

Creative Curriculum Project 2017-19

Feedback and Evaluation Form – End of Whole Project

Q1 – How many teachers/non-teaching staff were involved in the project? How many pupils were affected by the project? Were other people (e.g. parents, external organisations etc.) involved in the project?

In the course of the project, 8 classes with more than 100 pupils and about 20 teachers actively worked on the topics of the project. It was thus possible to reach a large part of the school's 12 classes (by summer 2019). Colleagues of the active teachers were indirectly involved by working with them in classroom teams and participating in the lessons of the project.

The pupils who were not actively involved in the project learned about the project activities during the weekly assemblies that take place every Friday and at which the classes involved in the project presented their work. There are also photo walls in the school with project activities where pupils can inform themselves.

As part of the school festival, a large interactive exhibition of the project took place, where parents and the local public could gather information. Children presented their work and, together with their parents and other family members, experienced various activities offered in the different classes during the project lessons. This offer has been taken up by many families.

The entire college was repeatedly informed about the course of the project in conferences and invited to participate. The material produced during the project is available to all colleagues for class preparation.

At the end of the project, a first event took place in the whole college, where all colleagues agreed on a creative approach to a topic that would later be used for teaching purposes. As a result, a project week took place in September in which the entire school participated.

The project was actively represented on the school's homepage (in German) and the linked blog so that parents, pupils and the local public could gain a lively impression of the project activities at any time. We got a lot of interested and friendly feedback from people outside school who read the posts on the blog and the schools homepage.

The following external organisations were won over for cooperation in the course of the project: police, nature conservation association, quartz company Frechen, local swimming pool, fire brigade, fossil expert, school museum, butterfly house, falconry, F (public garden with beekeeper), airfield

Q2 – How do you feel about the project now? Did you get more energy and motivation? Was it a heavier workload?

At the beginning of the project, the workload was felt to be higher, due both to the lack of routine in dealing with creative lesson planning and to the fact that project activities had to be prepared in addition to regular lessons. Improving both aspects was an important part of the group's work in order to enable a long-term feasibility of creative learning beyond the end of the project. At the end of the project, the colleagues gave feedback that it had been possible to embed the project activities better into the curriculum's subject structure or to develop a more relaxed approach to it, as well as to gain a positive routine in the creative planning work. Thus, at the end of the project, the workload was not estimated to be higher than for any other lesson preparation.

The school's project group met two to three times during the project on each topic to facilitate planning, progress and evaluation. At each evaluation, the group formulated subgoals, which were recorded in the minutes and whose processing was incorporated into the discussion at the next meeting. Many partial goals were achieved (e. g. learning at extracurricular learning locations, creative approaches to planning, creation of a material pool), others have not yet been fully implemented, but may be pursued further in a modified way in the future (e. g. cooperation of several classes). The exchange in the group was experienced as helpful and inspiring and as an absolutely necessary factor of this kind of planning work. The experience and the development work of the project group have enabled a first implementation of bricks for a creative curriculum that affects the whole staff.

From beginning to end the colleagues gave feedback that the project work was an enrichment for all. Pupils showed themselves to be more motivated and were thus able to better regulate their behaviour. Through the holistic and action-oriented approach and highlight experiences, the pupils were more actively involved in the learning process, experienced themselves more effectively and were able to show in different contexts that their learning was significantly more sustainable than in traditional subject teaching. The enthusiasm of the pupils for these teaching contents led to satisfaction of the colleagues and to the willingness to continue the engagement. Initiated by itself, the group decided to continue planning project lessons as a group.

Q3 – Does this way of working fit with your National Curriculum? Why, or why not?

There were no problems with the curricula of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, as they primarily regard competences as binding and the content with which these competences are acquired is not the focus. The necessary competences were to be conveyed well within the framework of the project through interdisciplinary teaching.

In the course of the project, curriculum-relevant competences were taught in the following subjects: Mathematics, German, English, General subjects, Music, Art, Textile Design, Sports

Q4 – Which key points will you take away with you and integrate into your curriculum and practice? Which points do you feel were not as relevant?

We would like to continue or expand further:

- the project-related collaborative work in the group.
After an initial overload due to many additional appointments, it was possible to anchor the meetings of the project group firmly in the school's conference structure, so that they now take place during the attendance time of the colleagues.
- Creative meeting with the whole staff to prepare project lessons, which will be offered throughout the school (possibly as project weeks).
After the positive response of the first creative meeting, which was the prelude to a first school-wide project week, we will look for organisational forms to continue and further develop the creative meetings and, as a result, to organise project-oriented, creative work on school-wide common themes, possibly in the form of project weeks.
- material fund
The creation of material boxes for the individual topics further develops a model that the school started a few years ago. These boxes contain:
 - all materials related to the topic that have been procured from Erasmus funds (or school's own funds),
 - short instructions for action and photo documentations about the lessons carried out
 - a data stick with all files used by the colleagues on the topic or files they have created themselves (worksheets, blackboard material for printing, films, music, etc.)
 - a list of private materials that colleagues keep at home and are willing to borrow.These boxes are intended to be constant added, thus the school's collection of materials that can be used for creative teaching is growing constantly.
- Anchoring the exhibition of educational works and a programme of activities for families in the concept of the annual school festival (if possible with a school-wide theme), in order to increase the transparency of our work, to create occasions for communication between children and their families and thus to take a first step towards an improved participation of the whole family in school events.

One point of discussion in the group was whether it might be useful not to work on the same topic at the same time, but one after the other, so that one could benefit better from the ideas of the others. On the other hand, there is the possibility that the pupils exchange ideas about a subject beyond the classroom and that their identification with the school as a community, which has many things in common, improves. This discussion will be continued in the future.

Q5 – Any other comments?

What have we taken with us from the other European schools?

Many of the steps in school development described above were largely inspired by the concepts presented by Dales School as part of the project. Both the content approach and organisational aspects have proved to be very helpful to us in our own discussions.

Teaching ideas presented by the other schools in the blog or during the international meetings have always been the starting point for the schools' own discussion of the topic and their own teaching design. For example, the complex sewage treatment plant models of the school in Vialonga were turned into a simple water filter system in the first year of our school. Creative games to improve group dynamics, which a Danish colleague presented during our meeting, found their way into the everyday life of our school or the motorical challenges of the Catalan "Challenge"-topic were reflected in the "Time"-boxes, which were created for creative leisure activities in our school. The paper airplane competitions were held in all schools.