

## Denmark

**Pedagogical Platform**

*The underpinning objective of this ILE is to promote four integrated 'life competences' in the learners: competences of knowledge, of self-assessment, of conduct, and of 'being'. All learners are assigned to two large groups – one for those aged 6-9 years and one for those aged 10-13 years – and smaller groups (the 'home groups') of about 12 learners each, with teaching and learning alternating between the larger and smaller groups. Soon 14-15 year-olds will be included. Each learner has a plan for interpersonal and educational development ('the child's storyline') with individual meetings between each learner and a teacher each two months to review progress according to the plan. Portfolios are an essential feature – all learners work with three different portfolios: the working portfolio, the selection portfolio (more formal and focused), and the presentational portfolio (2-3 products from each subject). The school design is as a triangle, representing the three age groups, the three specialized subject fields – culture and communication, science, and music and aesthetics - and this new complex also houses, as well as the school, a community centre and parish centre.*

**Main Focus of Innovation:** LEARNERS, CONTENT, RESOURCES, ORGANISATION

**General Information**

**Name of the ILE:** Pedagogical Platform

**Location/Address:** Lisbjergskolen, Lisbjergvej 15, 8200 Århus N.

**Website:** [Http://www.lisbjergskolen.skoleintra.dk](http://www.lisbjergskolen.skoleintra.dk)

**ILE submitted by:** The Resource Centre of Integration, The Child and Youth Department, Municipality of Aarhus

**Rationale**

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

The rationale of the Innovative Learning Environment project “Pedagogical Platform” is to encourage and qualify children and young people to become self-directed, self-reflected and self-evaluative learners. Supporting and developing these interpersonal educational capacities and skills is not only important for a successful economy, but is the very foundation for an effective participatory democracy. For this reason the school of today needs to pay attention to more than just succeeding within the normal field of education if it wants to stay abreast with the learning challenges of the 21st century. Lisbjergskolen has for some years been working with an innovative, dynamic and holistic approach to interpersonal education, showing good results that might bring inspiration to others.

**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)*

The Pedagogical Platforms main objective is to qualify the pupils’ ability to act independently and to become self-directed, self-reflected and self-evaluative learners.

**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?*

The Pedagogical Platform is founded on a holistic approach and is therefore thought to include all pupils at the school. The proposed innovative learning environment is therefore not aiming for the specific inclusion of a certain targeting group, but is aiming for the overall inclusion of all pupils.

For the time being there are 216 pupils covering the age range 6 to 13 years representing the classes from pre-school class (0. class) to 7th class. The age group of pupils covering the age range 14 to 15 years (the upper end of the primary school – 8. and 9. class) will in the near future be included as well as the school has just moved to a new and much larger complex.

**Facilitators**

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

The staff consists at present of 16 teachers, seven educationists and two assisting educationists. Teachers and educationists work close together. The school management is constituted by four leaders: The Head Teacher, the Head of Education, the Head of Administration and the Head of the School Leisure Time Facilities. The first three are all trained teachers. The Head Teacher is also Master of Arts in Education. The Head of the School Leisure Time Facilities is a trained educationist.

Every single person within the staff (teachers and educationists) as well as the leaders of the school are committed to follow the principles laid out in the Pedagogical Platform. The Pedagogical Platform is thus not only dependent on the commitment of a single innovator but enjoys a broader organisational foundation. The Head Teacher has the overall responsibility of making sure that the pedagogic and didactic guidelines are actually being followed.

## 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 pupils and teams of teachers/educationalists are organized according to two different groups. The first group corresponds to pupils covering the age range of 6 to 9 years and the second group to pupils covering the age range of 10 to 13 years. Within the two larger groups – but cut across the different core classes – the pupils are organized into smaller groups of approximately 12 pupils per group. These groups go under the name “home groups” and have one or two teachers/educationalists as primary grownups.

The teaching is differentiated and alternates between work within the bigger and the smaller groups. Both teachers and educationists are working together in a close teamwork.

The school is working on the ground of a common frame of pedagogic and didactic principals which constitutes the Pedagogical Platform. The overall objective of the Pedagogical Platform is to promote four integrated and holistic “life competences” among the pupils. These are:

- Competences of knowledge
- Competences of self assessment
- Competences of conduct
- Competences of “being”

To make the objectives mentioned above tangible and assessable each pupil has a Plan for Interpersonal, Educational Development. These plans go under the name “the child’s storyline”.

Every second month individual teacher-pupil feedback/assessment sessions are being held. On these pupil-teacher sessions the Plan for Interpersonal, Educational Development (“the child’s storyline”) is discussed on basis of the work with portfolios. The aims previously set are evaluated and new aims are formulated. The pupils’ primary teacher is responsible for putting these aims into writing.

