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REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP "DIFFERENTIATION AND ADAPTED LEARNING STRATEGIES"

Board of Inspectors (Secondary)

Meeting on 16th June 2008

BACKGROUND

The European Schools enrol students with different skills and competences comprising:

- Different level of factual knowledge
- Different attitudes and motivation
- Different study skills and learning styles, habits and strategies, levels of meta-cognition (awareness of the learning procedure)
- Different levels of language skills
- Accelerated mobility of pupils between systems and schools

The basic and *specific* reasons for these differences in the European Schools system are the different backgrounds (cultural, social, educational, etc.) the students come from, and the different stage (age, form, etc.) of their entering the system. As an addition to this problem, the students enter a system that differs from all national systems in many ways (e.g. the medium of instruction, organizing the time table, length of breaks between classes, the structure of courses and classes, etc.).

IDENTIFICATION OF AIMS AND GOALS

Nevertheless the European Schools should develop basic skills and key competences of *every* student in an appropriate way to the satisfactory level (to be defined in the programmes) by the end of the learning-teaching process within the system. In order to promote development of competences of all students, differentiation in teaching and learning is inevitable and essential. Having this in mind, the balance of knowledge and skills is to be maintained at all levels of the system.

In accordance with the *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* 'competence' is **defined as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes** appropriate to a particular situation. 'Key competences' are those that support personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.[1]

FOCUS POINTS

1 The revision of the programmes and some policy documents of the European Schools

Suggestions:
- The revision of the document *Structuring of syllabuses for the subjects taught in the European Schools*[2] is highly recommendable.
- Programmes should be reviewed and – if necessary – revised in accordance with the **Recommendation**, and this process is to be repeated at least every five years.
- Elaboration and revision of existing multilingual glossaries as annexes to the programmes.

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[1] *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* (2006/962/EC). See Annex 1.

[2] 1999-D-109. See Annex 2.

- Policy documents relating to the issue (e.g. SEN students, learning support, SWALS, etc.) should be reviewed and – if necessary – revised.

2 Fostering strategies (methods and techniques) of differentiation in the practice of the European Schools through the system of in-service trainings

Definition

Differentiated instruction applies an approach to teaching and learning so that students have multiple options for taking in information and making sense of ideas. The model of differentiated instruction requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and adjusting the curriculum and presentation of information to learners rather than expecting students to modify themselves for the curriculum. Classroom teaching is a blend of whole-class, group and individual instruction. Differentiated Instruction is a teaching theory based on the premise that instructional approaches should vary and be adapted in relation to individual and diverse students in classrooms.

To differentiate instruction is essential to recognize students varying background knowledge, readiness, language, preferences in learning, interests, and to react responsively. Differentiated instruction is a process to approach teaching and learning for students of differing abilities in the same class. The intent of differentiating instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success by meeting each student where he or she is, and assisting in the learning process.[3]

Suggestions:

Reinforcement of in-service training, e.g. newly seconded teachers alongside with the introduction of a **policy paper**[4] on the aims and content of **in-service teacher training** (and training of other staff, including inspectors) in the European Schools. In-service trainings should comprise areas of methodology helping differentiation and support in achieving the appropriate levels of competences for every student of the European Schools as well as in identifying and supporting talented/gifted students.

Standardized and co-ordinated in-service training sessions should be offered and provided for schools covering areas like:

- o Organization of the teaching and learning process including:
  - Techniques of differentiation within the class/group
  - Activity based pedagogy (co-operative methods, projects, drama, etc.)
  - Team teaching
- o Assessment
  - Formative assessment as a tool for differentiation
  - Assessment techniques
  - The Baccalaureate

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[3] This common definition of differentiated instruction is based on Hall, T. (2002). *Differentiated instruction.* Wakefield, MA: National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum. Retrieved [24/10/2007] from http://www.cast.org/publications/ncac/ncac_diffinstruc.html

[4] Cf. 2008-D-411-en-1

3 Learning to learn

Learning to learn is one of the key competences providing help to students in strengthening their learning abilities, techniques, metacognition and organization of work with regard to different learning styles and patterns.

