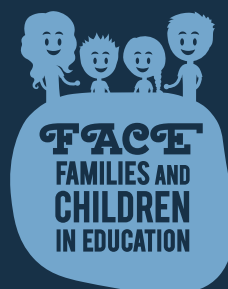


FACE



**IMPROVE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM
AND WORK TOGETHER**



FACE – Families and Children in Education is a project co-financed by the Zurich University of Teacher Education (Pädagogische Hochschule Zürich) and the Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland.

Improve your self-esteem and work together. Training booklet for teachers.

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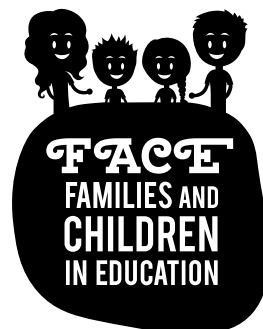
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FACE

Wiltrud Weidinger

IMPROVE YOUR SELF-ESTEEM AND WORK TOGETHER

Training booklet for teachers



How to work with this book

Welcome to FACE – Families and Children in Education – Improve your self-esteem and work together!

This book belongs to you as a teacher. It is a working book for you during your training on the FACE programme. In this book you will find:

- information on the FACE programme
- the main psychological and pedagogical aspects of FACE
- activities for you to complete

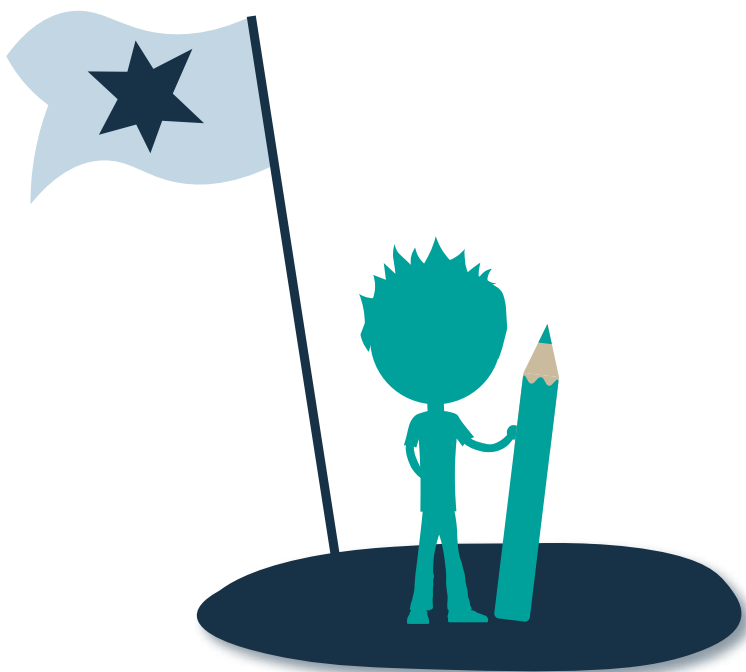
Some of the activities are designed for individual work or study; some activities involve cooperation or exchange of experiences with colleagues. The FACE training brochure guides you through different topics in various chapters. It includes background information on the different topics in the form of articles or short summaries. All tasks involve some kind of activity from your side. In the chapters you will find sufficient space to write. You will receive the instructions on how to do the tasks from your trainer.

We wish you an interesting training course and much success teaching FACE!



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1 FACE – THE PROGRAMME

1.1 General introduction: FACE – the programme

FACE – Families and Children in Education is a teaching and learning material series. The FACE series was designed to support children in the development of their self-concept and their view of their own competences, talents and interests. The FACE teaching and learning material for self-esteem is divided into three different levels:

-  Ages 4 - 6: FACE 1 – Develop your self-esteem and play together
-  Ages 7 - 9: FACE 2 – Develop your self-esteem and celebrate together
-  Ages 10 - 12: FACE 3 – Develop your self-esteem and work together

Structure

All parts of the FACE series are built up in the same way. The booklets comprise six major topics, each dealing with different levels of development of the self-concept and self-competences of children or adolescents. With each topic, two perspectives are addressed: that of the individual student and those of the others around him or her. The alternation between these two perspectives is part of every topic to help children develop the ability to bring the experience of self-perception and the experience of being perceived by others more closely together.

Every FACE booklet ends with a topic of reflection on the student's own learning processes (chapter 7). A final page gives the teacher or educator space for personal feedback to the students. We strongly recommend that the opportunity to give constructive feedback, as opposed to pure grading, be taken by the teachers and educators.

Each task begins with a page of information and instruction outlining the goals, the organisational set-up of the lesson as well as the main teaching steps and material needed. This page is meant for teachers and educators. Some tasks also include possibilities for variation. Following the information page, the students' working material is listed. This page or these pages are meant for the students to work on.

Each topic consists of 6 tasks which all last around 30 – 60 minutes, depending on the level of the group. Task number 5 is always a task that the children have to solve at home. Their parents, siblings or other family members are needed for giving information or opinions, which the students record. At the end of the yearly FACE programme an exhibition or event (celebration) is organised with the parents' participation. Its aim is to show and celebrate the results and products that the students have produced during their work on the FACE programme.

This overview shows the structure of FACE – Improve your self-esteem and work together:

Chapters	Tasks	Contents
1-6: Topic	1-4	In school
	5	At home
	6/7	Reflection on home task in school
7: Reflection	1-4	Reflection on learning processes to be solved in school
		Written feedback from teacher

Contents

In order to support the development of self-concept, self-competences and self-esteem the FACE booklets work on different topics. The topics included in FACE cover the following areas:

- About myself
- My family and I
- My friends
- My favourite places
- What I can do – my skills
- My feelings
- How I solve conflicts

Each topic approaches questions from the individual's perspective and also switches to taking the perspective of another person. Students have to work together in most cases. In task 5 of each chapter students take the addressed questions into their families and ask for their input or opinion. Each FACE booklet focuses on one specific product which is completed by the students, the teachers and the parents: FACE 1 (playing games together in a game party), FACE 2 (a joint celebration) and FACE 3 (preparing an exhibition).

When looking at the contents of the FACE booklets, it is clear that most of the contents correspond with subjects such as social studies or language. When looking at the competences that are required in the different chapters and tasks, subjects like Mathematics, Arts, Handicrafts, History, Geography or Biology can be incorporated and covered.

Cultural adaptation

The FACE series was originally compiled and created by experts of the Zurich University of Teacher Education for use in different teaching and learning contexts all over the world. Therefore, the majority of the tasks are designed to be more or less “culture-free”, which means that they can be used with children or adolescents at an appropriate age around the globe. However, each topic also includes one or two tasks that can be adapted to the specific context in which the material is used. These tasks often centre on specific cultural issues or issues of a certain minority group (e.g. street children, refugee children, ethnic minorities etc.). Various resources were used to compile the FACE series, some of them in their original form, with the majority adapted to fit the context of this booklet. This is indicated if it is the case, with the material referenced underneath each task or underneath the working material for the students.

Different roles

What are the students’ roles as learners?

The students are the main actors in the FACE programme. They, as students, have the largest influence on their results and on their success. This subject is not given to them: THEY will have to get it! They will learn, write, draw, conduct interviews and contact people – in an age-appropriate way. The teaching and learning material is designed in such a way as to trigger active learning amongst the students and to make them responsible for their own learning processes. FACE also requires students to plan and evaluate their own learning: it develops and trains metacognition as a learning strategy.

What is the role of the students’ parents?