Working with portfolios plays a vital part in making the plan for interpersonal, educational development concrete and focused for the pupil’s in the daily work.

The portfolios are used as a collection of the pupil’s work that tells the story of pupil achievement and development over time. The portfolios are also used for self-assessment and as an assessment tool for the regular pupil-teacher feedback sessions. Last the portfolios are used as an important instrument for the parents-teachers meetings.

All pupils are working with three different portfolios; these are: working -, selection - and presentational portfolios.

*The working portfolio* contains almost all of the pupil’s work in progress (physically contained in a cardboard box for the youngest pupils, and in a large ring binder for the other pupils)

*The selection portfolio* is more formal and focused than the working portfolio and contains a more limited part of the pupil’s work. It is the subject teachers who have the responsibility for the work with the selection portfolio as for taking care of collecting the different documentation needed. In subjects where the work does not involve or result in paper documentation, pictures and recorded sound can be used.

Finally *the presentational portfolio* contains two to three products from each subject that has been carefully chosen in dialog with the pupil’s primary teacher who has the overall responsibility for the work with the presentational portfolio. The presentational portfolio is kept by the primary teacher and the pupil is being given a copy to show at home.

Curriculum and teaching guidelines for the different age groups and for the individual subjects are approved by the Ministry for Education and therefore do not differ from other public schools. But how these aims are to be achieved – the methods and the means used – is to a certain degree very much up to the different schools to choose.

The subject teachers are handing out the central guidelines according to curriculum and teaching guidelines for the different age groups. Each pupil must apprehend these guidelines' in his or hers work within the different subjects. All this is under the careful guidance of the teachers. Approximately five objectives are then chosen in dialog with the pupil. The exact number depends on the specific subject, age group and topic.

Subsequently the pupil chose to focus on three objectives in his or hers future work. These objectives/goals are set to help the pupil to set concrete assessment criteria's and to become more organized and self-directed.

After the work has ended the subject teacher helps the pupil to select work to include for the selection portfolio. Working with the selection portfolio in close dialog with the teachers/educationalists helps the pupil to set concrete assessment criteria's and hereby becoming a more self-reflected learner.

One of the clear advantages is that focus is on individual work and development. The pupils' work and learning progress is compared with other work and learning progress by the same pupil, rather than with other, maybe stronger pupils.

### **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?*

In August 2008 Lisbjergskolen changed address and moved to a newly constructed complex. The new school is a four storey structure with an open plan ground floor. The three upper floors houses the three main subject fields' areas and the three core classroom areas – all physically linked to each other via a central atrium. The atrium functions as the school's assembly hall. The new school is designed as a triangle. The triangle symbolises the three age groups that in the near future will be represented at the school and the schools three specialised subject fields – 1) Culture & Communication, 2) Science and 3) Music & Aesthetics. In addition the new complex houses three main functions: School, community centre and parish centre. The community centre includes sports and music facilities for the local inhabitants to use in the evenings, weekends and holiday periods. The parish community centre is integrated in the ground floor but can be used both during and outside school hours.

No community resources are used to facilitate the learning.

Close and trustfully cooperation between parents and teachers is an essential part of the schools practise. Two times a year the parents are called to individual meetings with the teachers/educationalists. The Plan for Interpersonal, Educational Development (“the child's storyline”) together with the presentational portfolio plays a central role in these parent-teacher meetings as the teachers/educationalists' presentation regarding the pupils performances and the angle of departure of the dialog between parents and teachers is based here upon.

### **History of ILE**

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

The project was initially started in 1996 and was initiated by the school management in close dialog with the staff. Experiences of that time about the cooperation among teachers and educationalists revealed that the pedagogical and didactic angel of departure in relation to how the two groups worked with the pupils were very various. The Pedagogical Platform was consequently designed and implemented with the purpose to facilitate a common ground of pedagogical and didactic departure for both teachers and educationalists.

**Funding of the ILE***How is it funded?*

The school is an ordinary public school and thereby is run by public funding. The Danish School system is supported by tax-based governmental and municipal funding from day care through primary and secondary education to higher education. There are no tuition fees for regular students in public schools.

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

The school's "quality report" – a common assessment tool that all schools are required to use by law for monitoring and comparing different standard measures – shows that the number of parents who are satisfied with the school's ability to facilitate an environment that promotes a high degree of well-being for the pupils are high (85 % compared to 69 % as an average in the municipality).

80 % of the parents compared to 66% as an average in the municipality answers that they think the school is very supportive when it comes to the encouragement of the pupils' ability to make up their own opinion on matters.

The Plan for Interpersonal, Educational Development and portfolios are continuously being used as assessment tools. The Plan for Interpersonal, Educational Development is consequently used in conjunction with teacher-pupil feedback and parent-teacher meetings.