the class!

Alas, not at all. On the contrary. What a catastrophe! On Tuesday morning, when she reported the results, she started with a huge

outburst at the cheaters who'd managed to communicate without her noticing, abusing her trust. She couldn't believe, naive as she was, that at their age, they were already so deceptive, and so on and so on...

As the whole class looked at her with wide eyes and obviously didn't understand anything, she got more excited and accused Abel, Boris, Cherif, David, Eric and Farouk of organized cheating.

- Even Mister Boris, whose usual results were known by all, passed the afternoon H-E-B test perfectly - how did he manage that without cheating? Tell me!

As Abel raised his hand to explain, she shut him up, said she didn't listen to cheaters, and gave everyone their results except the GPTAs!

Then the class went back to normal, as if nothing had happened, despite the enormous injustice that hung over their heads.

After class, there was a lot of commotion on the bench around the big plane tree. The other students wanted to know what had happened, the Associates explained, and Boris had tears in his eyes, but what could be done?

-"We'll write to her", Abel decided. "I know her e-mail address, we'll explain it to her and demand reparation for the injustice done to us!"

-"You're right, damn it. Working a whole Saturday just to get blamed – that's more than injustice, it's stealing good results!"

-"There's nothing worse than injustice!"

-"Well, shall we send her an e-mail?"

It was a great writing exercise... Going and telling a Mrs Champoussin about a whole Saturday of revision at Farouk's – you'll see how easy it is! But then, by writing short sentences, as Mr. Duroc always said to, by taking care with the verbs and double letters, the result seemed good to them. All they now needed to do was to rush to the library to type it up and send it from the computer there. The librarian didn't like six gallopers around her computer, but they seemed well-behaved and focused.

-"So, are we all going to sign it?"

-"Oh no, she's going to come down on us twice as hard."

-"Shall we sign 'Great Plane Tree Associates Against Injustice'?"

-"All right, great, let's do it!"

The next morning, when we entered the classroom, the six GPTAs had a strange knot in their stomachs... That's how it is with e-mails, you write, click, and off they go, with no way of stopping them.

Before entering the classroom, we'd had time to chat, so everyone knew that the e-mail had been sent to the teacher... There was a heavy silence in the classroom; we were standing to attention and no one dared look at Madame Champoussin.

-"I received a letter by e-mail to my personal address, and I don't like that at all. It's an intrusion into my private life that will force me to change this address to prevent any disgruntled student from harassing me at home".

This isn't going well, thought Abel.

Boris was starting to look pale.

-"However, I read this text with interest, and I was surprised that one of you writes so well – no doubt there was outside help. But one thing bothers me a lot – this message is anonymous sent under a collective signature, rather childish, I must say".

We're still children, Abel thought to himself...

–“However, I’m inclined to believe the account of these ‘associates’, because it seems sincere. But it’s a pity the authors didn’t make themselves known by having the courage to sign their names”.

So, in a swift and determined move, Abel stood up, immediately followed by Boris, very pale, Chérif, David, Éric and Farouk, visibly angry.

–“Madam, we’re the signatories, we’re telling the truth, nobody helped us and we succeeded thanks to the revision you advised us to do”.

Then he sat down, imitated by the other Associates of the Great Plane Tree.

Madame Champoussin took some time before answering.

Several of the girls in the class thought that these Associates of the Great Plane Tree looked proud of themselves...

–“In that case, I’ll restore your justly obtained results”, said Madame Champoussin.

A sigh of relief spread from desk to desk and Boris smiled broadly.

From that day onwards, the true founding of the Associates of the Great Plane Tree, things were not

quite the same in the classroom. This first brilliant action of the six was soon followed by others just as useful and spectacular, conceived under the nurturing boughs of this great protective plane tree.

