

Hungary

Deák Diák Általános Iskola (Deák Diák Primary School)

This school has students aged 6 to 14 (an extension by three grades is planned) from a wide range of socio-cultural backgrounds, including students with special educational needs. Its objective is to offer a safe learning environment for children from all layers of society, and to help the children develop tolerance in heterogeneous learning groups. Different events, like a yearly campsite trip and various one-day school programmes are used to maintain a strong sense of school community. Most students stay in school for the whole day, with after-school activities in the afternoon. One innovative instructional method is a year-long scientific project that students conduct each year on a self-chosen topic, leading to a final written work. The school uses central topics to connect areas of the curriculum and is engaged in an ICT pilot project to make use of 1:1 pedagogical systems. There is an active cooperation between staff, parents, and former students. Teachers engage in collaborative learning and peer teaching.

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

Other Keywords: equity

General Information

Name of the ILE: Deák Diák Általános Iskola (Deák Diák Primary School)

Location/Address: H-1081 Budapest, Köztársaság tér. 4.

Website: www.deakdiak.hu/

ILE submitted by: The Hungarian ILE Steering Group

Rationale

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

Heterogeneity as a basic means of organisation has clearly been declared in our pedagogical programme right from the beginnings. In the continuously segregating Hungarian school system we are trying to offer a safe and helping learning environment for children coming from every layer of society. It is our belief that it is only the holistic approach that can fully contribute to the harmonic development of children. In order to achieve the above, we find it vital and consciously plan our everyday school life in a way that our students develop in a surrounding mentioned above while doing varied activities full of challenges.

Our forms are fully heterogeneous. The basis of learning is living in a strong, keeping school society. In order to achieve this, we plan our life in a way that our pupils become more and more tolerant while taking part in the various school programmes. At the same time, their relationships with each other can become stronger. Strong societies are enforced by the positive experiences children have together thus having the story of their own, a past of their own and this helps us handle conflicts. Lower primary grades all have two class masters who share teaching tasks and take turn in organising the afternoon life of the students. All lower primary students all stay in the school for the whole day, learning together and playing together. More than 2/3 of our upper primary students spend the afternoon in the school, preparing together for the next day.

To reinforce the feeling of belonging somewhere, the whole school go to a campsite not far from the capital at the beginning of every school year. It is only the first graders who stay in the school, although they visit their schoolmates and spend a whole day at the campsite. Special one-day school programmes, as well as Santa parties, class Christmas parties, class concerts, fancy dress days are all occasions where children can get to know the talents of their fellow students and can have fun together. Not only the occasions themselves but also, the organisation periods of them help building a strong school society. Another major event of every school year is the one-week forest school in the life of every form. These events are organised according to how they are defined in the pedagogical programme. Their main aims are developing social skills, the consciousness of the environment, health education as well as getting to know their country in a meaningful way.

We are designing a learning atmosphere in which we can use the modern IT equipment and our pedagogical resources in a way that we help each other. PCs have been taken out from the IT room, thus we could design several places (in front of the staff room, in front of the library) with internet connection for our students, as well as a separate classroom where PCs can be used to facilitate learning any kind of subject. Our classrooms are furnished with mobile pieces so that modern cooperative techniques can be performed successfully. Our teachers have got acquainted with the newest methods at several trainings, but peer teaching is also an important way of teacher development in our school. Quite a few colleagues of ours have taken part in designing the new competence-based programmes and their testing and adaptations have been done at our school for years now. Preparation for using ICT equipment in classes has been organised in a similar way.

The music school (Schola Cantorum Budapestiensis) has been present in our school for ten years now and they help the development of our students with a special music programme. Their work is characterized by making music and singing together of several generations. Their education starts from Gregorian tunes to the full repertoire of the world of music. Students can take part in several bands according to their talents and tastes. The great choir of the music school plays an important role in the music life of the country at a national level having published more than ten CDs. Their contribution to the successful development of SEN students is vital.

When producing our first pedagogical programme we thought over all the areas of running a school with a special focus on how it can contribute to the perfect development of our students.

We introduced a good number of techniques, which have become parts of the national practice since then (projects, scientific work, formative assessment, etc.).

In the 90s we were among the first to introduce the essay type formative assessment as soon as we had the legal possibility. As we had already been a so-called inclusive school, we found it important to assess our pupils compared to them as well. In order to make it possible for every student to show his talent, we designed a scientific project. This has become a school-wide programme ever since, which can be joined in several ways. The programme is started every school year and it can be joined either individually or as member of a group. It is practically a written work, the topic of which can be anything ranging from the school curriculum to any part of life or an imaginary world.

During the creation process, the students gather materials, measure, count, read, argue and as a result of the process, a piece of written work is handed in. At a certain point of the year, these works are displayed and the exhibition is visited by students, teachers and parents. The assessment of the works is done by the visitors who can share their ideas and opinion on separate sheets. The event has become one of the most looked forward events of every school year. It helps reaching several pedagogical goals such as development of mother tongue competences, development of digital writing skills, developing global knowledge and social skills.