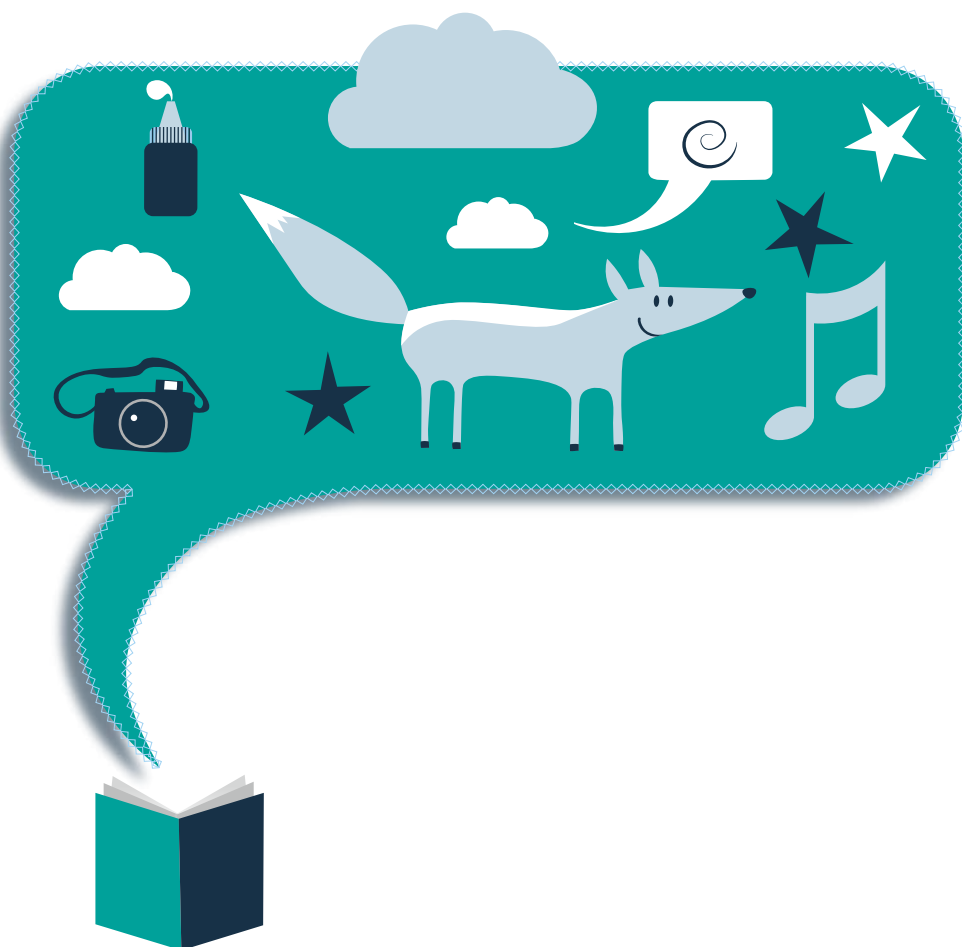
The students’ parents support them on their path through school life. They mainly do this by being interested in what the students do, by taking time to discuss issues with them, by listening to them, by giving them the information they need or the material they have to take with them to school (e.g. photos).

What is the role of the teacher?

It is the teachers’ role to trigger active learning amongst the student’s and their own learning as a teaching professional. Instead of lecturing, the teacher will enter into the role of a coach, facilitator and guide who supports the students in their learning processes. Nevertheless, a teacher still maintains the responsibility for steering learning processes, giving feedback on the students’ results and products and in the end for evaluating their work.

The three main ideas of the FACE programme from my point of view are:

1.
2.
3.



1.2 Organisation of FACE

Task:

1. Read through the short text on the following page.
2. Think of your own teaching schedule. Could FACE fit in somewhere?
This will be different for class teachers and subject teachers.
3. Fill in your present teaching schedule and write down where FACE could be integrated.
4. Note down two questions and ask them in the whole group.

It is the teacher's or educator's task to decide how to organise teaching FACE. This could be in an integrated way to fit the normal teaching and learning sessions of a group (e.g. FACE delivered for half an hour per day or week). It could also be in the form of a more concise block scheduling of the sessions (e.g. FACE delivered during larger blocks spread over two consecutive weeks). We recommend using FACE regularly so that the children experience continuity over a longer period of time. This will allow the FACE booklet to become more of a used and familiar tool for the students.

My present teaching schedule:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
08 – 09					
09 – 10					
10 – 11					
11 – 12					
13 – 14					
14 – 15					
15 – 16					
16 – 17					
17 – 18					
18 – 19					
19 – 20					

Think about your schedule and write down where you could integrate FACE into your teaching (e.g. in 30' slots, or in fixed blocks of 1 or 2 hours per week?). Take into consideration that you can also cover subjects like social studies, languages, arts etc. with FACE.

Write down two questions to ask in the group:

1.

2.



1.3 Competences in FACE

Task:

1. Sit in a group of 4.
 2. Read the text on competences on the following page.
 3. Write out the main competences that FACE promotes.
 4. Choose three competences out of the list.
 5. Flip through the booklet. Try to find a task that trains a competence.
Write down which tasks train which competences.
 6. Exchange your results with your other group members.
-

Teaching and learning in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic classrooms has to be competence-based in order to leave behind a deficit-oriented pedagogy. Instructional science has produced various definitions of everything belonging to “competences”. The definition most commonly used in German-speaking countries is Franz E. Weinert’s: “Competences are the cognitive skills and abilities available to individuals or acquired by them to solve specific problems as well as the motivational, volitional [determined by the will] and social readiness and abilities associated therewith to apply problem-solving successfully and responsibly to variable situations” (Weinert 2001). It is not about factual knowledge but rather about the ability to solve problems and, finally, about the necessary attitudes and motivation. Teaching methodology distinguishes two kinds of competences, namely subject-specific and transferable competences. Subject-specific competences are all the skills closely connected to one particular school subject. Transferable competences are all those skills and abilities necessary to be able to cope in life and not specifically linked to a particular school subject. These could be, for example, personal competences (self-reliance, reflection etc.), social (cooperation skills, conflict resolution skills etc.), but also methodical skills (communication skills, problem-solving skills etc.).

In short, this means:

- The goals to be attained by the students constitute different competence areas or levels. Learning at school is not guided by a specific range of topics (canon) or by specific content goals to be reached anymore, but by a set of competences to be acquired by the students step by step.
- The proficiency and progress of the students are assessed according to their achievement (or “performance” as it is more frequently called) in relation to a specific competence level.

The insistence on competence-oriented teaching goes hand in hand with the request for more learner-centred and needs-oriented education. To sum up, it can be said that

competence-oriented teaching is characterised by the following aspects/procedures/modus operandi etc.:

- Activate cognitive abilities of students by using demanding, but well-matched exercises
- Establish connection between existing knowledge and skills and newly acquired content
- Intelligent practising
- Looking for appropriate situations to apply knowledge and skills
- Individual support of learning processes
- Students reflect on their own learning progress (metacognition)

Competences and lifelong learning

In academic debate, competence orientation is also frequently connected to the concept of lifelong learning and the acquisition of appropriate life skills at school. This tendency can also be traced in the papers published by the European Commission: “It is where they gain the basic knowledge, skills and competences that they need throughout their lives and the place where many of their fundamental attitudes and values develop” (European Commission 2010). As a result of this, the demand has arisen for teachers to be equipped with the necessary competences to orientate the learning of their students towards a lifelong perspective.

