

Switzerland (Bern)

Institut Beatenberg

The learners are aged 12 to 17 years, and often arrive at this private boarding school after negative school experience. The learning is organized in mixed-age and mixed ability teams, with both individual and group learning. The regular school day lasts from 7am to 6pm. The time units are longer than single lessons, and cover subject setting (mathematics, German, French, and English), 'Aktivs' (for Science, arts, creative, manual, and sports interests), with the majority devoted to individualized learning in learning teams. The last three units of each week are devoted to summing up, reflecting on the activities of the week, presenting results to the community, updating portfolios, and finalizing the weekly work plan. Each learning team has access to a big workroom as an open plan space in which learners cooperate and engage in peer learning. Each young person has a personal workplace and 'home base'. The ordinary programme of instruction is regularly interrupted by several days devoted to projects and service learning.

Main Focus of Innovation: LEARNERS, TEACHERS, CONTENT, RESOURCES, ORGANIZATION

Other Keywords: alternative philosophy

General Information

Name of the ILE: Institut Beatenberg

Location/Address: Waldegg CH-3803 Beatenberg

Website: <http://www.institut-beatenberg.ch/>

Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

- Consistent focusing on the sustainable success of the individual learner on the basis of personal aims (competence to form its individual personality) and social involvement/relatedness.
- Needs and strength/potential orientated learning culture with variable structures; the training of all teachers/facilitators to become “LernCoaches” (Learning Coaches: facilitators).
- Elaborated system of settings and tools with the aim to foster the learners’ competence in subjects like mathematics, foreign language as well as methodical/ metacognitive and social competencies.

Evidence

Is there any evidence or indications showing that this initiative achieves the outcomes that it is aiming at?

- Periodical evaluation by the learners
- Diploma thesis of the University of Flensburg
- Master Thesis of the “Pädagogische Hochschule Zentralschweiz PHZ”¹
- Numerous national and international publications
- Quality control and development system “2Q” (for further information: www.erz.be.ch/site/biev-qes-broschuere-2q.pdf)
- The concept of this school has found large interest inside and outside Switzerland:
 - The institute Beatenberg regularly receives visits from other schools and interested professionals
 - Part of its publicity is due to intensive activities in continuing education (www.learningfactory.ch)
 - Campus Zollikerberg, a private school near Zürich, has implemented the whole pedagogical concept within a day school (www.campus-zollikerberg.ch)
 - Many schools have adopted parts of the pedagogical concepts, among which:

Max-Brauer-Schule, Hamburg, Germany
 Gemeinschaftsschule Lübscher Kamp, Itzehoe, Germany
 Greenhouse School, Graal-Müritz, Germany
 Theresianum Ingenbohl, Brunnen, Switzerland
 Tagesschule Brüningen, Meiringen, Switzerland.

¹ „PHZ“ is a (tertiary) Teacher Training College/School of central Switzerland

Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

Self-forming competence

- Knowledge: knowledge which is available/applicable if requested by situations and needs (contrary: isolated knowledge which cannot be applied if needed)
- Skills: know how – multifaceted methodical and strategic repertoire
- Attitudes: relation to oneself, to others, to the objects/things, Self-responsibility, pleasure in constructive handling/mastering of resistance

Self-effectiveness/efficiency

- Experience that the own learning leads to success. Construction and development of the belief in the own abilities.

Ability to connect, connectedness

- Access/connection to relevant life situations – to further education as well as personal-social aims

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

50 to 60 adolescents of the age 12-17 years from all social classes

Most of the adolescents come to the “Institut Beatenberg” because of negative school experience.

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

The team is composed of persons with classical teacher education/training as well as persons with different professional experience and background.

Besides an intensive internal training, the teachers/facilitators must follow courses to become “LernCoaches”.

Each coach takes care of a group of about 12 adolescents. Two to three of such groups form a Learning Team. Therefore the coaches always work also as a team.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?

The “Institut Beatenberg” created learning environments that integrally join/combine individual support and collective learning.

In mixed-age and mixed-achievement *learning-teams* the learners work individually and/or in groups on individual projects/intentions/enterprises and personally relevant goals.

Subject settings, i.e. intensive trainings and subject-oriented workshops/ateliers in small groups, provide the opportunity to systematically construct domain specific competence, particularly in areas of mathematics and language

Are called “Aktiv” those daily arrangements, which consider creative, manual, and sportive interests.

Regularly, “Special Learning Days”, “Service Learning” and “Units” (projects) lay focus on certain content/domain-specific and methodical/metacognitive aspects.

A regular school day lasts from 7:00 in the morning until 18:00 in the evening, including a 90 minute break at lunchtime and 30 minute breaks in the morning and afternoon, respectively. It encompasses 4 units (so no structure of single lessons). 4 units of 105 minutes are attributed to the *subject settings* (one for mathematics, German, French, and English/ICT, respectively). The afternoons of Monday to Thursday close with 120 minutes for “Aktivs” (Friday afternoon is free). 10 units – thus the main part of the learning time – is reserved for *learning teams*. While students are learning individually or in groups most of this time, the three last units of each week are dedicated to summing up and reflecting the activities and learning processes of each week (considering among others cross curricular competences), having students present results to the community, updating the portfolios, and finalizing the weekly work plan.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

Each learning team has access to a big workroom (kind of open plan office). The learning team follows the principle of learning from each other and learning with each other. This means: all learners are always also to a certain degree pedagogues. Each child has a personal workplace and so has a “home base”. Attributed to the learning teams is a “do-it-yourself-store”, which contains books, reference books, learning materials and “Lernjobs” (learning jobs).

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

The “Institute Beatenberg” was founded in 1945 as children’s home. 1975 the transformation in a boarding school took place. Since 1985, the “Institut” has permanently striven for innovation in collaboration with other institutions and the science.

In the context of social change in society, the constructive handling with diversity became more and more important.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

The “Institut” is funded by school tuitions that are for the most part paid by public authorities (cantons, municipalities), mainly for children with a difficult school biography. The teacher-student relation is similar as in public schools – in this view, portability to public schools is possible.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

With regard to contents, learning is based on competence grids. They form the functional benchmark. Related to them, the learners formulate the steps of development in form of aims/goals. The outcome is then measured and reflected against these goals. The individual learning history is captured in portfolios. The personal coaching is, among others, aimed at enabling the learners to reflect their learning and social behaviour and to permanently develop their competencies in these fields.

Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE

Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)

Detailed descriptions of the “Institut Beatenberg” can be found in numerous publications and documentary films.

Some background history can also be found on the website: www.institut-beatenberg.ch

You can find the learning concept and the basic principles thereto under: www.updatenet.net/english

Research papers are available from the University Flensburg and the PHZ

Besides the Institut Beatenberg has been working for more than 15 years with the quality system “2Q”.

Other information you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE

Complement of Erich Ramseier: I asked the school leader to narrowly answer, since this really innovative institute is well known, very well documented and much information can be submitted if needed (cf. p. 98 in Sliwka, A. (2008). The Contribution of Alternative Education. In OECD (Ed). Innovating to Learn, Learning to Innovate (pp. 93-112). Paris: OECD.)