Suggestions:

In order to strengthen the learning abilities of the students, special training and support should be provided all through their studies. Standards and guidelines for action plans should be developed by a group of experts, and in each school action plans should be prepared focusing on the following areas of future development.

     a. Introduction: organisation of studying in the secondary (based on the existing learning to learn courses)
     b. Organisation and handling of knowledge
     c. Methods and techniques of acquirement of knowledge
     d. Exploiting all possible sources in and outside school (informal and non formal learning)
     e. Personalised learning plans and programmes, individual study planners
     f. Ranking and rating of knowledge elements (fundamental and instrumental)
     g. In-service teacher training
     h. Appropriate (practical and applicable) coaching and consultancy for students

In achieving these goals, educational advisers should play an important role, which may require their in-service training and the revision of their job descriptions.

4 SWALS

Background

The number of SWALS in the European schools increases as does the variety of mother tongues and languages spoken. It is difficult to make generalizations about SWALS as their needs are varied. Nevertheless a successful integration of most students without their own language section into the system is hardly possible without some special help and support.

It is open to debate whether the current system of fixed language sections remains able to cater for needs of a more and more multilingual environment. A concept of fixed sets of subjects and a free choice of languages in the upper secondary cycle is certainly worth exploring.

The working group suggests that the issue should be dealt with in the working group set up for working out suggestions about a new SWALS policy.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 18 December 2006

on key competences for lifelong learning

(2006/962/EC)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 149(4), and Article 150(4) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee (¹),

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions (²),

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty (³),

Whereas:

(1) The Lisbon European Council (23-24 March 2000) concluded that a European framework should define the new basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning as a key measure in Europe's response to globalisation and the shift to knowledge-based economies, and emphasised that people are Europe's main asset. Since then, those conclusions have been regularly restated including by the Brussels European Councils (20-21 March 2003 and 22-23 March 2005), and in the re-launched Lisbon Strategy which was approved in 2005.

(2) The European Councils of Stockholm (23-24 March 2001) and Barcelona (15-16 March 2002) endorsed the concrete future objectives of European education and training systems and a work-programme (the Education and Training 2010 work programme) to achieve them by 2010. These objectives include developing skills for the knowledge society and specific objectives for promoting language learning, developing entrepreneurship and the overall need to enhance the European dimension in education.

(3) The Commission Communication "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" and the subsequent Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning (⁴) identified the provision of 'the new basic skills' as a priority, and stressed that lifelong learning must cover learning from pre-school age to post-retirement age.

(4) In the context of improving the Community's employment performance, the European Councils of Brussels (March

2003 and December 2003) stressed the need to develop lifelong learning, with a particular focus on active and preventive measures for the unemployed and inactive persons. This built on the report of the Employment Taskforce, which emphasised the need for people to be able to adapt to change, the importance of integrating people into the labour market, and the key role of lifelong learning.

(5) In May 2003 the Council adopted the European reference levels ('benchmarks'), demonstrating a commitment to a measurable improvement in European average performance. These reference levels include reading literacy, early school leaving, completion of upper secondary education and participation of adults in lifelong learning, and are closely linked to the development of key competences.

(6) The report of the Council on the broader role of education adopted in November 2004 stressed that education contributes to preserving and renewing the common cultural background in society and to learning essential social and civic values such as citizenship, equality, tolerance and respect, and is particularly important at a time when all Member States are challenged by the question of how to deal with increasing social and cultural diversity. Moreover, enabling people to enter and stay in working life is an important part of the role of education in the strengthening of social cohesion.

(7) The report adopted by the Commission in 2005 on progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training showed that there had been no progress in reducing the percentage of low achievers in reading literacy at age 15 or in raising the completion rate for upper-secondary education. Some progress was visible in reducing early school leaving, but at current rates the 2010 European reference levels adopted by the May 2003 Council will not be achieved. Participation of adults in learning is not growing fast enough to reach the 2010 reference level, and data shows that low-skilled people are less likely to participate in further training.