Those competences – that are connected to the demands of lifelong learning – are to do with areas such as learning motivation, conviction of self-efficacy, teamwork skills, information and research competence, flexibility, communication competence etc. The developed FACE teaching and learning resources lead children and young people to discover and become aware of their own pre-existing competences. Furthermore, the resources aim to further the self-concept and self-confidence of the students, their cooperative work with each other, the development of a healthy culture of learning from mistakes, the intrinsic motivation for self-directed learning, the evaluation competence of their own learning as well as the competence to be able to make decisions and carry the consequences for these decisions. In a more detailed description of furthering self-concept and life skills, the following competence areas are key:

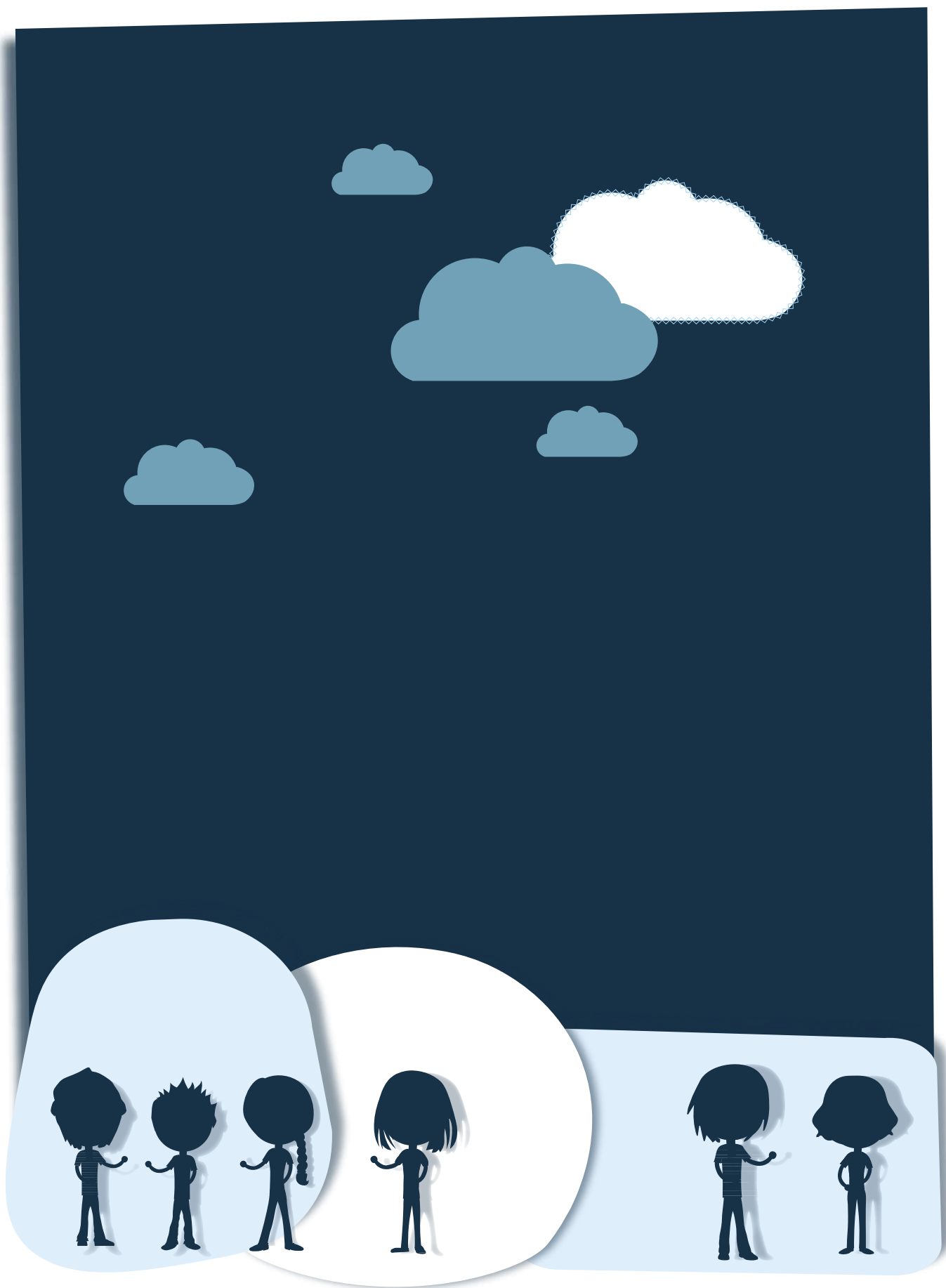
- analytical competence of own strengths and weaknesses
- methodological competence to access information and to develop learning strategies
- conflict resolution competence
- communication competence and cooperation competence
- decision-making competence and taking responsibility

In this sense, “analytical competence” has the objective of dealing with one’s own skills and abilities from a competence-oriented (rather than a deficit-oriented) approach, to locate these and to sort them out, to weigh them up and – after having put them to use – to

evaluate them. “Methodological competence” then, describes the mastery of a diverse range of methods and techniques that enable self-reflection and the ability to enter into a dialogue with one’s counterpart. This includes methods such as writing lists, arguing “for” and “against”, being able to represent real circumstances (e.g. expressing feelings), conducting interviews, giving and receiving feedback, imagining “what if” situations, finding alternative solutions to a given problem etc.

This competence area encompasses the entire range of learning strategies in addition to developing and refining particular learning strategies that are found to be the most effective for a particular individual. The acquired methods ultimately serve to gain a deeper understanding of one’s own work habits and thought patterns employed to overcome life’s challenges. The area of “conflict competence” has proven to be highly meaningful, particularly if the project seeks to engage very disadvantaged or stigmatised groups. The example of Roma children in Romania shows that the acquisition of non-violent conflict resolution strategies is indispensable for communal life. With this it is hoped that these children and young people are helped towards gaining a peaceful life. The areas of “communication and cooperation competence” target age-appropriate, respectful communication, expressing opinions, formulating needs, the ability to listen and to respond as well as all forms of cooperation in pairs, but also in small groups. In this way, students should be prepared not only for the challenges of higher and further education, but also for those presented by the world of work. Finally, “Decision-making competence and taking responsibility” describes the competence area in which students are able to make their first decisions regarding their own interests, in which they should be able to take on responsibility for the decisions they have made for themselves and to defend them. This becomes more and more important the nearer students get to the transition point between school and work.

Competences	Tasks in FACE
1.	
2.	
3.	



2 PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 What is self-concept? A checklist for teachers.

Task:

- 1. Think about what you associate with self-concept. Think of your students in one class. You might want to look at your class list to help you with this.
- 2. Out of these students, who has a positive self-concept from your point of view? Write down their names.
- 3. Read through the text on the following page.
- 4. Look at your notes again. Do you still have the same opinion? Make a tick if yes.

Students with a positive self-concept:

Student's name	Yes or no?



Self-concept

Self-concept in the context of FACE follows the general idea of self-concept as “the individuals’ knowledge and beliefs about themselves – their ideas, feelings, attitudes and expectations”. Self-concept as understood in this context can be subdivided into different categories. Or it can follow even more detailed subdivisions like non-academic areas (such as physical appearance, popularity, trustworthiness, relations with parents, emotional stability) or academic areas (verbal, mathematics, problem solving, art etc.). Self-concept therefore is strongly connected to achievement and to self-esteem. However, self-concept can be described as a cognitive structure, a belief about who you are. Self-esteem is more of an overall, general feeling of self-worth that incorporates self-concepts in all areas of life. In the context of the FACE programme we use the term and the model of self-concept. Self-esteem is also very much influenced by the culture surrounding a person and by how this culture values the particular characteristics of the person. This cultural influence is compounded when children grow up in poor socio-economic circumstances that force families and also children to fight for their own survival.