In the past years, the question of how can our students most effectively be trained and prepared for lifelong learning has come into our focus. One of the effective techniques, on the one hand, is the above mentioned scientific project work. On the other hand, we have designed and tested a possible way of project-based learning. The pilot project has reached our eighth graders, based on which we are planning the changing pedagogical system of the 5th and 6th grades from this school year. The main idea beyond this is that each year we choose a given central topic connected to the curriculum and the major part of the learning process is done around this. Cooperation has a main role in this work as students work in groups of four. Work is planned and done with the help of our ICT facilities. The website of the fifth graders where students load their work can be reached from the school's site. This way, not only the parents can get more informed about their child's learning but we have the possibility to show children a modern means of sharing information. This method helps children at different levels develop together. It also develops creativity and gives a direct connection to real life as well. While doing the activities, we have the possibility of developing all skills and competences at the same time. The topics of the several grades so far: grade 5 – The farm, g 6 – Planning a village holiday, g 7 – Compiling the brochure of a travelling agency, g 8 – Planning an own business. In years 5 and 6 the project is built around science, while in years 7 and 8 around geography. The project is built up of several smaller subprojects kept together by two umbrella projects. One of the two is the topic around which the curriculum content is organised while the other is the chronicle of the school year, the earlier mentioned written scientific work.

From the school year 2007/2008 we have taken part in the pilot project on testing CMPCs, in which we focus on the possibility of the 1:1 pedagogical system. This project is supported by the Partners in learning programme of the Educational Agency, Intel Hungary and Microsoft. All the work is done with the help of their own student PCs. Both the technical environment and the digital content make the most modern ways of parallel development possible and these are really popular with children.

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)

As presented in the introductory part, both our students' social skills and meta-cognitive strategies are focused on. We find self-assessment and peer assessment crucial in our work as these are the ways through which our students can get to know themselves better and can develop an objective way of assessing their fellow students and the world around them. This is strongly facilitated by the earlier presented scientific work and the cooperative work-forms we use.

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?

All the learners in our school take part in the work, this means 390 students. The age range of students is between 6 and 14, out of which 10% are SEN (Special Educational Needs) students. 5% of our children need special aids in learning, 20% are *cumulatively underprivileged*, while 30% are *underprivileged*. They come from a very wide range of socio-cultural backgrounds, their families being on all ends of society. This as well makes it very important to have standard and generally accepted values in school life to which all students, teachers and families stick. At the same time, this is what makes our school open in the full meaning of the word, as everyone can enter the school at any time of the day.

Facilitators

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

All the teachers in our school take part in the work. The two leaders are Éva Wagner and Tamás Farczádi Bencze.

Éva Wagner has taken part in numerous educational projects in the past decades. She has worked in several educational development teams, designing new ways and methods required by modern pedagogy. At the same time she has worked as a teacher trainer for many years.

Tamás Farczádi Bencze has worked as a teacher trainer for years. He has taken part in several educational projects with a special focus on EFL (English as a foreign language) teaching. He is one of the authors of a book on modern foreign language methodology published in 2006 and used as course material at twelve universities in Hungary.

The teachers in the school are relatively highly educated considering the requirements for primary school teachers. All the staff is open to innovative methods and have taken part in a good number of trainings.

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 local curriculum, based on the National Curriculum, is based on the earlier presented views and concepts. The digital information sharing platforms (website, e-mail, SMS, etc.) are used not only during the teaching/learning period, but it has gradually been introduced in the afternoon activities as well. The system is target-oriented, it is constantly revised and its focus is on being holistic, needs and child oriented.

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?

Our classrooms are furnished with mobile pieces so that modern cooperative techniques can be performed successfully. Our teachers have been acquainted with the newest methods at several trainings, but peer teaching is also an important way of teacher development in our school. Quite a few colleagues of ours have taken part in designing the new competence-based programmes and their testing and adaptations have been done at our school for years now. One of the most important factors in our work is the relation with the parents and the child community, which greatly helps the learning potential. The parents can always enter the school without disturbing the learning activity. There is an active cooperation between the staff and the parent community. Our former students all have a very strong connection with the school and take an active part in our extracurricular life, such as summer camps, balls, and other free time activities.

History of ILE

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

The school has had a very constant staff for decades now and for a very long time we have been open to every change. As all the teachers felt the changing challenges of the 21st century, the need for a modern view is not at all new in our school. The board of the school manage and lead this process, which means a constant change.

As presented earlier, a good number of pedagogical innovations have started from our school and have reached a national level by now. Thus, innovation is present in our school with teachers constantly looking for new ways and possibilities in the changing world.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

Besides the main budget of the school, we get financial support from several projects we work in. In the past years, we took part at national level in the HEFOP and TÁMOP projects and at international level in the LINGUA and COMENIUS projects. Besides the above, we always take part in smaller projects supported by local foundations. The school also has a foundation, which is supported by sponsors and parents.

Learning Outcomes

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

The yearly students' and parents' assessment shows that those who are familiar with our school are satisfied with our pedagogical work results.

At the national level testing of competences, our pupils show results above the average and 90-95% of our students go on with their secondary studies at institutions providing GCSE and A-levels (the national maturity examination).

From the school year 2010/2011 we have been promised the permission to go on with our work as a 12 grade institution, thus making the long-term outcomes more effective.

The assessment system of our school contains both the summative and formative ways. In the lower primary section, there is an essay type of evaluation and so as to have a really effective and understandable assessment, the self assessment is in strong connection with the group assessment. In the upper primary section, summative assessment is used beside the above mentioned one. The maintenance and harmonisation of the system to the changes means a constant important pedagogical task.

The products of our pedagogical activity are not only assessed by the school community, however this is what we consider most important. We very often appear on outer forums and thus are able to get outer feedback as well as a proof of our work in a wider context.

Individual innovations are always welcome by the school management. This does not only mean the teaching staff, but the parent and student community too. The school runs a satisfaction evaluation section as a part of the school evaluation system and the innovative ideas are always in focus. The satisfaction during the process is ensured by the parent forum where all the classes are represented.