Case Study

The Teachers' Professional Workshop in the Pécs-Somogy Primary School

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EFFeCT

European Methodological
Framework for Facilitating Teachers'
Collaborative Learning

A Case Study of the Teachers' Professional Workshop in the Pécs-Somogy Primary School

CONTEXT

The institution is the site of one of the member schools of Budai-Városkapu Primary School and Basic Arts School, with its school building located in an outer, eastern part of Pécs called Somogy. The school has been operated by the state since 1 January 2013 through the Klebersberg Institution Maintenance Centre, established at the same time. The school belongs to the School District of Pécs and is maintained by the Local Government of Pécs City with County Rights, whose General Meeting established the complex educational institution through a 2007 resolution, unifying four, formerly independent schools under the same governance. The member schools are: Budai-Városkapu School, Bártfa Street Primary School, Szieberth Róbert Primary School and Basic Arts School and Vasas-Somogy-Hird Primary School.

The eastern part of Pécs significantly changed during the past period. Between the 1950's and the 70's, it was commonly known as a miner settlement, carrying a lot of values; this part of the city was characterised by a rich sports life, varied cultural programmes and the preservation of mining traditions. In the 80's, the situation changed; some of the sports fields, cultural institutions and libraries were closed down and the renovation of community centres was neglected. With the decline of the local coal mine, the settlement slowly lost its entire 'mining character'. The schools remained the only opportunity for sports and culture. The appearance and the social composition of the residential area also went through great changes. During the active period of the coal mines, mainly the employees of the company lived here and their children attended the schools. However, as jobs were cut, people began to move out of this part of the city, which became impoverished and aging. Unfortunately, unemployment is becoming more and more common, and the resulting hopeless situation is often accompanied by rearranged family circumstances, while these family backgrounds are also typically characterised by low schooling, alcoholism and poor living conditions.[1]

Within the complex institution of the Budai-Városkapu School, the teachers' workshop, aimed at the renewal of teaching/learning, is run at the *Pécs-Somogy* institutional unit of the Vasas - Somogy -

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[1] Pursuant to the school's Educational Programme, see
http://www.budaivaroskapu.hu/docs/Ped_program_BVI.pdf

Hird Primary School. As a consequence of the above situation, the number of students has significantly fallen (from about 150 to 90), and, due to the attraction exerted by inner city schools, those who remained were mostly disadvantaged students, whose parents could not afford to take their children elsewhere. The changed composition of students affected the next year's enrolments, and there seemed no way out of this circle: the majority of the students come to the school from poor families, unemployed parents, poor housing and hungry. Many of the children are impeded in learning, with "dis" issues, behavioural problems or are considered hard to handle.[2]

In consideration of the circumstances, and headed by the new principal-in-charge appointed in 2013, a school development process, based on partnership and supporting methods, was initiated, seeking to enable teachers to teach all the children together through an educational programme of a different approach, using different methods, and to make the school inclusive. The workshop, launched by the school management and involving the teaching staff, seeks to learn about methods of alternative and reform pedagogy in order to create their own educational programme using the elements which best suit the school's needs. As part of the workshops, the participants study various educational methods and attend training sessions. Thanks to the teachers' efforts at the workshops, the educational programme – which also relies on the elements and achievements of the Step by Step programme[3], now integrated into the educational practice of the school – is constantly developing. The school mostly expands its resources with the involvement of civil organisations and institutional partners.[4]

METHODOLOGY

The school which the case study focuses on has – primarily due to the school management – been actively involved in innovative processes, workshops and professional partnerships in Hungary, not only at a local and regional, but also at a national level. Erika Csovcsics has been Principal-in-charge

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[2] Interview with Erika Csovcsics. In: B.TIER (ed.), Alma a fán – Iskolavezetők a méltányos oktatásért ('Apple on the tree' – School leaders for equity and learning), Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest, 2015. http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/hu/iskolavezetok-a-meltanyos-oktatasert

[3] The child-centred educational programme called *Step by Step* was developed by American professionals, under the supervision of Open Society Institute, in 1990. In Hungary, the kindergarten programme was introduced in 1994, followed by the school programme in the academic year 1996/97, funded by Soros Foundation. The mission of the Step by Step programme is to establish a new educational approach with children in its focus, to apply the principle of „Every person is a unique and unrepeatable personality". The teachers who choose this programme seek to support children, their motivation to learn, as well as the class as a community by searching for what is valuable in each child. More information: lepesrollepesre.eoldal.hu (In: Ibid)

[4] Ibid

of Budai-Városkapu Primary School and Basic Arts School for three years. She has worked as an equity professional, lead various projects and participated in a number of forums, conferences and workshops which focused on integrated education and equity in education. She uses her experiences gained in the NGO sector for the benefits of the school. Her basic pedagogical attitude is acceptance, trust and enablement. In addition to her other responsibilities, she's a member of the Hungarian network of coordinators for Tempus Public Foundation's CroCoos – Prevent dropout![5] project, implemented in an international partnership, and, with regard to our international project, EPNoSL – European Policy Network on School Leadership[6], she gave an account of the beginnings and plans of the teachers' workshop in an interview conducted with her as part of our interview series 'Apple on the Tree' in 2015.