In other words, self-concept means the way we feel about ourselves. For a child or an adolescent this can mean how and to what extent he/she feels valued by his/her family, how he/she feels as a student, how he/she feels teachers and fellow students perceive him/her, how he/she views himself/herself as a friend etc. Self-concept also includes the extent to which children feel that they are accepted by their friends and whether they believe in their own competences to master their lives. A positive self-concept is decisive for the satisfaction of children and adolescents and their social and emotional well-being, as well as their academic achievement. Children and adolescents with negative feelings towards themselves tend to also have negative feelings towards others. They tend to show rather weak academic achievement and are more prone to behavioural challenges. Childhood and early adolescence are the time to support a positive self-concept. The older a child gets the more difficult it becomes to eliminate the effects of a negative self-concept. It is however possible to possess a very low and negative self-concept in certain areas without it having any impact on other areas. Also, the strength of the self-concept can vary

over time. Children who feel “different” tend to develop a negative self-concept. It is very important to support students in developing a balanced self-concept. Recognising their strengths and appreciating them will allow students to see their own limitations at the same time. Students have to learn to understand that they cannot be perfect, because nobody is. Perfection is a rather unrealistic goal. Whoever strives to become perfect will end up unhappy. It should be the students’ goal to do their best. Supporting the self-concept of children and adolescents is connected to certain competences and skills.

Criteria for observing behaviour related to self-concept

It is possible to observe and evaluate the self-concept of the students over a certain period of time. As a teacher you can ask the following questions as criteria for assessing their self-concept:

Checklist for teachers:

-
- Are the students ready to take the risk of making a mistake in their work or play?
 - Are they self-confident enough to speak in class?
 - Are they eager to make new experiences and do they take up challenges?
 - Can they develop friendships?
 - Can they set goals for themselves?
 - Do they respond to the requests of the teacher?
 - Are their expectations of themselves realistic?
 - Can they accept failures?
 - Are they ready to learn from their mistakes?
 - How do they cope with problems and failures?
 - Are they self-confident enough to take part in class discussions?
-

Try to get the students to know how they can value their own work. Let them collect pieces of their best work in a folder. The aim is to activate the intrinsic motivation of the students. Intrinsic motivation comes from the person inside and is not dependent on any external reaction such as praise or reward. Students are intrinsically motivated if they feel good about themselves. Being successful in one learning area may encourage students to take risks in other areas and try out new things. It is the teacher’s task to find an area where the student is academically strong and successful. Only when students are able to evaluate their own efforts will they also be able to rely on their own values rather than on external judgements.

It is extremely important for the development of students’ self-concept that they feel accepted by teachers and colleagues. Teachers should try to teach students that they do not have to like everybody and that it is important that they accept others and are accepted by others.

2.2 Life skills

Task:

1. Read through the text on the following page.
 2. Think about one class that you teach.
 3. Fill in the circle with the life skills meter.
 4. Where do your students score highly? Where do they still need a lot of improvement in your opinion?
 5. Show your completed life skills meter to at least two of your colleagues and discuss it.
-

Life skills as a key word used in FACE refers to the following definition introduced by the World Health Organisation: “Life skills are abilities for adaptive behavior that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life” (World Health Organisation, 2001). The WHO describes 10 core skills:

- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Creative thinking
- Critical thinking
- Effective communication
- Interpersonal relationship skills
- Self-awareness
- Empathy
- Coping with emotions
- Coping with stress

Life skills therefore, can also be defined as the competences that an individual needs for sustaining and enriching his or her life. Materials that support the development of these life skills should therefore relate to these competences and contribute to making pre-existing levels of competence visible, transferring and making use of them for the support of life skills in the school context. For a more detailed understanding, the material developed in the FACE project speaks of self-competences diversified in different areas for better evaluation (see again the description of competences in chapter 1).

Life skills meter of class _____

10											Decision-making
9											Problem-solving
8											Creative thinking
7											Critical thinking
6											Effective communication
5											Interpersonal relationship skills
4											Self-awareness
3											Empathy
2											Coping with emotions
1											Coping with stress

2.3 Making pre-existing competences visible

Task:

1. Read the text by yourself.
 2. Think about the pre-existing competences in the class you teach.
 3. What are they? Can you write them down?
 4. Compare them with your colleague's list. Do you find similarities?
-

Children and adolescents coming from minorities or vulnerable groups within a society are often not only disadvantaged because of their ethnic backgrounds and differences from the mainstream but also because of a limited access to and attendance of school (UNICEF 2007).

However, this does not mean that these children start school as a tabula rasa with no prior acquired competences and skills. On the contrary, children who grew up in socio-economically weak situations often have to contribute to the survival of their family. In the instance of Roma children this phenomenon is present when we observe the children in schools. These children enter the schools with competences and skills that they have acquired in non-formal educational settings, in their families, in their peer-group, on the streets etc. It is often the educational system – not only in the countries of South Eastern Europe but also in most countries also in the West and North – that fails to perceive, measure and value these pre-existing competences. Schools do not offer opportunities where these pre-existing competences and skills can be applied, tested, further developed and transferred into a way that they become useful and accepted by the institution and its requirements.

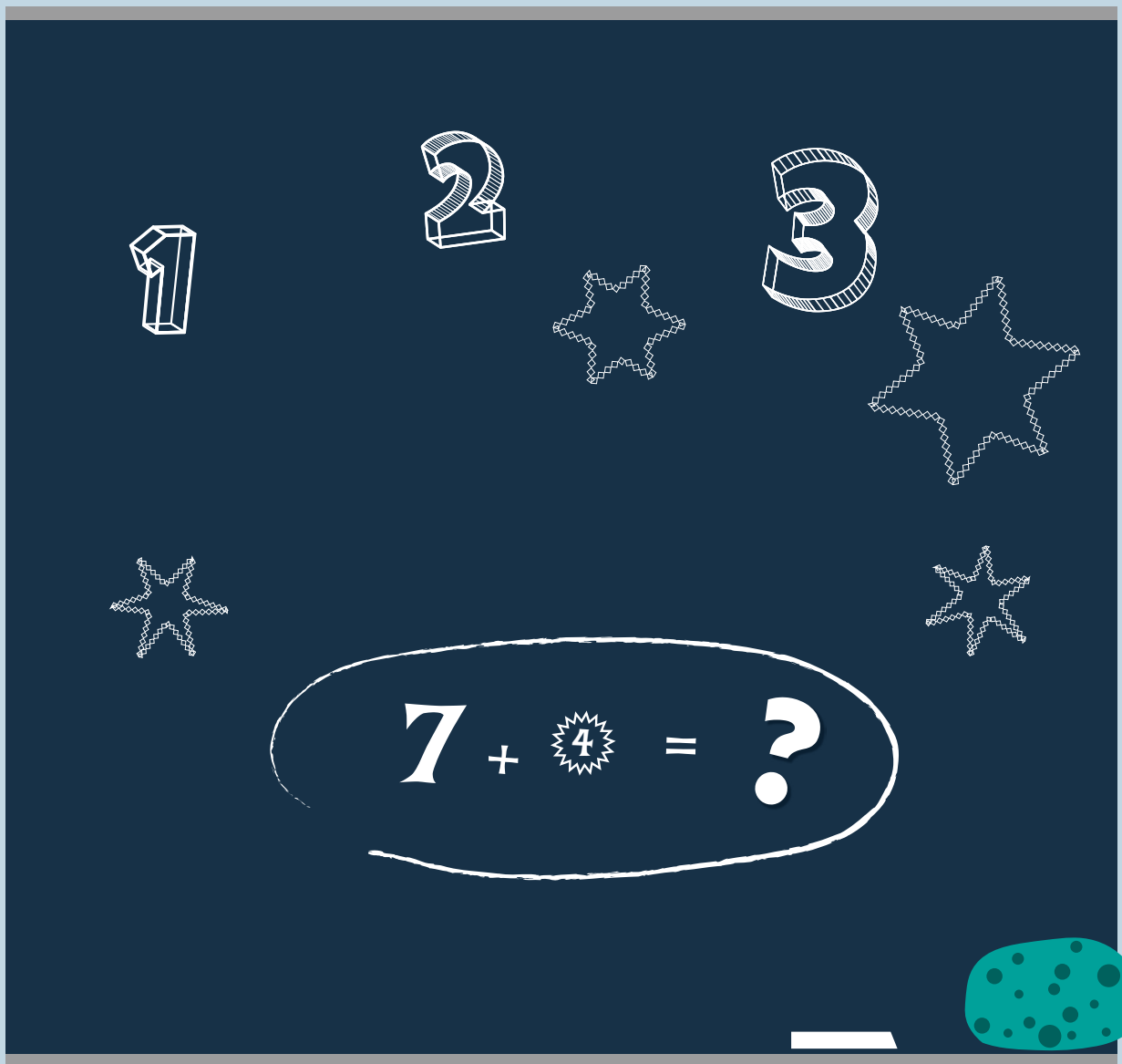
These pre-existing competences often encompass the described life skills, such as decision-making, problem-solving, creative thinking, effective communication, coping with emotions and stress etc. but they also include purely subject-related competences such as calculating, verbal communication skills (especially when children are in the roles of selling things), technical skills (repairing, agricultural work, handicrafts) as well as knowledge about their environment and its materials (agricultural work, weather forecasts etc.) or artistic/musical skills (due to a rich cultural heritage). In schools children with such pre-existing or pre-acquired competences cannot show and prove them as they are hardly ever required for school tasks, tests or other forms of summative assessment procedures. That is also the reason why Roma children – when placed in mixed groups with non-Roma children – quickly become stigmatised and remain outsiders. Their perceived lack of cognitive skills becomes visible in the context of the classroom to teachers and to their colleagues. In other contexts these children would be viewed differently.