It must be said that it truly was a beautiful tree, majestic, with strong branches that seemed eternal and intertwined branches that grew in a clever disorder to form a vast ball of wood and leaves. The dreamiest children would spend long moments contemplating its bark with its multiple and changing shapes, where one could sometimes discern the silhouette of a continent on a plant map, and sometimes the ghostly silhouette of some woodland deity. Henceforth, it would be the silent witness of the exploits of the Associates who’d chosen it as their emblem.



PHOTO ESCOLA NOVA 21 - LES VINYES

GUEST OF THE MONTH

JOHN LAWLOR

AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAMME IN THE IRISH SCHOOL SYSTEM: BRIDGE 21



Hello, dear John, thank you for agreeing to be the "guest of the month" for this issue of Cooperative Approaches to Education Reform. You have succeeded in linking two important activities in your professional life. On the one hand, you are the head of Scouting Ireland, the Irish Scout organisation, and on the other hand, you have a PhD in Educational Sciences and are a researcher at the University of Dublin. In this capacity, you have developed an original research

project - "Bridge 21" - which somehow brings to formal education methods that have proved their worth in non-formal education, Scouting in particular. Can you present the Bridge 21 project to us?

Because of advances in information and communication technologies (ICT), the world has moved from an economy based on material products and services to an economy based on information and knowledge. This economy requires a greater capacity to respond flexibly to complex problems, to communicate effectively, to process information, to work in teams, to use technology and to generate new knowledge. It does not require people who have stored up a lot of knowledge and are able to regurgitate it ("knowers"), but people who have acquired the ability to learn and develop new knowledge ("learners"). The key skills that learners need are

ASPECT	(Less) Pedagogy in an industrial society	(More) Pedagogy in the information society
Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities prescribed by teacher • Whole class instruction • Little variation in activities • Pace determined by the programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities determined by learners • Small groups • Many different activities • Pace determined by learners
Collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual • Homogeneous groups • Everyone for him/herself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travail en équipe • Groupes hétérogènes • Soutien réciproque
Creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive learning • Apply known solutions to problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Productive learning • Find new solutions to problems
Integrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No link between theory and practice • Separate subjects • Discipline-based • Individual teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrating theory and practice • Relations between subjects • Thematic • Teams of teachers
Evaluative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher directed • Summative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students directed • Diagnostic

VOOGT & PELGRUM, 2005

creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, initiative, communication skills, and the ability to cooperate with others. The Bridge 21 project has therefore been designed, within the framework of the University of Dublin, to test a new educational approach to motivate students to become responsible for their own learning and capable of learning to learn. The table below shows the difference between the educational needs resulting from the industrial society and the new educational needs created by the

emergence of the information and knowledge society.

What are the essential components of the Bridge 21 project?

The model we have developed provides an effective environment for project-based learning and teamwork through the mediation of information and communication technologies (ICT).

The current school system, more often than not, does not fully exploit the potential of ICT in learning. The computer is simply

used as a workbook with the same didactic pedagogy transposed from the classroom to the computer room. As Hertz (2013) states, new technologies allow project-based learning, but this is difficult in a classroom that does not allow moving tables and chairs to create space for collaborative teamwork.

From the outset, I was inspired by the Scouting method, firmly rooted in a system of self-organised teams that allows the transfer of control and responsibility for learning from the adult to the young people themselves. The adult then plays the role of mentor, guide and facilitator. This is known in Scouting as the "Patrol System". Maria Montessori was so impressed by this that she wrote of Scouting as: « freeing children from the narrow limits to which they have been confined".

In Scouting, each team gives itself a name, an identity and has a meeting and working space called the "Patrol Corner". The patrol has a patrol leader, chosen by their peers, whose task is to help them carry out a range of activities that combine fun and learning. Ideally, a Scout patrol can be described as a learning community where young people help each other to

learn new skills through action learning.

How did the project start?

The initial programme was called *Bridge2College* and was aimed at secondary school pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, averaging 16 years of age, in what the Irish school system refers to as the 'transition year'.