Based on the information thus available to us formerly, we thought that the teachers' professional workshop held at the school can be a good example for school-level collaborative learning among teachers, and it agrees with the jointly developed set of criteria in many points. Since as background material we only had the former interview with the Principal-in-charge and the educational programme of the school, we needed more confirmation and therefore planned a short on-site research: we visited the premises to talk to teachers, to study the environment that defines the school, as well as the school itself, and to meet the children who study there, too. Data collection was therefore qualitative. In order to get an overall and entire picture through the on-site research, we didn't only want to conduct interviews, but also to attend a teachers' workshop, where we could observe teachers' attitude, involvement and the form and realisation of collaboration in practice in the most direct way possible.

Based on the criteria defining the main focus of the case study – and grouping them into larger units, then breaking them down to sub-questions – we compiled a series of questions[7] for an in-dept interview with the school head. The interview – which, besides the formerly specified questions, also provided a flexible framework to the conversation – was recorded and transcribed. Another important part of the on-site research was the visit to the school operated at the Pécs-Somogy site. The form and length of the discussions conducted with the school's teachers and other professionals (e.g. social worker, pedagogical assistant) had not been specified formerly. This part of the on-site research required flexibility; the subjects of the talks were affected by the place and time, being in the school and the staff room during the study, as well as by volunteering. Some didn't want to talk

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[5] Project website: http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/en/crocoos
[6] EPNoSL: http://www.tka.hu/new/3676/school-leadership-for-equity-and-learning
[7] For the series of questions, please see the annex.

to us, whereas others proved helpful. Another series of questions, focusing on particular details, was made for the teachers' interviews, too, also only providing a framework for the recorded talks.

The teachers' individual and community attitude and behaviour were further shaped by the workshop held at the school on the day of the talks in the afternoon, with the participation of teachers, the school head and a guest workshop leader. As that particular workshop was focusing on board game pedagogy, and experience-based, experiential learning is a fundamental approach at the school, the workshop was also attended by some students, who formed smaller groups with teachers to try board games designed to support learning/teaching. After the children had left, the workshop leader explained to the teachers the methodological and pedagogical background of the games and showed them further examples in practice. We had specified a set of criteria to studying the workshop, which primarily sought to record the atmosphere and the mood at the workshop, as well as the relationships among the teachers and the practical realisation of learning.

This time, photos and videos were also taken.[8]

PRACTICE

As part of a pedagogical experiment, the teachers' workshop, identified as a good practice, seeks answers to issues and challenges which define the operation of the school and permeate everyday teaching and learning. During recent years, the primary school at the Pécs-Somogy site has virtually become segregated, as a consequence of the migration generated by the free choice of school: those parents who can afford to take their children away, prefer to choose inner-city schools. Therefore, the school leadership considers it particularly important to find a way to advance children coming from here, to bring back dropouts and to realise equity in education – that is, to offer everyone whatever they need to be successful and effective.[9] The school motto reflects this very same approach: "Our school is not knowledge-centred, but personality-centred." "Everybody is equal but different" – they believe that pedagogy is the world of differences. Currently, 85 students attend the school, the capacity of which would allow education for 120-130 children.

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[8] The photos and videos taken at the workshop can be found in 'Portrait'.
[9] Interview with Erika Csovcsics. In: B.TIER (ed.), Alma a fán – Iskolavezetők a méltányos oktatásért ('Apple on the tree' – School leaders for equity and learning), Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest, 2015. http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/hu/iskolavezetok-a-meltanyos-oktatasert

> *"I feel that at the above-mentioned small school we can't answer the untold questions and find solutions to the problems of these children during the conventional, 45-minute classes and by alternating subjects. […] Continuous engrossment can be ensured by adding up the number of classes in similar subjects, in an epochal system, and since this system would develop learning skills more intensively, more could be learnt and there would be more capacity for new knowledge. It also requires us to get to know the children, their family backgrounds, their age characteristics, today's challenges, the influences affecting the children, their learning methods, as well as the way they absorb knowledge, and then we can adjust our programme and the school itself accordingly."* [10]

Principal-in-charge Erika Csovcsics

Besides all these, the workshop was also launched to meet the management's needs to process the professional materials sent to them for information and development at regular sessions, together with the teachers, since you can only internalise and use these materials if you have understood and taken them in. It was also an important aspect that besides the usual flow of information – which can also be managed through written notice (email, bulletin board, etc.) -, these professional issues and joint learning should have a forum.

The workshop that has been run for two years – intensively since September 2015 – seeks to develop an educational programme in which teachers can combine alternative pedagogical methods and other methodological good practices, such as Waldorf education, Maria Montessori's methods, the alternative foundation programme of Children's House[11], Budapest, the Complex Instruction Programme[12], developed by professionals in Hejőkeresztúr, as well as their own individual experiences to create what they need, in a puzzle-like manner. Experiential education and experiential learning, as well as various manual activities and arts education are getting more and more focus in classes.