The FACE programme tries to make these competences and skills more visible to both groups: to the Roma children and families as well as to the non-Roma families and children in the classroom. Only when both groups and the school itself start to see and value skills

and competences that have been acquired elsewhere, their potential can be used and learning opportunities can be created in class where these skills can be transferred into useful competences, skills and strategies for the specific learning context in school.

Pre-existing competences in my/one class:

Examples: mental arithmetic, cooking, organising, taking care of children, handicrafts, repairing, art work, music etc.



3 PEDAGOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 A perspective towards teaching and learning

Task:

1. When you think about your understanding of teaching and learning, what are the most important elements to you? Have a short brainstorming session with a colleague. Write down your notes on a sheet of paper.
2. Read the article on the following page.
3. Discuss it with the same colleague again. What crucial thoughts do you draw from this article?

Learner-centred education

Teaching and learning in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic schools that want to support the life skills and self-competences of students have to be learner-centred. It is based on the assumption that the structure, choice of content and organisation of all teaching must be geared to the students' needs. Student-centred teaching means that the focus of attention is on the learner's individuality, i.e. students are perceived as individuals with an independent personality (Helmke, 2012). In student-centred education students are taken seriously and valued as individuals, regardless of their learning performance or success.

This means that the interests, biography and background, the living conditions (life situation) and the specific needs of learners are perceived and respected. All this has a positive effect on the self-esteem and learning motivation of students and at the same time on the learner-teacher relationship. Students in learner-centred education feel more at ease and taken more seriously as people. Of course, this kind of setting implies that students can turn to the teacher not only for subject-related but also for personal questions and problems. In this context, education means not only schooling but, to a certain extent, also parenting.

Apart from paying attention to the emotional-affective dimension in lesson planning, learner-centred education also takes into consideration the developmental stage of the learner, previous knowledge, initial situation, experience and living conditions.

Children are perceived as actors and active subjects and not as mere objects of the teacher or of the educational programme. A key requirement of student-centred

education is, therefore, to stimulate children and adolescents in a holistic way to become active. As a result, this educational concept does not place the teacher at the centre of teaching but the learners. Learner-centred teaching means planning and structuring a lesson from the learners' point of view, in cooperation with them and geared to their needs (Wiater 2012). Or, as Helmke (2012) puts it: learner-centred education is characterized by a high degree of student participation and activity. As opposed to teacher-centred education, the model practised in most countries of South Eastern Europe, learner-centred education calls for a radically different role of the teacher (see section on the new role of the teacher as learning coach or facilitator).

Constructivist approach

In the context of a child-centred perspective of teaching and learning, an understanding of learning as individual construction is central. This constructivist approach to learning is based on two key assumptions (see Woolfolk 2008):

1. Children and adolescents are active subjects in their learning process and “construct” their own knowledge (based on their everyday knowledge they develop, for example, their own ideas and “models” about the change between night and day, about wars or about disparities between the rich and the poor).
2. Social interactions are important for this process of knowledge construction.

The constructivist approach to learning is based on the assumption that learners need the environment only as a stimulus and matrix for their own development. The main impulse for learning originates from/in the learners themselves. According to this view, students are actively and specifically looking for those things in their surroundings that pose a problem (“Why does it get dark at night?”, “Why did so many people from my country migrate?”), in order to increase their knowledge by solving the problem. Learning is seen as a constant rearranging of knowledge. The existing structure built up by the children and adolescents themselves is extended with every new learning process and step and either reorganised or built from scratch.

Constructivist methodology prefers constructing and applying knowledge and competences to mere memorising, recalling and reproducing of facts, concepts and skills (Woolfolk 2008). The learning goals at the centre of constructivist methodology are problem-solving skills, critical thinking, asking questions, self-determination and openness for different solutions. From a constructivist point of view the recommendations for education are the following:

- Learning should be based on complex, realistic and relevant learning settings and issues; these in turn trigger the learners' “knowledge construction” and “discovery learning”.
- Learners should be supported in adopting and discussing different perspectives and points of view. In order to be able to do this they should

be offered different approaches to the same topic. Students should also get the opportunity to discuss fairly and to exchange ideas.

- Learners should be aware that they are responsible for their own learning and its quality (this means at the same time strengthening self-awareness and understanding that learning is the outcome of the constructivist process).

The importance of knowledge transfer and mere learning of facts, which characterises traditional teaching, is thus reduced. This also requires teachers of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic classes to rethink the planning of learning tasks. Instead of: “Learn the following names of plants and animals by heart”, the task may have to be reformulated as follows: “In groups of three, discuss which plants and animals play an important role in the different levels of the forest, take notes and create a small poster about it”.

One part of the constructivist approach also emphasises the important dimension of independent and autonomous learning. In this context, the key term is “self-directed learning”. This means that learners regulate (direct) and monitor their own learning process and progress (including e.g. homework and longer-term projects such as a presentation) on their own (independently/autonomously). In this sense, independent learning means that students are responsible for and can decide autonomously about different aspects of their own learning.

These decisions are related in particular to the following dimensions:

Learning goals:	What do I need/do I want to be able to do?
Learning content:	What do I need/do I want to know?
Learning methods:	How do I learn this, which methods and strategies do I apply?
Learning media:	What kind of tools do I need?
Time frame:	How much time do I need/do I have at my disposal?
Pace of work:	How quickly do I work?
Learning partner:	Do I work alone? Do I work with someone else? Do I work in a group?

Whereas the learning objectives and the lesson contents (in everyday reality) at school are usually fixed, the students have some choice with regards to time, pace, learning partner(s) and sometimes also the learning methods they want to use. The FACE programme uses different levels of self-directed learning in order to guide teachers in their decisions on which dimension to open first and in order to assuage any fears of chaos that teachers often associate with a fully “open” lesson. The learning strategies mentioned above are very important in this respect. They constitute the basis students need in order to plan, organise and control/regulate their learning independently and autonomously.