(8) The Framework of Actions for the Lifelong Development of Competences and Qualifications, adopted by the European social partners in March 2002, stresses the need for businesses to adapt their structures more and more quickly in order to remain competitive. Increased team-work, flattening of hierarchies, devolved responsibilities and a

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(¹) OJ C 195, 18.8.2006, p. 109.
(²) OJ C 229, 22.9.2006, p. 21.
(³) Opinion of the European Parliament of 26 September 2006 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and Council Decision of 18 December 2006.
(⁴) OJ C 163, 9.7.2002, p. 1.

greater need for multi-tasking are leading to the development of learning organisations. In this context, the ability of organisations to identify competences, to mobilise and recognise them and to encourage their development for all employees represent the basis for new competitive strategies.

(9) The Maastricht Study on Vocational Education and Training of 2004 indicates a significant gap between the levels of education required by new jobs, and the levels of education achieved by the European workforce. This study shows that more than one third of the European workforce (80 million persons) is low-skilled whilst it has been estimated that by 2010 almost 50 % of new jobs will require tertiary level qualifications, just under 40 % will require upper secondary schooling, and only about 15 % will be suitable for those with basic schooling.

(10) The Joint Council/Commission Report on the Education and Training 2010 work programme, adopted in 2004, reinforced the need to ensure that all citizens are equipped with the competences they need as part of Member States' lifelong learning strategies. To encourage and facilitate reform, the report suggests the development of common European references and principles and gives priority to the Key Competences Framework.

(11) The European Youth Pact which is annexed to the conclusions of the Brussels European Council (22-23 March 2005) stressed the need to encourage the development of a common set of core skills.

(12) The need to equip young people with necessary key competences and to improve educational attainment levels is an integral part of the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005-2008, approved by the June 2005 European Council. In particular, the Employment Guidelines call for education and training systems to be adapted in response to new competence requirements through better identification of occupational needs and key competences as part of Member States' reform programmes. Furthermore, the Employment Guidelines call for ensuring gender mainstreaming and gender equality in all actions and for achieving an average employment rate for the European Union of 70 % overall and of at least 60 % for women.

(13) This Recommendation should contribute to the development of quality, future-oriented education and training tailored to the needs of European society, by supporting and supplementing Member States' actions in ensuring that their initial education and training systems offer all young people the means to develop key competences to a level that equips them for adult life, and which forms a basis for further learning and working life and that adults are able to develop and update their key competences through the provision of coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning. This Recommendation should also provide a common European reference framework on key competences for policy makers, education and training providers, the social

partners and learners themselves in order to facilitate national reforms and exchange of information between the Member States and the Commission within the Education and Training 2010 work programme, with the aim of achieving the agreed European reference levels. Furthermore, this Recommendation should support other related policies such as employment and social policies and other policies affecting youth.

(14) Since the objectives of this Recommendation, namely to support and supplement Member States' action by establishing a common reference point that encourages and facilitates national reforms and further cooperation between Member States, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States acting alone and can therefore be better achieved at Community level, the Community may adopt measures in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Recommendation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives insofar as it leaves the implementation of this Recommendation to Member States,

HEREBY RECOMMEND:

That Member States develop the provision of key competences for all as part of their lifelong learning strategies, including their strategies for achieving universal literacy, and use the 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning — A European Reference Framework' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Reference Framework') in the Annex hereto as a reference tool, with a view to ensuring that:

1. initial education and training offers all young people the means to develop the key competences to a level that equips them for adult life, and which forms a basis for further learning and working life;

2. appropriate provision is made for those young people who, due to educational disadvantages caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, need particular support to fulfil their educational potential;

3. adults are able to develop and update their key competences throughout their lives, and that there is a particular focus on target groups identified as priorities in the national, regional and/or local contexts, such as individuals needing to update their skills;

4. appropriate infrastructure for continuing education and training of adults including teachers and trainers, validation and evaluation procedures, measures aimed at ensuring equal access to both lifelong learning and the labour market, and support for learners that recognises the differing needs and competences of adults, is in place;

5. coherence of adult education and training provision for individual citizens is achieved through close links with employment policy and social policy, cultural policy,

innovation policy and other policies affecting young people and through collaboration with social partners and other stakeholders;

HEREBY TAKE NOTE OF THE COMMISSION'S INTENTION TO:

1. contribute to Member States' efforts to develop their education and training systems and to implement and disseminate this Recommendation, including by using the Reference Framework as a reference to facilitate peer learning and the exchange of good practices and to follow up developments and report on progress through the biennial progress reports on the Education and Training 2010 work programme;

2. use the Reference Framework as a reference in the implementation of the Community Education and Training programmes and to ensure that these programmes promote the acquisition of key competences;

3. promote the wider use of the Reference Framework in related Community policies, and particularly in the implementation of employment, youth, and cultural and social policy, and to develop further links with social partners and other organisations working in those fields;

4. review the impact of the Reference Framework within the context of the Education and Training 2010 work programme and report, by 18 December 2010, to the European Parliament and to the Council on the experience gained and the implications for the future.

Done at Brussels, 18 December 2006.

For the European Parliament	For the Council
The President	*The President*
J. BORRELL FONTELLES	J.-E. ENESTAM

ANNEX

KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING — A EUROPEAN REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

Background and aims

As globalisation continues to confront the European Union with new challenges, each citizen will need a wide range of key competences to adapt flexibly to a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world.

Education in its dual role, both social and economic, has a key role to play in ensuring that Europe's citizens acquire the key competences needed to enable them to adapt flexibly to such changes.

In particular, building on diverse individual competences, the differing needs of learners should be met by ensuring equality and access for those groups who, due to educational disadvantages caused by personal, social, cultural or economic circumstances, need particular support to fulfil their educational potential. Examples of such groups include people with low basic skills, in particular with low literacy, early school leavers, the long-term unemployed and those returning to work after a period of extended leave, older people, migrants, and people with disabilities.

In this context, the main aims of the Reference Framework are to:

1) identify and define the key competences necessary for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society;

2) support Member States' work in ensuring that by the end of initial education and training young people have developed the key competences to a level that equips them for adult life and which forms a basis for further learning and working life, and that adults are able to develop and update their key competences throughout their lives;

3) provide a European level reference tool for policy makers, education providers, employers, and learners themselves to facilitate national and European level efforts towards commonly agreed objectives;

4) provide a framework for further action at Community level both within the Education and Training 2010 work programme and within the Community Education and Training Programmes.

Key Competences

Competences are defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

1) Communication in the mother tongue;

2) Communication in foreign languages;

3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;

4) Digital competence;

5) Learning to learn;

6) Social and civic competences;

7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and

8) Cultural awareness and expression.

The key competences are all considered equally important, because each of them can contribute to a successful life in a knowledge society. Many of the competences overlap and interlock: aspects essential to one domain will support

competence in another. Competence in the fundamental basic skills of language, literacy, numeracy and in information and communication technologies (ICT) is an essential foundation for learning, and learning to learn supports all learning activities. There are a number of themes that are applied throughout the Reference Framework: critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking, and constructive management of feelings play a role in all eight key competences.

1. Communication in the mother tongue (¹)

Definition:

Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home and leisure.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

Communicative competence results from the acquisition of the mother tongue, which is intrinsically linked to the development of an individual's cognitive ability to interpret the world and relate to others. Communication in the mother tongue requires an individual to have knowledge of vocabulary, functional grammar and the functions of language. It includes an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, the main features of different styles and registers of language, and the variability of language and communication in different contexts.

Individuals should have the skills to communicate both orally and in writing in a variety of communicative situations and to monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of the situation. This competence also includes the abilities to distinguish and use different types of texts, to search for, collect and process information, to use aids, and to formulate and express one's oral and written arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context.

A positive attitude towards communication in the mother tongue involves a disposition to critical and constructive dialogue, an appreciation of aesthetic qualities and a willingness to strive for them, and an interest in interaction with others. This implies an awareness of the impact of language on others and a need to understand and use language in a positive and socially responsible manner.

2. Communication in foreign languages (²)

Definition:

Communication in foreign languages broadly shares the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts (in education and training, work, home and leisure) according to one's wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. An individual's level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and between the different languages, and according to that individual's social and cultural background, environment, needs and/or interests.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

Competence in foreign languages requires knowledge of vocabulary and functional grammar and an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction and registers of language. Knowledge of societal conventions, and the cultural aspect and variability of languages is important.