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[10] Ibid

[11] Children's House is operated in Pesthidegkút, Budapest, with 8 grades and one class per each grade, according to its own educational programme and local curriculum. The school has run the Children's House Alternative Foundation Programme since the academic year 1991/92, which, besides its teachers' practical experiences, was also greatly inspired by the appearance of reform pedagogical trends in Hungary in the early 20th century. More information: www.gyermekekhaza.hu (In: Ibid)

[12] Complex Instruction Programme (KIP) is the Complex Instruction method developed by Stanford University, USA, adjusted to Hungarian needs from 2001 by the teachers of Béla IV Primary School in Hejőkeresztúr, headed by Principal Emese K. Nagy. The programme has been used successfully for 15 years now, and also adopted by other schools. The model allows children to work in groups during classes. Each student in a group has a particular task, and therefore they do not only share classroom work, but also the sense of achievement caused by the successfully completed tasks. The programme seeks, for example, to handle status issues among students, to help children gain more knowledge, to develop cognitive skills, as well as to contribute to the classroom effectiveness of student groups of heterogeneous socialisation and knowledge. More information: www.komplexinstrukcio.hu (In: Ibid)

At the beginning of the cooperation, the leader and the teachers jointly specified the main guidelines and identified the issues they needed answers to. To support that, the school head sought professionals who could share their own experiences. The main initial steps of the school development workshop, planned in 2015, are as follows:

- Activity-centred education: each teaching unit and class involves children in learning processes through physical movements and activities.
- Aligning extracurricular activities with educational goals and classes (e.g. gardening, household skills, planning, keeping your environment clean, etc.).
- Developing a self-managing attitude: promoting self-assessment, through self-reflection, discussion groups, case discussion, describing emotions, study planning, behaviour planning and keeping a learning log.
- The active involvement of parents: participation in extracurricular activities, where their parental roles are confirmed through experiences, and they can learn how to help effective progress from home. [13]

The professional programme – and in the long term, the school's operation, too – is adjusted to the above, as well as to the existing framework of the educational system; currently, the workshop seeks to serve this path-finding and learning. At this experimental stage, the new educational model is jointly developed by the school's teaching staff consisting of 14 teachers, 2 pedagogical assistants and 3-4 guest teachers from other member schools. They also rely on assistance from other professionals; currently, the school employs two teachers of special educational needs and a social worker. The workshops are usually held with the attendance of the entire teaching staff – except for two teachers on duty during the workshops – on Friday afternoons, in one of the classrooms of the Pécs-Somogy site. (This small member school has six classrooms, a lecture hall and a workshop, as well as an IT room and a P.E. room set up at the local community centre. In the past few years, the building received some minor renovations, and now offers a cosier and more colourful environment to its visitors.)

These 2-2.5-hour-long sessions on Friday afternoons provide participants an opportunity to expand their knowledge and methodological resources, either by self-education or with external help. They asked parents to take their children home earlier on these occasions, and the ones who remain at the school are supervised by two teachers on duty. Initially, these sessions shifted towards information exchange and problem solving, with less emphasis on real learning. Later on – as a number of new training opportunities arose – the Friday sessions became more frequent. The school

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[13] Ibid

leadership maintains good relations with civil organisations such as the House of Civil Communities, so they can always find training opportunities matching their profile that they can join. Each particular session is determined by the given topic; sometimes they focus on discussing current issues affecting the children, exchanging experiences, seeking solutions and brainstorming; at other times, they share various (professional) experiences from conferences, professional workshops and external training sessions, study the theoretical background of some educational trend/method through specialised literature or invite a guest lecturer/trainer specialising in a given field.

The initial goals have changed over time: first they wanted to reverse the process of local parents sending their children to other schools and to 'reintegrate' these children into the school. Since they couldn't change this trend, at a later stage they worked hard to identify the sort of children the school could accommodate and how they could integrate children with behavioural disorders or special educational needs in the small classes of about 12 students. It was one of the goals of the Montessori training, for example, where a special education teacher taught them Montessori basics. Apparently, however, it wasn't a viable direction, either. The current goal is primarily to facilitate the learning and teaching of those who attend the school by learning about various educational theories, practices and methodological solutions. As another new area, the school circumstances, or "services" if you like, provided to students studying at home, could set the new directions for the school in the future.

"It's crucial that we shouldn't think about children in isolation, because when children go to school, they don't go there alone, but their entire family goes 'with them'. There are issues which can never be resolved without contacting, reaching, involving the family. That's why collaboration is a must. It's important that students should feel comfortable here and experience that learning and going to school can as well be nice, and that learning 'can lead to somewhere'. I hope we can provide these children a different kind of openness and attention, which can help them stay here and finish school."

Xénia Praks, social worker

"I want children to experience the process of creation itself, to feel their own creative powers which can enable them not only to imagine, but also to make things come true. I think it will teach them in real life that they can realise their ideas through finding the necessary people, resources and tools."

Bence Zsin, pedagogical assistant

"It's easy to say we love children, but if we don't ensure the circumstances which make them feel comfortable at school, we haven't done all that it takes, and we haven't given them what they might need. When children can't see their future at

home, we should show them here that there are things to long for and goals that can be achieved. They should want better and more!"

Csabane Fogaras, teacher of special educational needs

"Most of the students here start their lives with disadvantages that go back for generations. So where we can and should help them most are the things they don't get at home: attention, presence and a positive role model."