3.2 Life-relevant learning

Task:

1. Read through the text.
2. When you think of your students, which topics would be relevant for them in terms of their lives? Write them down in the first column of the table.
3. Now flip through the FACE booklet. Which topics do you consider most life-relevant for them? Write them down in the second column.

Any teaching must take students' actual everyday lives and future conditions into account when choosing learning contents. This becomes even more necessary when dealing with children and adolescents coming from poor socio-economic backgrounds or who have a short and unsuccessful school biography. This means that topics must be chosen so as to be up-to-date and relevant to the lives of learners. 50 years ago, Wolfgang Klafki expressed this pointedly in the following question: "How relevant is the content or topic in question in the cognitive development of the children in my class? Or more precisely, what experience, ability or skill are they meant to acquire by its means? How relevant is the content from the pedagogical point of view?" (Klafki, 1958). However, not only must the relevance of the content in terms of the students' present needs to be taken into account, but also in terms of their future.

It is the teachers' job to choose relevant learning contents for the students' present lives and future needs. Offering life-relevant learning contents to students demands high professional standards from teachers and up-to-date information on the young learners' everyday lives, problems and pre-conditions. For teachers in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic groups this means, first and foremost, that they must take into account the fact that their students grow up as children belonging to a minority, in and between two cultures and with experiences which differ significantly from the experiences of other students in their schools. Topics such as "life in the city", "fairy-tales and myths", "In 20 years I will be...", "my dream job" etc. in rural schools in Romania, Macedonia or Kosovo have to be treated differently from the way they would be treated in mainstream schooling in urban surroundings. In the case of minority children who grow up in a bicultural environment, it is imperative to bear in mind not only their background and their additional experiences and competences, but also their (usually) weaker command of their heritage language and culture. Few countries have made an effort to adapt their curricula in a way that also addresses topics and themes that are relevant to the lives of Roma children: the number of topics which are traditionally taught still prevail.

Life-relevant topics for my students	Life-relevant tasks in FACE for my students



3.3 The different roles of students and teachers

Task:

1. Read through the article.
 2. Analyse your own role as a teacher and the roles of the students in your class(es).
 3. Write down which roles you take as a teacher and which roles the students take.
 4. Bring your results into the whole group.
 5. In which ways do you think teaching FACE changes the roles of the teacher and the students? What are the biggest challenges you face?
-

The significance of classroom management

Effective classroom management is one of the prerequisites for good quality teaching. Classroom management is the temporal and motivational framework for teaching in class; it helps to avoid unnecessary disturbances and chaos. International studies have shown that there is a proven direct link between classroom management and the extent of the students' learning progress. In this sense, Hattie's (2013) comprehensive meta-analysis equally indicates, that well-organised classes and teachers who are strongly committed to classroom management, have a clear (medium to high) effect on the learning performance of their students. Another important related aspect is the personal attitude of teachers (motivation, commitment) and the extent to which they are able to recognise and react to students' problematic behaviour. The following points are crucial with respect to classroom management in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic classes (see Woolfolk 2008):

- The classroom must be well-organised (material, seating arrangement, organisational aspects etc.).
- All students must be highly and constantly involved in activities and exercises that are attractive and task-based; the teacher must be able to recognise and modify activities accordingly.
- Define, ideally together with the students, clear, plausible rules and behaviours and make them accessible (e.g. put up a poster with class or talking rules).
- Define consequences of inappropriate behaviour; deal with discipline problems without making a fuss and without interrupting the lesson.
- A teacher can radiate uncertainty and indecisiveness.
- Make sure the lessons are flowing smoothly avoiding incongruous and unnecessary breaks.

New roles of the teacher: learning coach and learning facilitator

For students, competence-oriented and needs-oriented teaching means being highly active. In order for this to happen, the teacher must plan suitable learning activities, supervise the students along the way and give them active support if needed. Increasingly,

teachers take on the role of “learning coaches”, i.e. of initiator, supporter or evaluator of learning processes; they exert their role as a traditional lecturer less and less. The FACE programme and the teaching materials stress this shift in the teacher’s role.

To be able to fulfil this new role, the teacher must be able to assess the learning needs and the prerequisites of each student. Other tasks entail planning challenging lessons with regard to content and methodology, developing learning paths, choosing exercises, observing and supervising the learning process and, if problems arise, intervening in an adequate way. During and at the end of a learning sequence it is also necessary to analyse the learning success (who has learnt what; what goals or competences must be further emphasised or looked at in more depth and whether an assessment or assignment of grades is necessary). Another important aspect is the ability to gain insight through conversations with students, to reflect upon their learning and record the results. There are various possibilities nowadays, such as keeping a learning journal or compiling a portfolio, in which some representative products of the students’ work are collected. Within the FACE programme the teaching and learning materials are compiled in a portfolio-oriented way and constitute a yearlong learning journal for students. This also means that the relationship and the cooperation between teachers and students is different, i.e. much more equal and intense than in a more traditional kind of education where the teachers mainly lecture and their authority is based on their official position. For some teachers from countries where more traditional role models exist, it can be a challenge to adapt to a different understanding of roles and cooperation. Nevertheless, they must realise that their students will easily get used to this new teacher role.

Roles of teacher and students in my class(es)

Teacher	Students



4 DIDACTICAL METHODS

4.1 Task-based learning

Task:

1. Read through the text.
 2. Look through the FACE booklet and find three examples of task-based teaching and learning sequences.
 3. Discuss them with a colleague.
-

In FACE students learn via task-based learning methods (TBL). Task-based means that the students work on the task: it is not the teacher who works on them. This means that the booklets are designed in a way that students are able to solve problems that lead to useful and meaningful outcomes. In the process of solving these tasks they will explore many pathways leading to a solution. In this way students will acquire necessary competences and skills. Therefore, working on a task itself already means that the students learn something and it is your task as the teacher to make this possible! Try to give students the freedom to try out different ways of solving a problem: TBL will then become quite simple! Also bear in mind the following hint: "Five minutes is the limit!"

The principle of FACE is based on focussing on the students and their activity during the lessons. In order to leave enough space for TBL it is necessary for the teacher to be aware of his/her speaking time. The teacher should not exceed the limit of 5 minutes when giving instructions to students.

TBL focuses on asking students to engage in meaningful tasks that develop the competence the teacher wishes them to acquire. Such tasks can include visiting a site, professionals etc., conducting an interview, or calling customer service for assistance. Assessment is primarily based on the task outcome (in other words the appropriate completion of tasks) rather than on the accuracy of language forms. The basic approach of integrating thinking and doing has implications for the whole process of learning. The active handling of learning objects is not confined merely to the preliminary stages of "real" learning, which is understood as involving only the minds of learners. Rather, integrating learning and doing gives all learners a clear idea of why they are learning by

doing; they have a task to do and this requires the activation of many abilities and skills. In this kind of teaching, the learner must define his or her learning needs with each new situation that arises. Learners also require instruction from the teacher and this means that students set their teachers tasks and not vice versa. TBL produces ideal combinations of constructivist learning and learning by instruction.

According to Rod Ellis (Ellis, R. Task-based Language Learning and Teaching, Oxford Applied Linguistics: 2003) a task has four main characteristics:

- A task involves a primary focus on (pragmatic) meaning
- A task has some kind of “gap”
- The participants choose the resources needed to complete the task
- A task has a clearly defined outcome

In task-based learning, students face problems that they wish to solve. Learning is not an end in itself, but leads to something useful and meaningful. Students learn by exploring ways to solve a problem, setting themselves and their teacher the tasks that pave the way to the solution of the problem. Many real life situations consist of finding solutions to problems. TBL prepares students for life by creating real life situations as a setting for learning.