Introduced as a pilot project in 1974, the Transition Year was generalised in 1994. The transition year, which falls between lower and upper secondary education, is designed to provide students with an educational experience that provides life skills and incorporates work experience.

Each high school designs its own transition year program based on guidelines established by the Ministry of Education and Skills. The goal is to have a program that facilitates a positive challenge for personal development and promotes self-directed learning for students.

We focused on this year because it gave us the chance to offer the Bridge 21 program to high schools as an opportunity that fits perfectly with the goals of a much more flexible curriculum.



THE PILOT PHASE

In the pilot phase, between November and December 2007, we held five workshops of four days each. A total of twenty days of workshops with ninety students from four high schools. Eighteen volunteer mentors facilitated the workshops. Projects offered to participants included: building websites, creating robots with Lego Mindstorms, working with DrumSteps (a tool for composing constructionist music), animation, digital editing and making videos. The workshops took place in a standard computer lab in the Trinity College Access Programme premises on the university campus.

The critical lessons learned from the pilot project were invaluable in helping to define the curriculum that was to follow.

The following conclusions were drawn:

- Youth enjoyed the program.
- The teamwork approach was successful and could be further developed.
- The children indicated a more positive attitude towards university.

- The mentor's approach as a "guide" was effective. The use of ICTs to enable constructivist learning from experience was successful, but team projects would benefit from being carefully documented.
- Appropriate learning space would be important for effective teamwork.
- Engagement in formal education through schools has been positive and feedback from schools has been encouraging.

We can confidently prepare for a more ambitious programme.

How did the project evolve afterwards?

The new programme was designed to reach out to all young people, not just disadvantaged young people. The mission of the project was not simply to encourage further study at university but to create a learning model to influence systemic change in education in Ireland.

Following the initial experiences, we undertook a process of refining the model based on a deeper understanding of what was effective in improving the learning experience of students.

We focused on 8 key elements:

1. **Teamwork** - We encouraged the development of teamwork and team dynamics. Teams do not form by chance; they must be established, developed and nurtured. Teams had to be heterogeneous, with 4 to 5 members. Each member should have a role to encourage interdependence and cooperation, for example: researcher, editor, multimedia artist, audio technician, scriptwriter. Each team chooses a team leader who acts as a tutor and coach, coordinates the work and represents the team to the adult mentors. All this helps to strengthen the sense of responsibility, cooperation and cohesion within the team.
2. **Technology-enhanced learning** - The use of ICT aims to promote collaborative work. Technology is used as a resource by the team in a process that aims to create knowledge rather than to consume information. Each team is equipped with 2 computers to encourage collaboration and avoid the phenomenon of individualisation and solitary learning that can occur when each student has exclusive

individual access to one machine. The computers are equipped with freeware applications and provide easy access to the Internet on a broadband network.

Participants are on their own in a 'sink or swim' approach and learn from each other by exploring the potential and capabilities of applications they have no previous experience with. This approach is also aligned with the way young people use technology in their social lives.

3. **A learning space** - We have designed and developed a specific user-friendly learning space to promote and encourage teamwork and foster discussion and exchange between teams. A set of two rooms has been set up. The first room is equipped with "team pods" which delimit for each team a semi-enclosed space equipped with computers and comfortable seating. The second room facilitates the presentation and sharing of team projects and also provides a small room for discussion meetings (see diagram and photos on page 41).
4. **Project-based learning** - The Bridge 21 model structures learning through challenges assigned to teams in the form of projects to be completed. Projects are complex and challenging, requiring the team to work independently and cooperatively. In addition, the approach provides support, but not direction, from an adult mentor. Projects generally require the team to present the results of their work to their peers in other teams. All team members must participate in the presentation to build trust, communication skills, team spirit and collegial responsibility.
5. **Team and individual reflection** - Team reflection at scheduled team meetings is intended to support a cycle of project planning and evaluation of team performance and learning. Team reflection is guided by a structured questionnaire. Individual reflection is applied to deepen learning and encourage metacognition. It is supported by a post-activity questionnaire to encourage students to reflect on what the experience has meant to them and what they believe they have learned. This structured reflection

process also serves to provide useful data to support research on the Bridge 21 model and evaluation of its impact.