(¹) In the context of Europe's multicultural and multilingual societies, it is recognised that the mother tongue may not in all cases be an official language of the Member State, and that ability to communicate in an official language is a pre-condition for ensuring full participation of the individual in society. In some Member States the mother tongue may be one of several official languages. Measures to address such cases, and apply the definition accordingly, are a matter for individual Member States in accordance with their specific needs and circumstances.

(²) It is important to recognise that many Europeans live in bilingual or multilingual families and communities, and that the official language of the country in which they live may not be their mother tongue. For these groups, this competence may refer to an official language, rather than to a foreign language. Their need, motivation, and social and/or economic reasons for developing this competence in support of their integration will differ, for instance, from those learning a foreign language for travel or work. Measures to address such cases, and apply the definition accordingly, are a matter for individual Member States in accordance with their specific needs and circumstances.

Essential skills for communication in foreign languages consist of the ability to understand spoken messages, to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations and to read, understand and produce texts appropriate to the individual's needs. Individuals should also be able to use aids appropriately, and learn languages also informally as part of lifelong learning.

A positive attitude involves the appreciation of cultural diversity, and an interest and curiosity in languages and intercultural communication.

3.   **Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology**

Definition:

A.   Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs, charts).

B.   Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science and technology involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

A.   Necessary knowledge in mathematics includes a sound knowledge of numbers, measures and structures, basic operations and basic mathematical presentations, an understanding of mathematical terms and concepts, and an awareness of the questions to which mathematics can offer answers.

An individual should have the skills to apply basic mathematical principles and processes in everyday contexts at home and work, and to follow and assess chains of arguments. An individual should be able to reason mathematically, understand mathematical proof and communicate in mathematical language, and to use appropriate aids.

A positive attitude in mathematics is based on the respect of truth and willingness to look for reasons and to assess their validity.

B.   For science and technology, essential knowledge comprises the basic principles of the natural world, fundamental scientific concepts, principles and methods, technology and technological products and processes, as well as an understanding of the impact of science and technology on the natural world. These competences should enable individuals to better understand the advances, limitations and risks of scientific theories, applications and technology in societies at large (in relation to decision-making, values, moral questions, culture, etc).

Skills include the ability to use and handle technological tools and machines as well as scientific data to achieve a goal or to reach an evidence-based decision or conclusion. Individuals should also be able to recognise the essential features of scientific inquiry and have the ability to communicate the conclusions and reasoning that led to them.

Competence includes an attitude of critical appreciation and curiosity, an interest in ethical issues and respect for both safety and sustainability, in particular as regards scientific and technological progress in relation to oneself, family, community and global issues.

4.   **Digital competence**

Definition:

Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

Digital competence requires a sound understanding and knowledge of the nature, role and opportunities of IST in everyday contexts: in personal and social life as well as at work. This includes main computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, information storage and management, and an understanding of the opportunities and potential risks of the Internet and communication via electronic media (e-mail, network tools) for work, leisure, information sharing and collaborative networking, learning and research. Individuals should also understand how IST can support creativity and innovation, and be aware of issues around the validity and reliability of information available and of the legal and ethical principles involved in the interactive use of IST.

Skills needed include the ability to search, collect and process information and use it in a critical and systematic way, assessing relevance and distinguishing the real from the virtual while recognising the links. Individuals should have skills to use tools to produce, present and understand complex information and the ability to access, search and use internet-based services. Individuals should also be able use IST to support critical thinking, creativity, and innovation.

Use of IST requires a critical and reflective attitude towards available information and a responsible use of the interactive media. An interest in engaging in communities and networks for cultural, social and/or professional purposes also supports this competence.

5. Learning to learn

Definition:

'Learning to learn' is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

Where learning is directed towards particular work or career goals, an individual should have knowledge of the competences, knowledge, skills and qualifications required. In all cases, learning to learn requires an individual to know and understand his/her preferred learning strategies, the strengths and weaknesses of his/her skills and qualifications, and to be able to search for the education and training opportunities and guidance and/or support available.