Task-based learning follows a pattern that can be described in general terms. If the teacher sticks to this pattern, the potentials of learning by doing (i.e. active learning) will unfold almost by themselves:

- The students face a task that needs to be solved (presented either by the teacher or a textbook)
- The students plan their action
- The students implement their action plan
- The students reflect their process of learning and present their results

It is important for students to experience the principles of TBL frequently in different contexts. A good task that gives rise to many problems that need to be solved is the best means to create a productive and exciting learning environment.

Even though there is an increased interest in TBL worldwide, there are issues to be considered in planning instruction around it. These include the risk that students will stay within the safe constraints of familiar terms and forms, just "getting by", so as to avoid the extra effort and fear of errors that accompany the risk of trying out new possibilities. As with all group work and group tasks, some students may also rely on others to do most of the work and learning.

Another challenge is that if the learning is not well planned, there is a constant danger of running out of time for new learning to be acquired and reinforced while it is still fresh. A third challenge is the difficulty of implementing task-based approaches where classes are large and space limited and/or inflexible.

4.2 Cooperative learning

Task:

1. FACE includes a lot of cooperative learning sequences.
2. Look through the FACE booklet and identify two cooperative learning sequences.
3. Read through them and discuss them with a colleague.
4. Write down the questions you have and bring them into the plenary.

FACE supports and encourages the concept of cooperative learning. Cooperative learning focuses on developing openness when working together, on communication and on discussion. When working together, task content can be understood in more depth and students can develop greater self-confidence. When working in groups, students experience being accepted by others and valued as team members and can share their knowledge more freely. Cooperation can be encouraged by group games, group activities and group discussions. Teachers should take care to offer individual work periods and group work periods in a balanced ratio.

This form of teaching is not about simply letting students work in groups in the hope that the work will somehow get done. It should not be seen as a learning process which in some shape or form is relegated to the area of social learning for lack of visible cognitive success. Rather, cooperative learning is concerned with the achievement of the learners. Clear role distribution among the members of the group is a prerequisite for successful teaching according to a cooperative model. In this way, formal tasks that provide equal status among the members are distributed and practiced and this leads to successful learning. It is however clear that not every task is suitable for this type of teaching and therefore a polarized relationship between cooperative learning forms and teacher-centred teaching is not the idea. In this model of teaching, the teacher plays a clear and meaningful role. As many class comparisons have shown, the success of cooperative learning depends on some basic elements. The following procedure seems to be tried and tested by many teachers:

Cooperative learning – How to go about organising a group:

1. The names of the group members are listed alphabetically.

2. Each person in the group is assigned one of the following roles.

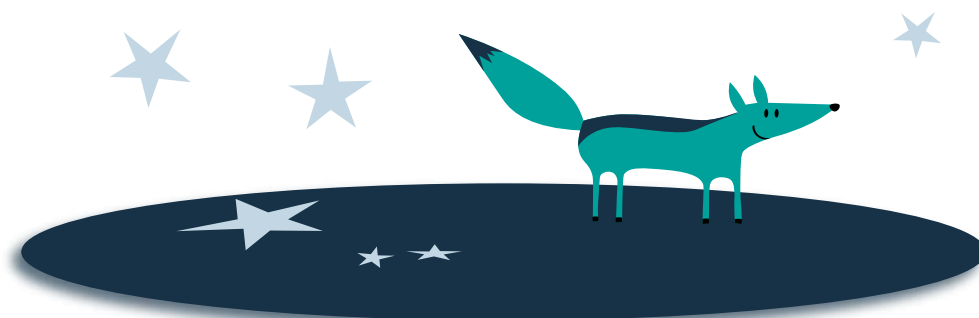
Moderator:

This person ensures that all the members understand the task and acts as the group's speaker.

Reporter:	This person organises the presentation or final product.
Materials manager:	This person ensures that all the necessary materials are available and makes sure that everything has been cleaned up at the end.
Planner:	This person makes sure that the group manages its time well and checks that the group sticks to its schedule. This person makes sure that the group plans out its course of action in a reasonable way at the beginning of the assignment and adapts this plan accordingly.
Mediator:	This person solves any problems within the group.

3. Rules:
A Some members of the group have special tasks/roles, but every single person is responsible for the entire process and the group's results.
B If a question needs to be asked of the teacher or student leader, the whole group must decide on how the question is to be asked. In this way, the group decides upon the question collectively. The leaders do not answer any individual questions during this group process.
C Each group is responsible for the presentation. Each member of the group is responsible for answering any questions.

Teachers who often work with the group method mention that it often makes sense for learners to keep their roles for longer periods of time. This provides security, speeds up learning and improves group performance.



4.3 Goal orientation

Task:

1. Read through the text.
 2. Underline the most important aspects from your point of view.
 3. Exchange your experience with a colleague and discuss what goal orientation might mean in your classes.
-

Communicating goals

Every booklet, every day and every task in the FACE programme include descriptions of the goals that should be attained by task-based learning. When explaining a task and giving oral instructions to the students it will still be very important to communicate the objectives. Only then will students understand why they are doing what they are doing.

Applying goal orientation theory in the classroom

Students tend to adopt the goal orientations that are stressed in their classrooms. Given that the research clearly shows that the mastery approach of goal orientations is related to better motivational and cognitive outcomes, the following suggestions should help to facilitate the adoption of mastery goals (in light of the debate and unresolved issues regarding the adaptive nature of approach performance goals, we do not offer any strategies to foster performance goals):

1. Focus on all meaningful aspects of learning activities.
2. Design tasks for novelty, variety, diversity, and interest.
3. Design tasks that are challenging but reasonable in terms of students' capabilities.
4. Provide opportunities for students to have some choice and control over the activities in the classroom.
5. Focus on individual improvement, learning, progress, and mastery.
6. Strive to make evaluation private, not public.
7. Recognise student effort.
8. Help students see mistakes as opportunities for learning.
9. Use heterogeneous cooperative groups to foster peer interaction; use individual work to convey progress.
10. Adjust time on task requirements for students having trouble completing work; allow students to plan work schedules and time lines for progress.

Taken from (Schunk/Pintrich [2010]: Applying goal orientation theory in the classroom. MeecePearson Allyn Bacon Prentice Hall. Online under <http://www.education.com/reference/article/applying-goal-orientation-theory-classroom/> [20.06.2013]).

☞ Establishing goals, communicating them and celebrating success

Arguably the most basic issue a teacher can consider is what he or she will do to establish and communicate learning goals, track student progress, and celebrate success. In effect, this includes three distinct but highly related elements: (1) setting and communicating learning goals, (2) tracking student progress, and (3) celebrating success. These elements have a fairly straightforward relationship. Establishing and communicating learning goals is the starting place. After all, for learning to be effective, clear targets in terms of information and skill must be established. However, establishing and communicating learning goals alone does not suffice for student learning. Rather, once goals have been set it is natural and necessary to track student progress. This assessment does not occur at the end of a unit only but throughout the unit as it is worked upon. Finally, given that each student has made progress in one or more learning goals, the teacher and students can celebrate those successes.

4.4 Differentiation and variation of tasks

☞ Task:

1. Read through the text.
 2. Think of one class that you teach currently. How many different levels of learning are there?
 3. Look through the FACE booklet. Choose one task that you will adapt to three different learning levels.
 4. Discuss your ideas with a colleague.
-

☞ What is differentiation?

Differentiated instruction is simply providing instruction in a variety of ways to meet the needs of a variety of learners.