Anikó Gergely, teacher

The participants identified their own personal motivations and goals as follows:

- to create a school which primarily focuses on 21st century skills required for finding employment, and not merely on transferring the curriculum and knowledge
- the inspiring environment helps to find a way to work and cooperate with these children effectively in such pedagogical circumstances
- the openness, the search for new ways, the different way of thinking and the individual attention towards children that characterise the teaching staff are very important
- with various life stories in the background, to create communities using the tools and language of arts as an important social message
- to improve the situation of children with special needs or disadvantaged children, and to create such learning circumstances that they are entitled to
- to ensure qualification for the students of the school, to motivate them to continue their studies

"When I started my career, I was a supervising teacher at a dormitory, and then after a few years spent in the NGO sector, I returned to teaching this year. The school, due to its situation and the children who attend, provides a very stimulus-rich environment where something always happens. It has a good teaching staff, with nice, helpful and cooperative people, and even those who are a little different from the majority are very kind" (Anikó Gergely, teacher)

At the workshops, they examine all the methods that might provide a solution to the problems.[14] They don't instantly put everything into practice, but they've recently learned that if they try something and it doesn't work, they shouldn't wait and keep it in their tool kit unchanged, but adjust

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[14] Topics and trainings of the last workshops: "Bad children" trainings (3 occasions); Facilitator training (2 occasions); Integration of children with Special Education Needs; Pedagogy of board games; Sustainable school; Creative workshop; Using media with children. Internal trainings: Alternative educational programmes; Educational principles in the past and nowadays; Arizona room; Epochal education; Morning discussion group.

it as soon as it fails. Only solutions which are also viable in practice can lead to success, such as the introduction of morning discussion groups, the use of restorative techniques, the experiential education methods learnt at the Pressley Ridge training, the crisis and aggression management techniques, as well as the Arizona room[15], which serves to manage behavioural problems, to call the attention to the importance of observing certain rules and to set the limits.

The first achievement of the workshops and of the cooperation among teachers can be sensed in the change of the school's atmosphere: the general mood has improved, and it has a positive effect on learning and teaching. The changed educational culture is partly due to that, and partly to the process that started after the appointment of the Principal-in-charge three years ago, and which also entailed changes in the teaching staff. The new teachers (some of whom had formerly worked together at a foundation school for Roma children) represented a different approach, a different style and tone, but the consequential internal conflicts have been resolved by now. We can also see that students – who had to change schools several times – feel more comfortable here, which is also confirmed by the feedback from their parents. Whereas it's harder to achieve any change with adolescent children with existing, bad behavioural patterns, in lower grades the positive change can be seen in children's attitude and openness towards learning and various activities. There is a lot of time, effort and discussion put into the epochal system, preparing our own visual aids, the morning discussion groups and the introduction of drama pedagogical elements, but the experiences show that both the children and their parents have become more accepting, and therefore turn to the school with more trust. Nevertheless, the objective measurement of the results has not been developed yet, and therefore currently the possible changes in school performance cannot be proven this way.

PARTICIPATION

The circle of participants at the workshop is partly given: the school's teachers, joined by occasional guest teachers from other member schools – their presence mainly depends on their classes, they

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[15] The basic principles of the programme launched in Arizona, US, are as follows: Every student has a right to undisturbed learning. Every student has a right to undisturbed teaching. I respect others' rights. The room – where these guiding principles are posted in a written form – is used when a students breaks these rules despite having been warned repeatedly. The room is supervised by a teacher on duty. Here the student has a chance to think over what's happened and how he or she wants to change their behaviour and return to normal work. Source: http://csomaiskola.hu/arizona_program.htm

are not required to attend. The cooperation is closed as far as, due to the school development and community development goals, it is designed for a particular school/teaching audience; however, from other aspects, it can sometimes be open: although it's not a goal, teachers from the members school can sometimes join in, as it sometimes happened, too.

Although the initiative came from the school head, if the participants didn't have an inner motivation to do this work, the workshop and the community wouldn't work just by external pressure. Attendance, therefore, is not optional, but the lack of voluntary involvement would mean that the teacher can't be a part of the process, that is, a member of the school community. In this respect, there haven't been any conflicts between the management and the teachers yet.

Anybody can bring topics and ideas to the workshop, but generally – relying on the existing network of NGO and other professional relationships and various professional partnerships – it is the school head who suggests/organises the main directions of the workshops, mostly by inviting external professionals. This is also primarily due to the fact that teachers are less inclined to leave the local level and its more closed, more focused world. Mostly, it is the social worker colleague, coming from an NGO/foundation background, as well as the teachers arriving from the former teaching staff of Gandhi Secondary Grammar School of Pécs (also formerly headed by Erika Csovcsics) who bring in and share with their colleagues good practices seen elsewhere, such as the Arizona room. Besides the presentation of the ideas brought in, they are always discussed; reading the related literature or background materials is a good solution, but not enough because, due to the lack of time, it can easily be forgotten. It also happened that the notes taken on various alternative pedagogies were read and interpreted in pairs at the workshop, followed by a joint discussion on what could be worth adopting. The workshop only tackles issues which are important for finding the right professional direction or are certain to raise teachers' interest. As the time available is limited, it's important that these sessions should not be held for the sake of the workshop itself, but should be inspiring, interesting and full of activity.

The initiatives which appear in the everyday life of the school come from the teachers' workshop, almost without exception. However, the new knowledge gained the workshops is not necessarily put into practice instantly. The key aspect of introducing innovations or changes is whether they affect everyone, and if they do, what measures they require to be kept up. When introducing the Arizona room, for example, the parents as well as the student self-government were informed and the questions arising were discussed. The effectiveness of the methods put into practice are monitored; in the case of the Arizona room, for example, a decline in the use can be currently seen, and joint discussions on the possible causes are planned. Generally, however, the low number of teachers

allows them to share the relevant successes and failures with each other. The same applies to the training sessions only attended by a few colleagues: after the training, they share their new experiences and knowledge with the others.