Learning to learn skills require firstly the acquisition of the fundamental basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that are necessary for further learning. Building on these skills, an individual should be able to access, gain, process and assimilate new knowledge and skills. This requires effective management of one's learning, career and work patterns, and, in particular, the ability to persevere with learning, to concentrate for extended periods and to reflect critically on the purposes and aims of learning. Individuals should be able to dedicate time to learning autonomously and with self-discipline, but also to work collaboratively as part of the learning process, draw the benefits from a heterogeneous group, and to share what they have learnt. Individuals should be able to organise their own learning, evaluate their own work, and to seek advice, information and support when appropriate.

A positive attitude includes the motivation and confidence to pursue and succeed at learning throughout one's life. A problem-solving attitude supports both the learning process itself and an individual's ability to handle obstacles and change. The desire to apply prior learning and life experiences and the curiosity to look for opportunities to learn and apply learning in a variety of life contexts are essential elements of a positive attitude.

6. Social and civic competences

Definition:

These include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

A. Social competence is linked to personal and social well-being which requires an understanding of how individuals can ensure optimum physical and mental health, including as a resource for oneself and one's family and one's immediate social environment, and knowledge of how a healthy lifestyle can contribute to this. For successful interpersonal and social participation it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments (e.g. at work). It is equally important to be aware of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, gender equality and non-discrimination, society and culture. Understanding the multi-cultural and socio-economic dimensions of European societies and how national cultural identity interacts with the European identity is essential.

The core skills of this competence include the ability to communicate constructively in different environments, to show tolerance, express and understand different viewpoints, to negotiate with the ability to create confidence, and to feel empathy. Individuals should be capable of coping with stress and frustration and expressing them in a constructive way and should also distinguish between the personal and professional spheres.

The competence is based on an attitude of collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. Individuals should have an interest in socio-economic developments and intercultural communication and should value diversity and respect others, and be prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise.

B. Civic competence is based on knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and civil rights, including how they are expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations and how they are applied by various institutions at the local, regional, national, European and international levels. It includes knowledge of contemporary events, as well as the main events and trends in national, European and world history. In addition, an awareness of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements should be developed. Knowledge of European integration and of the EU's structures, main objectives and values is also essential, as well as an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe.

Skills for civic competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and to display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. This involves critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community or neighbourhood activities as well as decision-making at all levels, from local to national and European level, in particular through voting.

Full respect for human rights including equality as a basis for democracy, appreciation and understanding of differences between value systems of different religious or ethnic groups lay the foundations for a positive attitude. This means displaying both a sense of belonging to one's locality, country, the EU and Europe in general and to the world, and a willingness to participate in democratic decision-making at all levels. It also includes demonstrating a sense of responsibility, as well as showing understanding of and respect for the shared values that are necessary to ensure community cohesion, such as respect for democratic principles. Constructive participation also involves civic activities, support for social diversity and cohesion and sustainable development, and a readiness to respect the values and privacy of others.

7. **Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship**

Definition:

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

Necessary knowledge includes the ability to identify available opportunities for personal, professional and/or business activities, including 'bigger picture' issues that provide the context in which people live and work, such as a broad understanding of the workings of the economy, and the opportunities and challenges facing an employer or organisation. Individuals should also be aware of the ethical position of enterprises, and how they can be a force for good, for example through fair trade or through social enterprise.

Skills relate to proactive project management (involving, for example the ability to plan, organise, manage, lead and delegate, analyse, communicate, de-brief, evaluate and record), effective representation and negotiation, and the ability to work both as an individual and collaboratively in teams. The ability to judge and identify one's strengths and weaknesses, and to assess and take risks as and when warranted, is essential.

An entrepreneurial attitude is characterised by initiative, pro-activity, independence and innovation in personal and social life, as much as at work. It also includes motivation and determination to meet objectives, whether personal goals, or aims held in common with others, including at work.

8.   **Cultural awareness and expression**

Definition:

Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence:

Cultural knowledge includes an awareness of local, national and European cultural heritage and their place in the world. It covers a basic knowledge of major cultural works, including popular contemporary culture. It is essential to understand the cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe and other regions of the world, the need to preserve it and the importance of aesthetic factors in daily life.

Skills relate to both appreciation and expression: the appreciation and enjoyment of works of art and performances as well as self-expression through a variety of media using one's innate capacities. Skills include also the ability to relate one's own creative and expressive points of view to the opinions of others and to identify and realise social and economic opportunities in cultural activity. Cultural expression is essential to the development of creative skills, which can be transferred to a variety of professional contexts.