6. **Goal Oriented Mastery** -

Bridge21 is designed to encourage personal mastery through skill development and avoids normative evaluation. Participants are not in competition with each other, they work together to learn and succeed. Although there is a natural tendency for competition between teams, this is minimized by developing an atmosphere of cooperation between teams. When presenting projects, teams encourage each other, criticize each other constructively and applaud each other.

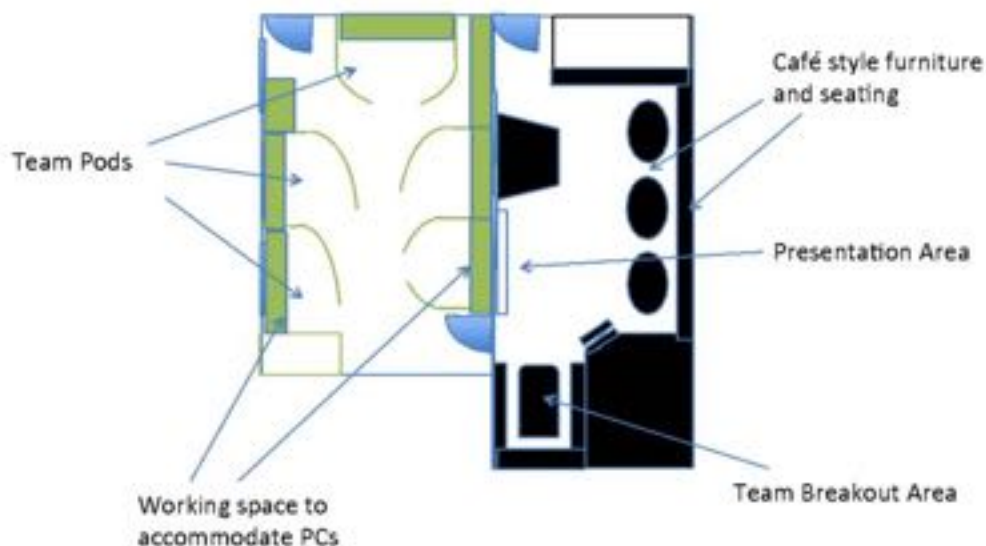
7. **Establish a social learning environment** -

A friendly, open and relaxed atmosphere permeates the environment and the protocols involved are based on trust and responsibility rather than on policing and control. A friendly co-learning relationship between mentors and students is sought. Students are encouraged to address adult mentors by their first name and to consider them as co-learners

and partners in the activity and not as an authority figure. The goal is to create a dissonance with students' prior perceptions of what a learning environment is and thus reinforce their motivation to learn.

8. **The role of the mentor/facilitator** -

The role of the adult mentor in Bridge 21 is that of a guide. Learning takes place within the team and the adult mentor is not a team member. The intention is to maintain a "light" and non-intrusive type of coaching. The adult mentor provides support and guidance but avoids taking over the leadership of a team. The adult takes a step back so that the team and its members take a step forward. Mentors also provide technical support, but instruction is kept to a minimum. When a team encounters difficulties such as personality conflicts or cooperation problems, the mentor seeks to help the team find solutions in a non-directive approach. The adult respects the integrity of the team and the primacy of the team in solving its own challenges. In this way, the team is the vehicle for transferring responsibility for learning from the adult to



the participant. The role of the adult is characterized by support, guidance and co-learning.

What have been the conclusions regarding the effectiveness and educational impact of the Bridge 21 project?

For 3 years, 1055 secondary school students, aged 15 to 17, participated in one-week workshops with 25 participants each, during school time in a specially designed extracurricular learning environment.