Since the programme is constantly changing and there are a lot of new features, the form teachers always discuss the changes with the children, since it's them who are mainly concerned. The students generally give instant feedback: they always express their opinions, even though not always in a way teachers would love to hear. The more formal ways of giving feedback (regular, periodical attitude checks or other measurements) have not been established yet. The relationship with the parents reflects a phenomenon common in primary school: in the case of lower-grade students it is easier to keep in touch, and the parents visit the school because of their children, whereas in upper grades this presence and interest significantly decreases. Parents are hard to mobilise, and the school is aware of the fact that they have a lot to make up for in this respect, too – formerly, there was an educational workshop held for parents on Wednesdays (e.g. on addictions), whereas recently a family day sought to strengthen the loose relationship with them.

The development of the school community also includes organising days of leisure activities, such as excursions in the region. These occasions also contribute to building the community and to teachers' mental protection, almost like supervision. The talks, plans and exchange of experiences conducted meanwhile are reflected in minor, instantly adoptable changes and new partnerships.

One of the outcomes of the entire learning process which the principal-in-charge had not anticipated was an inquiry from private learners. That was largely due to the professional work which aroused the interest of those who inquired and felt themselves close to the openness and the new methods of the school, as well as the educational work conducted here. In this – currently not entirely controlled – system, parents could enrol their children with private learner status in any educational institution, but they also consider it important to get something more from a school than the obligatory monthly consultation: high-quality alternative education.

Based on the experiences gained during the past period, in the near future they will try to combine the methods tested so far. The former profile needs to be cleaned, weeding out the elements that do not work and strengthening the ones that work in practice. Besides the internal demand, now it's also an external necessity for the school, precisely because of the growing number of inquiries from private learners. After closing the academic year this June, they will revise their practices and methods, and examine what they can really adapt and what they can only implement later. The goal is still for the school to provide alternative education which keeps existing students here while also

attracts others. The school head says they will need about three more years to complete the process which is now half-way through. The first joint session was held in June 2014 (the workshop has been held regularly since September 2015). At that time, they estimated five years for the school to become accepted and put on track. They predict that the school may work in a phasing-out system in three years, and there will be some children whom they won't be able to admit in the class of 12.

DEPTH

The teachers' professional workshop has been embedded in the operation of the school; the time of the meetings is scheduled among the weekly duties, and the Friday afternoons (between 2 and 4:30 pm.) assigned for this purpose have been freed through cooperation with the parents – the families were asked to take smaller children home on these days, whereas upper-grade students wouldn't want to stay in the school building, anyway, especially since the IT room was closed down. Children whose families can't take them home are supervised by two teachers on duty, who don't attend the given workshop on these occasions.

Due to the special situation (community building, small teaching staff, teaching-learning issues), participation in the learning process of school development can't really be optional for teachers, or if anybody wants to stay away from this process, that would mean they want to stay away from the school itself and a jointly building school community. At the same time, the workshop can't work without personal motivation; all of the respondents specified their own personal motivations with regard to teaching disadvantaged and underprivileged children, or ones facing various problems (see PRACTICE).

According to the principal-in-charge, the group identity is still forming; within the staff of 16, 10-12 teachers work as a team, whereas some teachers are outside this unity – they can see it themselves, and the other members of the community can feel it, too. It's a sign for the leader, who discussed the underlying problems with these teachers, and they are all aware that you can only build a real community if the team pulls in the same direction, along shared values and goals. Regardless, they consider it important – and the children can see it, too – that communities have a power, communities are characterised by team spirit, as teachers expect them, too, and that mistakes should not be concealed but discussed.

The workshop sessions provide an opportunity for learning, cooperation, various levels of learning from each other, from information transfer through case discussions and sharing good examples to training opportunities.

The teachers, pedagogical assistants, the social worker and the teacher of special educational needs involved can not only rely on each other professionally, but also and most of all mentally and emotionally. In the beginning, coherence was poor; it took personnel changes after the change in the management, as well as at least one year's common work for teachers to begin to support each other and notice who needs exactly what and when.

Working together requires constant feedback and adjustment – it's exactly the experimental nature and testing various methods that require continuous monitoring when they are put into practice, as well as regular discussions, and when necessary, instant adjustment to be effective. Collaboration and the activity and regularity that it brings along are not a drag for teachers who follow the directions set for the community; they find this collaboration inspiring and refreshing, which was also confirmed by observing the workshop.

The workshop doesn't have any written rules – besides the summaries written by the school secretary –, there's not much formality in the way they are conducted, everybody "takes out" as much of these sessions as they can, and when an initiative doesn't require further agreement or it doesn't affect the entire operation of the school, then teachers may as well test the method/technique/good practice learnt in practice the next day.

In the absence of the leader, some workshop sessions are usually cancelled, but there were also occasions when an important issue – mostly the discussion of a problem that affected the entire team – was on the agenda, and the session was held without her. Anybody can miss some workshop sessions when they have other important things to do.