A solid understanding of one's own culture and a sense of identity can be the basis for an open attitude towards and respect for diversity of cultural expression. A positive attitude also covers creativity, and the willingness to cultivate aesthetic capacity through artistic self-expression and participation in cultural life.

Structuring of syllabuses
for the subjects taught in the European Schools

Approved Board of Governors of the European Schools on 26, 27 & 28 January 1999

1.0 Introduction

The structure of syllabuses is modelled on the following standard pattern which may be differentiated and extended depending on the subject:

1.0 Objectives

1.1 General objectives (identical for all subjects)

1.2 Subject-specific objectives

2.0 Content (knowledge, skills, abilities)

3.0 Methodology

(proposals for ways of teaching and use of materials and media)

4.0 Assessment of learning outcomes

4.1 Functions and principles of assessment of learning outcomes
(identical for all subjects)

4.2 Participation in class

4.3 Written work/tests

4.4 The Baccalaureate

4.4.1 Baccalaureate written examination

4.4.2 Baccalaureate oral examination

Chapter 1 describes and explains the relevant objectives for each subject:

• In the **first section (see 1.1)** the **general objectives**, compulsory for all subjects, are set out. (The text of this section is therefore included in the syllabuses for all subjects.)

• In the **second section (see 1.2)** the **subject-specific objectives** are set out, supplementing the ones mentioned in section 1.

In **Chapter 2** the **content** which should be covered in each subject is set out. This is normally done at three different description levels: **broad areas, themes** and **topics.**.

The presentation of teaching content is related to the three curriculum units (Years 1-3, Years 4-5 and Years 6-7).

Chapter 3 deals with methods of **teaching** in each subject.

Chapter 4 deals with **assessment of learning outcomes** in each subject.

• Section 4.1. contains the general functions and principles of assessment of learning outcomes applicable to all subjects.

• In Section 4.2. rules and advice on assessment of learning outcomes in the "participation in class" area are set out.

• Section 4.3. comprises rules and advice on assessment of learning outcomes in the **"written work/tests"** area.

• Section 4.4 comprises provisions for the Baccalaureate examination in each subject. Recommendations and examples for the Baccalaureate written and oral examinations should be appended.

1.0 Objectives

1.1 General objectives

The secondary section of the European Schools has the two objectives of providing formal, subject-based education and of encouraging pupils' personal development in a wider social and cultural context. Formal education involves the acquisition of knowledge and understanding, concepts and skills within each subject area. Pupil should learn to describe, interpret, judge, and apply their knowledge. Personal development takes place in a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural contexts. It involves an awareness of appropriate behaviour, understanding of the environment in which pupils work and live and a development their of individual identity.

These two major objectives are inseparably nurtured in the context of an enhanced awareness of the richness of European cultures. This awareness and the experience of a shared European life should lead pupils towards a respect for the traditions of each country in Europe, while preserving their own individual identities.

4.0   Assessment of learning outcomes

4.1   Functions and principles

Assessment is both a formative and a summative process.

Formative assessment is an ongoing process providing information about pupils' learning. It should also be a basis for pupils' further development and plays an important role in the provision of educational guidance for pupils, parents, or guardians and the school. Assessment need not always involve the award of a mark and it should not be punitive, but it should evaluate performance. For teachers, assessment of learning outcomes provides an opportunity to review the objectives, methods and results of their teaching.

Summative assessment provides a clear statement of the knowledge and skills possessed by a pupil at a particular point in time.

The following general principles of assessment of learning outcomes should be observed :

- Performance should be assessed against all the objectives relating to knowledge and skills set out in the syllabus.

- Assessment must relate to work which has been covered in the course.

- All types of work done by the pupil on the course should be a part of the assessment process - eg. oral and written contributions, class tests, practical work.

- Pupils should be aware of the work to be done and the standards to be achieved in order to attain each level in the assessment scale.

- Pupils should know how their performance compares with other pupils, in the same or other sections. This requires co-ordination between the teachers of the same and different sections to ensure comparability.

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