Czech Republic

Zakladni skola Praha 2, Londynska 34

This elementary school for students aged 6 to 15 years uses team-teaching in heterogeneous groups. Emphasis is placed on interactions between students and peer education to foster the students' social development. Students can participate in the planning of learning activities and have a say in the choice of subjects, both in classroom and via a school parliament. Four times a year, students receive formative verbal evaluation reports. They also regularly write self-evaluations, which are bundled in a portfolio. The school is open for ideas and feedback, for this purpose, the school collects and evaluates empirical data and there are frequent staff meetings, teachers' portfolios, etc. The school is open for visitors at all time.

Main Focus of Innovation: TEACHERS, ORGANISATION

General Information

Name of the ILE: Zakladni skola, Praha 2, Londynska 34

Location/Address: Prague, Londynska 34, 120 00

Website: www.londynska.cz

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

We have experience with creating and utilizing of innovative environment and realization of innovative educational strategies. Support of innovative trends has a long tradition at our school. The school has experience with participation in national and international projects.

New components are continuously integrated into educational environment of our school. They come from contemporary world. Our ILE try to anticipate demands that students will have to face and solve in their practical as well as personal life.

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)

Functional literacy in all educational fields; ability to think, logical reasoning, problem solving, ability to communicate, ignite interest and facilitate the need for further education in our students. For aims setting we often draw upon our own empirical experience (based on data collected from our teachers, students, and their parents and/or guardians).

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?

This ILE is the elementary school concentrating on pupil personality and individual development. Whoever fits the age and school law criteria is eligible to take part. Total number of pupils is 560: 6 – 15 years; some pupils finish at the age of 16.

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

Teachers/facilitators: 53 people altogether, average age of 35, age range 24-67, including 9 males. **Leaders:** headmaster, 3 deputy headmasters, garants of all grade teams, leader of foreign language instruction, leader of after school programme. **Professional backgrounds:** master degrees, three of them study in PhD. programme, others participate in critical thinking courses and in any alternative activities. **Roles of teachers in this ILE:** diagnostician, guide, consultant, facilitator, support in learning, teaching conceptions creator, innovator, social model, mentor, activity organizer, ethical values bearer, interpersonal relationship cultivator, class and school manager, administrator, coordinator, supervisor, consultant, initiator of activities and changes, education expert, role model.

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?

Pupils are directed to organize their learning according to their personal potential and individual possibility and build on their prior learning. Classes are run mostly in heterogeneous peer groups. During school projects groups can be formed consisting of pupils from various grade levels. We try to apply different forms, methods, and strategies of education. We also try to lead mutual interaction to maximum. Pupils have space not only to ask questions but also to present their ideas and help specify their educational aims. Pupils have the right to disagree with teachers.

Example one: Teacher lists examples of international terrorism and presents some ideas of how to deal with it. Then the pupils are asked to pick their own example they want to discuss in the next lesson. The pupils prepare the information to support their ideas.

One of students is asked to be a discussion leader. Teacher is presented as one of the people contributing to discussion, but also has the right of last word.

Example two: Pupils have the opportunity to utilize school parliament to raise their comments, complaints, and suggestions which to be presented to teachers. They don't have to obey the requests but always have to get back to the students and explain their viewpoint.

The expected outcomes connected with cross-cutting themes listed in the school programme are designed for positive develop of emotional part of a pupil's personality as well as their social development. The methods favoured by the school (such as team learning) are also tools providing social development of pupils. We intentionally create heterogeneous classes in which gifted students meet with students with special needs, pupils with various family, cultural, and social background.

We also would like to mention the use of constructivist learning, when we activate acquired skills, knowledge, we utilize the awareness of 'cognitive need' when the pupil realizes his lack of knowledge for particular problem solving. It motivates him to learn.

One of the pillars of our work is education in consequences (in context). Without building on formerly acquired knowledge and experience (prior learning), this principle could not be practiced.