Bridge 21 is a research project in Educational Sciences that was developed over a period of three years. The results were analysed

using a case study method, questionnaires and focus groups.

The following themes emerged from the evaluation using the case study method:

- An increased sense of personal responsibility for learning and a greater propensity for self-directed learning;
- A better attitude towards technology and its place in learning;
- A positive reaction to the team's experience and its role in their learning;
- Improved intrinsic motivation of students;



TEAM PODS

- Transfer of skills acquired during the project to school and other learning contexts;
- Perceived increase in personal confidence.

From the questionnaires and focus groups the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 82% of the participants indicated that they had perceived a gain in autonomy in their learning and greater self-confidence.
- 95% of participants reported an improvement in their communication skills.
- 93% reported a more positive disposition to teamwork after the workshop. 85% of participants felt that they could learn better at school through teamwork.
- 90.5% of participants indicated increased confidence in the use of ICT.

The programme showed a positive result in encouraging metacognition. A significant number of participants made reference to thinking about how they learn.

- 90% indicated that they felt that university entrance was more achievable after participating in the program.
- 93% of students considered the program important and effective in making friends. It is also evident that students enjoyed the experience and this enjoyment influenced their perception of their learning in the process. It is noteworthy that students were surprised that learning can be fun and, as one student put it, "*Learning can be fun instead of boring.*"

Focus group interviews conducted at a time interval ranging from 6 months to 3 years after participation (depending on the student cohort) confirm the results of the data collected at the end of the intervention and suggest a lasting positive memory of the program and a significant residual effect on students' attitudes towards learning following the program.

The data clearly show that participation in Bridge 21

workshops facilitated the development of generalizable skills commonly referred to as 21st century learning skills, including communication skills, teamwork, initiative, problem solving, curiosity and imagination. Bridge21's claim to be a model for 21st century learning is therefore well-founded.

The results are indeed impressive. Do you think that Bridge can be a model for generalizable learning in schools?

Yes, I do: Bridge 21 is easy to implement, it requires few ICT resources because of the team sharing, it requires a low threshold of training for mentors and pedagogical facilitators, and the participants easily understand how it works.

Let me add a personal reflection

Learning is best understood as a journey of co-learners. The master and student approach to learning underpinned with a behaviorist pedagogy can be seen to have 'run its course' when meeting the challenges of society in the 21st century.

For over 100 years Scouting has faithfully followed an educational programme which liberates the learner and follows the finest precepts of educational theory.



PRÉSENTATION ET DISCUSSION

Meanwhile formal education has found itself bound in a time-warp of Victorian practice where system subverts accepted best practice and well established learning theory.

In exploring Bridge21 as a model for learning the relationship between young person and adult was shifted to one of learner and mentor/facilitator. In addition the power of peer learning was released and collaborative working encouraged powerful results in a structured team-based learning environment.

The Bridge21 Model through its structured teamwork approach offers a vehicle for the transfer of

control of the learning from the teacher to the learner and in this facilitates the critical characteristics of learning necessary to encourage intrinsic motivation and in particular promote student responsibility for the learning.

The participant students perhaps put it best:

- *"The highlight of the week for me was to get to know new people and to see that we all get along fine, if we just do work together and have fun."*
- *"When you work in a team you learn that different people are good at different things and this week has given all of us the*

chance to show what we are good at."

In summary it is clear that participation in the workshops had a direct positive impact on the students' perceptions around their learning and on their intrinsic motivation to learn.

Through my lifelong immersion in Scouting's educational method and the academic work on

Bridge21, I have formed a view that there were two polar opposite approaches to teaching and learning with young people. One is based on policing and control and the other is founded on building trust and responsibility. Setting aside the justice and humane arguments, I believe that a system that seeks to build personal responsibility for learning and in the process to grow the learner is destined to be more effective.



BRIDGE 21 LEARNING MODEL