As a closing element of the talks conducted with the school head and the teachers, we asked them to place the teachers' workshop and the collaboration on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represented the sharing of information and 5 represented collaborative learning. The values indicated in the responses were close to each other (varied between 3.5 and 4.5), but they were not uniform. The principal-in-charge put themselves at 4.5 on the scale, mainly because now she could only imagine closer cooperation and learning if each of their steps were carefully planned (e.g. planning the series, the structure, the progress and the expected outcomes of the workshops), but she thinks it's too early now. The uncertainty and occasional halt in the process comes exactly from this openly admitted path-searching. According to the school management, within a year it won't be a question

what they do and why, and uncertainties will be eliminated. Other respondents gave a value between 3-4 or 4 for the depth of collaboration. The values chosen on the scale were justified by the following:

- differences between the colleagues (in involvement, in the depth of commitment, in the effort made);
- the deficiencies of consistent implementation and putting theory into practice;
- the challenges of the harsh environment and the fact that there's still a lot to do;
- the need for continuity, regularity and persistence, offsetting pulsation as a need;
- excessive workload, high number of classes and lack of time as a disadvantage.

EQUITY

As a consequence of the above background and the objectives, every element of the school, and within that, the teachers' professional workshop, serves the compensation for disadvantages and the realisation of equity in education. Common learning, learning about various methods, as well as the cooperation among the teachers and with the partner organisations and other professionals all serve the same goal: to provide children as much as possible at that given place, so they can have an option at the next stage of their studies when they have completed a learning phase or a school. So, it shouldn't be their socially disadvantageous situation that determines what they can achieve, but they should really be enabled to make the most of themselves and their skills. They consider it very important that, relying on their personalities and tools, teachers can create an environment at school which has an impact on children. It is supposed to contribute to reducing the differences among children.[16]

Equity in education also means that the school is open to all children. It does not sort, does not specify what kind of children it expects to come and what not, but adjusts education to the children who attend. The school can also accept diverse children at a classroom level and given them tasks in situations where they need to cooperate with their peers or teachers, and it can always take these tasks to a higher level. The goal is that children should always advance, without being pigeonholed. A

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[16] Interview with Erika Csovcsics. In: B.TIER (ed.), Alma a fán – Iskolavezetők a méltányos oktatásért ('Apple on the tree' – School leaders for equity and learning), Tempus Public Foundation, Budapest, 2015. http://oktataskepzes.tka.hu/hu/iskolavezetok-a-meltanyos-oktatasert

school as an institution can also show equity by regarding children as individuals, not just as members of some group, and differentiation serves that very purpose.[17]

A specific example of applying equity was the case of a first-grade little boy last year, who had attention deficit disorder and behavioural disorder, probably ADHD. He was aggressive and children were afraid of him. It was agreed that the teacher of special educational needs should work with him every day. After two months, the child began to integrate into the community, which means that through calculable and constant support from a teacher and in quiet circumstances they could change the formerly characteristic behavioural patterns.[18]

The experimental workshop itself also promotes strengthening social justice by the fact that, although it is a process generated and operated by the school head, there are no hierarchical elements in its operation, but it is based on partnership and allows a free collision of opinions and posing questions (any hierarchy may only arise from teachers' different attitudes and dominance). Everybody in this workshop is open, and they are here because they took it as a challenge. The school head considers it very important that only those should work here who really want to be involved in this creative and demanding work that requires a lot of energy and faith. It doesn't matter if in the meantime you realise that it's not exactly your goal or it's not what you mean by achievement. They let the ones who change their minds go, and look for those who can join them with fresh energies. For this reason, the leader keeps constant contact with her colleagues, invites feedback and they search for solutions together.

A concomitant of this path-finding stage, and also a part of the school's approach is the fact that you are allowed to make mistakes; if an initiative doesn't work, they'll try another method or another tool. They regularly invite professionals who know more about a certain field, from whom they can learn.

LEARNING

The professional workshop mainly exerts its direct impacts on shaping teachers' attitudes. It doesn't only apply to teachers who have been involved in the school development process since the beginning; the educational attitude has also changed with teachers who had formerly worked as a

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[17] Idib
[18] Ibid

member of a teaching staff, a well-established team, and belonged to a more innovative and committed circle of teachers than the average. By now, they all tackle issues or ask questions in a palpably different manner. Complementing the work conducted at the workshops through additional efforts, independently, studying the relevant specialised literature, or by searching for ICT tools and applications on the internet which can be motivating for children is more characteristic of younger colleagues. However, even teachers who formerly paid less attention to problems have started to look for solutions.

How much of the content of the workshops becomes real learning for them depends, according to the leader, on how much that particular knowledge is relevant to resolving problems concerning the children. There are some for whom – due to their personality – teaching doesn't present any frustration or other difficulties, whereas others need to rely on the methods and techniques taught here, such as restorative techniques (aimed at conflict management and community development), as well as directed discussion groups, learning new methods for developing reading comprehension or the use of the Arizona room.