Pupils are guided to independent learning. There is always feedback and correction by teacher (or other pupils) available. We often practice team teaching in pairs, groups, as well as larger teams (temporary or permanent groups/teams; permanent in language training particularly).

Student can also drive his/her specialization in regard to the theme being taught. In case of talent and interest, the pupil can attend selected subject instruction; he/she can pick a way of feedback (evaluation); can choose school materials (we do not demand books); lastly, the homework submission allows the option of processing.

Metacognitional development happens also as one of the tools of searching for optimal personal learning strategy. Pupils are led to periodical self-evaluation, which is discussed with them afterwards. These facts can be observed in students' portfolios, which include self-evaluation papers as well as examples of students´ work (selected by students and teachers).

Curriculum and pedagogy concepts: Free Elementary School (own school educational programme based on Framework Educational Programme for Basic Schools); constructivist learning, critical thinking, problem learning, team instruction, peer education.

Problem learning is one of the favoured methods at our school. This method is most often applied in the initial phase of new chapter exposure and then later when checking if the expected outcome was met. A pupil is faced with a problem that should be solved by application of acquired skills – new skills and prior learning. These skills needed for particular problem solving can be acquired in different subjects as well.

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?

Learning takes place in the school building as well as in external environment. The lack of space caused by the age of our building (115 years old) is being compensated by built-in wooden levels inside of our classrooms (everywhere, with the exception of two classrooms). Decorations around our school come from our students directly (paintings, posters, and statues). Outcomes of projects are continuously presented in our hallways.

A bell does not ring at our school. Time organization, with its barriers, corresponds to the modern pedagogical approach.

Parents´ involvement

We try to incorporate pupils' families into our school life even before these children become our students. We run meetings with children and parents, we invite parents and other members of community to visit our school (this visit is anytime available as we are "open" school). These visits bring us useful feedback. We take the inputs into serious consideration.

We regularly run "tripartite meetings" where teacher meets with pupil and at least one of the pupil's parents and/or guardians.

We also cooperate with "Clovek v tisni" organization (People in Need) and attend Prague cultural events very often.

History of ILE

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

It was initiated by Jaroslav Kotal – former school headmaster. An attempt of creating modern open school preparing independent personalities was at the beginning of the process. The reasons for change are still the same. Some aspects given by legislature changes have occurred – like the duty to create of own SEP (school education programme).

We were among the first ten pilot schools to do so. (It was experimental verification of new school programmes created due to Framework Educational Programme for Basic Schools as a first step of curriculum reform.)

Thanks to the fact that our school is well known among pedagogical experts as pro-innovative we were able to put together body of teachers who want to share the visions of school development. Ideas and opinions of our teachers are frequently detected (Q sorting, culture gap determination, questionnaires, regular personal meetings and comments on teacher portfolios, etc.) Teachers work in grade teams, support and complement each other. Further support comes also from our school leadership.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

By state budget and budget of Prague 2.

Learning Outcomes

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

We gain information about school climate, educational results, pupils' needs, meta-cognitive skills development, social abilities of pupils, ideas and views of parents and/or guardians. We get this information through frequent self-evaluations such as questionnaires, personal discussions, pedagogical observations, comparison testing (Scio), Q sorting, cultural gap measures, etc. All pupils have their own student portfolios, which are organized by subjects and selected by pupil and teacher together. Outcomes are recorded in pupils´ Zaznamnik z Londynske - Report Book, printed separately for each grade, containing a complete summary of expected outcomes for each school year and including figures of evaluation. Design of report book is linked with yearly grade project: title, cover, self-evaluation figures come from main idea of the project.

In all grades of our school pupils receive verbal evaluation reports – formative ones four times a year and also verbal final report in June (school year in Czech Republic: September – June). Students´ self-evaluations are run at least three times a year in a verbal or graphic format.

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)

We keep on writing our school chronicle, web page (www.londynska.cz) to be daily updated (activity plans, homework, project presentations, information for parents, school activities, yearly plans), we participate in international project (Global School For the 21st Century) which gives us useful reflection.
We often find out positive reviews from parents who want to enrol their children for our school.