The workshop session held on 8 April 2016 focused on game board pedagogy. The invited guest was the head of a 'tanoda' (afternoon school for extracurricular activities for disadvantaged children) in Told, a small dead-end village in Eastern Hungary[19], with great experience in using board games to motivate teaching and learning. The workshop was attended by the leader, 13 teachers, the social worker and 11 students from various age groups. The workshop began by trying some simple games; adults and children sat down together at the tables in random, mixed groups and tried 3 or 4 games. They were mostly games which don't require a lot of expensive accessories; they can be played with a few dice or marbles, using paper and a pen for counting or to draw a board. Each participant gladly and actively joined the games (except for one passive, introverted child), and the students and teachers jointly interpreted the rules of the games and learnt to apply them in practice. The workshop contributed to learning at the level of knowledge (short theoretical background), skills (applying game rules) as well as attitude (experiential learning, joyful learning). In the first half of the workshop, children stayed as long as they wanted, and when they had left, the workshop leader talked about game board psychology, the ways of use, his experiences and the most important

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[19] As a public benefit organisation, 'Igazgyöngy' Foundation conducts complex development work, with great emphasis on arts education and creating opportunities. They have been trying to find an answer to the difficult issue of integration in one of the most disadvantageous micro regions, the region of Berettyóújfalu. A member of the Foundation, Toldi Tanoda works with disadvantaged, mostly Roma, children and young people. Relying on the work of university students and freshly graduated volunteers, they seek to achieve changes with the children through learning support and other skills development projects. More information: www.igazgyongy-alapitvany.hu; www.ped2.hu

lessons learnt. The teachers maintained attention and concentration despite the fact that the workshop was halfway through, and they only became a little 'undisciplined' when the games were taken out again and they could continue learning their use. Besides gaining new knowledge, the workshop also played an important role in shaping views, trying new methods, experiential learning, strengthening relationships between students and teachers, teachers and teachers, as well as between the leader and the teachers, that is, community building.

As far as the target group is concerned, the cooperation also primarily generates changes in attitude and behaviour – the introduction of certain initiatives has a positive effect on teachability, managing common behavioural issues, as we can't talk about real teaching and learning as long as classroom conflicts are not resolved. As a result of their Pressley Ridge training, teachers revised and restricted the use of the IT room so children can play more outdoors. Using a calm, quiet tone with the children and avoiding shouting resulted in an atmosphere which was, if not harmonious, more calculable. That was achieved through a number of communication, aggression and conflict management training sessions, common learning and transformation. Children also need to learn how to get along with each other. The achievements, however minor, are discussed, and the teachers can rely on each other not only professionally, but also mentally and personally. In such hard circumstances, you need to keep some distance from the problem; nevertheless, when a teacher takes on a challenging case, establishing a closer relationship and trust between him or her and the child is inevitable. There is no dedicated supervision for teachers, although they received some training on that aspect; difficult situations are mostly resolved through humour, admitting being stuck or even "losing it", as well as through support given to each other.

By teaching in pairs, teachers can also monitor and support each other's work. This system was also integrated in the compulsory number of classes (24 per week), which is very useful, even though not common practice elsewhere. In the classroom, the colleague assigned to a teacher either supports teaching itself, classroom work and differentiation, or provides certain children individual development. Individual development is provided in a system carefully elaborated by a teacher of special educational needs, with continuous monitoring, assessment and self-assessment, which clearly shows the rate of improvement, relapses and children who show prolonged learning problems, that is, the ones who need individual development.

Teachers also support each other when visiting families, as the headmaster is accompanied by another teacher or sometimes a teacher of special educational needs, and ensure families that they wish to cooperate with the family in the child's interest.

FACILITATORS

The external circumstances that determine the existence of the workshop – that is, the social and economic environment in which the school operates – are constant; the professional challenges arise from everyday problems, the disadvantageous situation and the children with various learning and behavioural disorders. In these circumstances, challenges also become constant, and there is a continuous need to find solutions to learning and teaching issues, and the disadvantages and difficulties faced every day also keep colleagues together.

The partnerships with civil organisations and participation in various grant programmes ensure the expenses of the training provided at the workshops, or by funding the costs (grants) or providing training materials, trainers and professionals reached through a network of civil connections. Volunteering is also a part of these solutions, which the school wishes to turn into some reliable system.

As an external factor, the local government and the maintaining organisation have recently given support to the school; the local government, for example, supports the operation of the three-week summer day care after the academic year, initiated by the school, which is great help for parents. They also maintain good relations with professional partner institutions, special services, child protective services and civil organisations.

At an organisational level, as long as the workshop is still looking for the right direction, the profile of the school is not quite clear and the methodological tool kit is constantly expanding, the regular cooperation and common learning is justified (which, of course, also applies later). It is also important that the workshop was integrated in the structure; the sessions are held during regular working hours, as it would have been impossible to find suitable time slots for ad hoc workshops. Parents were also notified in writing of teachers' regular afternoon meetings, and asked to take their children home on Fridays (the simultaneous closing of the IT room also helped a lot).

At a group level, the workshop is supported by the attitude of the staff, their desire to do something, as well as their many years of experience in teaching disadvantaged children and ones from various sociocultural backgrounds.

At an individual level, it also helps a lot that, due to their achievements in the Step by Step programme years ago, now integrated in their educational practice, the teachers working here are open to new methods and practices, which might be less common elsewhere. All of the respondents consider these circumstances challenging and inspiring, despite the workload and problems.

BARRIERS

Since it is a relatively segregated school, there is a risk that they might not be able to attract children who are not disadvantaged, or by the time the new programme is fully elaborated, they may not have enough students.

Despite the teachers' commitment to teaching disadvantaged children and their individual motivations, at an organisational level it may be a risk that the main drive of the cooperation is the school head. The heavy workload on teachers and their everyday work burdened with students' various problems lead to an exhausted teaching staff. In the absence of the leader, they don't self-organise to hold these sessions; in fact, they are happy to get a 'break'. Time limit is also a problem: they have one and a half or two hours every week or every second week, which passes very quickly.

At a structural level, the simultaneous presence of a large number of methodological elements presents a difficulty, whose monitoring (integration into practice) requires a lot of time, energy, consistence and continuous feedback. It's also a problem that these elements haven't been combined in an integral unit yet; this step still needs to be taken.

Another risk of the experimental workshop is that the strict and rigid framework of conventional teaching makes teachers feel safe, while they are well aware that they should do it differently. As today's teachers were socialised in a former educational system with other methods, for them it's a challenge to be brave, creative and search for new ways.

At an individual level, most of the teachers (now) understand that this process is not just about the school generally, but a common cause, which needs common learning, otherwise the implementation won't happen, or at least not properly. Three or four teachers from the staff feel less committed to the cause; their outsider attitude may slow down or impede the process and becoming a real community. In lack of inner motivation, in their case the goal is not "forced" integration, but to help them find their own paths.

Annex

Report headings	Key words/ questions	Questions supporting the preparation of the case study	Questions to be used during the interview	Max. words
Context		What is the story of the institution(s) involved in the practice? How is the climate of the institution(s)? What is the local, regional or national context in which the practice is implemented?	What was the need for establishing the practice? (Was there any social or economic reason behind?)	500
Methodology		How was the practice identified? What was the methodology applied for data collection?		500
Practice	How is it happening?	Who is participating? (who, in what role) What is happening? (account of the good practice) What is the goal of the practice? How is it happening? What is the process? Why is it happening that way? Where is it happening? (location) When is it happening/ when did it happen? What are the expected results? --------------------------------------- What are the actual results? Were there any unexpected results? If yes, which were these?	How was the practice started? What were the initial aims? What was the participants' personal, professional and pedagogical motivation? What were the expected results? What are the elements of the process? What is happening? Why is it happening that way?	700
Participation	Involvement - community culture - decision making - innovation	How are teachers involved in the cooperation? Which stakeholders participate in the decision making process? How / to which extent supports the practice - the involvement of teachers in the decision making processes? - the deep learning of teachers? - the innovative ideas? How is knowledge sharing implemented? Does the practice include elements of strategic planning? Is there any reflection to policy?	How is the community organised? Is it an open or a closed community? Who are the participants? If there is a new idea, how it will be put into practice? Who takes the decisions? Are pupils/students or other stakeholders involved in the decision making process? Are there any innovations that were facilitated only be the interaction within the community? Do the community members have a vision? Are there any principles of	700

			operation that have to be accepted by all members of the community? Place the cooperation on a scale between 1 and 5. 1= information exchange; 5= collaborative learning. Why so?	
Depth	cooperation: - engagement - organisational implantation - individual learning process	How is the implantation of the practice to the organisation/ to the operation of the organisation/ to the structure of the organisation? How is the cohesion between the community and the organisation or within the community? How far do the teachers identify themselves with the community? How is the group culture? How / to which extent support the community members one another mentally, emotionally and from the professional point of view. How supports the community learning and creative community work?	Are there any meetings cancelled? When it comes to a meeting of the community, are there any consequences if one of the members does not show up? If there is a decision, how will it be implemented? Does the community keep track of the results of the decision? Do the teachers see themselves as a community? Is the motivation of participants external or internal? Does the process have an impact on the participants?	700
Equity	Compensation of disadvantages - access	To which extent enhances the practice compensating disadvantages? Which teaching methods are characteristic for the practice to enhance social justice? To which extent advances the practice equity in terms of process and/or results?	Is there any condition to participate? What happens if someone would like to join the community? Is there a hierarchy among the participants? Do the activities advance equity with respect to the target group? Are there specific examples?	700
Learning		How does the practice support deep learning of teachers/students/other stakeholders?	Does the process have an impact on learning outcomes of the target group? If yes, how and to which extent?	700

Facilitators	supporting factors	What are the personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics that support the practice?	What are the factors that made it possible to implement the practice? (personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics)	500
Barriers	(threats, risks)	What are the personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics that hamper the practice?	Are there any factors that endanger the implementation of the practice? (personal, structural, group, organisational and process characteristics)	500

When it comes to community work, the results can be evaluated only in a long term perspective from the efficiency point of view. Members need to "be well" and inspired in the environment where they work in order to be able to perform at a high quality level.

<u>Factors that might determine personal satisfaction</u> of teachers in a teachers' collaborative learning group:

- How far feels the teacher him/herself isolated professionally? vs How can the teacher connect to others?
- How far feels the teacher uncertainty vs professional certainty?
- Does group work support/ hamper
  - individual achievements?
  - professional dedication?
- Does the pressure that occurs during the collaboration support or hamper the performance of teachers?
- Is collaborative work voluntary or obligatory?
- What is the effect of challenges and difficulties on teachers? Do they feel inspired or threatened?

<u>Factors that might determine efficiency of work:</u>

- What can be the learning outcomes of collaborative learning in case of teachers?
- How can be learning outcomes of pupils/students improved by collaborative cooperation of teachers?

- What are the dimensions of learning outcomes?
- Are there any innovations generated during collaborative learning?
- Do the teachers explicitly help and assist one another during collaborative learning?
- What kind of help and assistance can be expected? (Physical-personal, giving advice, sharing material etc.)
- How deep can be professional issues discussed?

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Budai-Városkapu Primary School and Basic Arts School's Educational Programme:
http://www.budaivaroskapu.hu/docs/Ped_program_BVI.pdf