1. A differentiated classroom is proactive.

The teacher in a differentiated classroom realises that individual students have different needs. Because of this, the teacher proactively plans a variety of methods to get students to engage in learning. Where a traditional lesson changes reactively when learning is not occurring as planned, a differentiated lesson is proactively planned so that individual needs are addressed before the lesson occurs.

2. Differentiated instruction is more qualitative than quantitative.

Differentiated instruction is not the amount of work given to students but rather putting students in a learning environment in which students can achieve learning. For example, a student who has already mastered a concept in maths should not be given more problems, but should stop practicing that skill and move on to a

subsequent skill. In addition, giving a student who is struggling a smaller amount of examples is less effective. This student may need more assistance, practice or an alternative way to express knowledge.

3. Differentiated instruction provides multiple approaches to content, process, and product.

During instruction, teachers are conscious of three elements, content (what students learn), process (how students make sense of content), and product (how students demonstrate what they have learned). When using a differentiated approach in the classroom, teachers can offer different approaches to what students learn, how they learn it, and how they demonstrate what they have learned.

4. Differentiated instruction is student centered.

A differentiated classroom is one that allows the student to think for his or herself. The teacher does not tell the students everything but rather allows the student to discover concepts independently growing at his or her pace. Lessons are designed to engage growth in all students. Lessons are neither too difficult nor too easy for the individual student, but challenging.

5. Differentiated instruction is a blend of whole-class, group, and individual instruction.

In a differentiated classroom, students receive types of instruction, whole – class, group, and individual instruction. When working together these types of instruction as a whole increase student learning. During whole class instruction students gain a feeling of community and common understanding. After whole class instruction, students may move into group or individual instruction and conclude by sharing what they have learned in a whole class setting.

Adapted from How To Differentiate Instruction In Mixed – Ability Classrooms – Tomlinson 2001. (online under http://legacy.mckinneyisd.net/departments/curriculum/MISD/Secondary/differentiation_in_the_classroom.htm [20.06.2013])

Key principles of a differentiated classroom

Differentiation is a teaching concept in which the classroom teacher plans for the diverse needs of students. The teacher must consider differences such as the students':

- learning styles, skill levels, and rates
- language proficiency
- background experiences and knowledge
- motivation
- ability to attend
- social and emotional development
- levels of abstraction
- physical needs

Key principles of a differentiated classroom

- The teacher is clear about what matters in the content area
- The teacher understands, appreciates and builds upon student differences
- Assessment and instruction are inseparable
- The teacher adjusts content, process, and product in response to student readiness, interests, and learning profiles
- All students participate in respectful work
- Students and teachers are collaborators in learning
- Goals are maximum growth and continued success
- Flexibility is the hallmark of a differentiated classroom

In a differentiated programme:

- differences are studied as a basis for planning
- student differences shape the curriculum
- pre-assessment is the norm
- multiple learning materials are available
- multiple options for students are offered
- students make sense of information
- an emphasis on concepts and connections is made
- there is varied pacing
- students get support in setting goals and standards
- varied grading criteria are used excellence as an individual effort is honoured

A differentiated programme is not:

- “individualised instruction”
- “chaotic”
- “another way of providing homogeneous grouping”
- “tailoring the same suit of clothes”
- more tasks and assignments as different ways of providing learning experiences

5 ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING PROCESSES

5.1 Perspectives of assessment

Task:

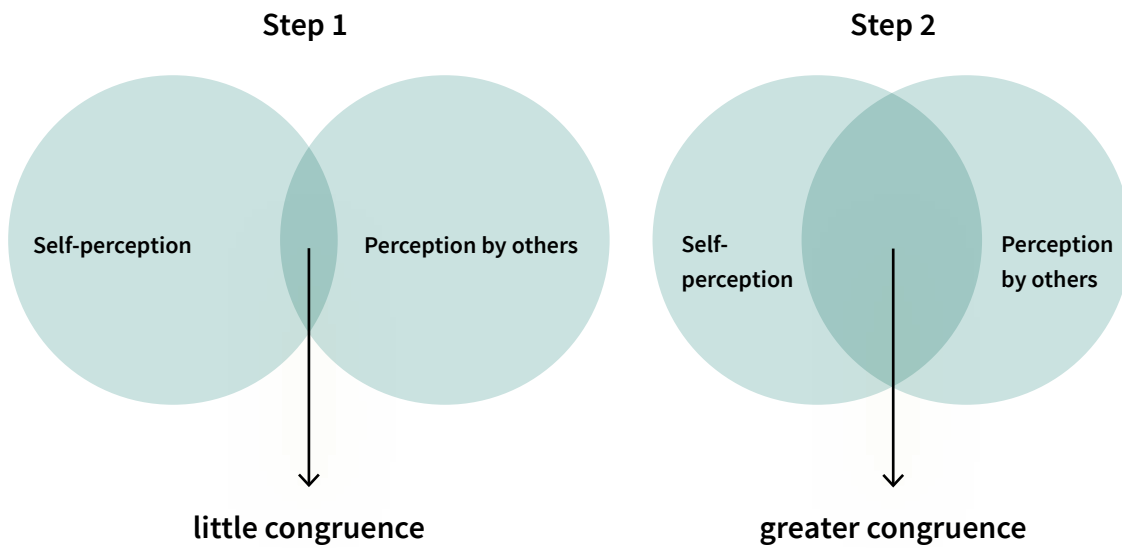
1. Read through the short text.
 2. Discuss with a partner the meaning of self-perception:
 - A How do you experience the children in your class when it comes to self-perception?
 - B Do you experience a difference in the teacher's and the parents' perception when it comes to the assessment of the children's learning progress?
-

Internal and external assessments enable a person to get a picture of his/her own state of learning and to develop further steps along the way. Both kinds of assessment also help to set new goals.

All people are used to assessment by other people. By being assessed by other people one receives feedback from students, teachers or parents.

Self-assessment describes the ability to estimate oneself and to draw the consequences thereof. It is an essential instrument to support learners in their autonomy and to guide them out of the pure dependence on teachers' feedback. Students who are able to estimate themselves realistically develop a better picture of their own self and will be less likely to feel insecure. They will be less dependent on feedback and praise and can interpret reactions of teachers more adequately.

Self-assessment and assessment by others do not have to be congruent completely but should be heard in joint meetings, thought over and discussed. A student does not automatically see herself/himself in the same way the teacher does. Different viewpoints have to be laid out and discussed. In this way blind spots, narrowed perspectives or fixed pictures can be corrected. Step-by-step, students have to learn how to estimate their own competences and abilities as well as how to give feedback to other students, how to accept feedback and discuss it. Through this step-by-step approach, self-assessment and assessment by others become more congruent.



5.2 Forms of assessment

Task:

1. Read about the different forms of assessment.
 2. Think about how you practise assessing your class.
What forms of assessment do you use? Summative? Formative? Prognostic?
 3. Take notes about your forms of assessment and discuss it with a colleague.
-

In general there are three different forms of assessment:

A Formative assessment: assessment of learning processes

This perspective serves to improve, control and check on a student's learning process, or the student's and teacher's activities to achieve a certain objective.

B Summative assessment: assessment of learning achievements

At a certain point in time, a conclusive assessment sums up the knowledge and skills that a student has acquired. Its main purpose is to inform, for example, the student or parents about the student's level of performance.

C Prognostic assessment

This type looks at a student's future development. At different stages during a student's school career, people involved in a student's education process (students, teachers, parents, in some cases school psychologists and authorities) recommend how a student should continue his or her school career.

An assessment of learning processes: formative assessment

The main goal in the assessment of learning processes (or formative assessment) is to support the individual student. Thus the efficiency of teaching is improved. Instead of merely dealing with the symptoms, the underlying reasons for learning difficulties are investigated and tackled (these reasons can be cognitive as well as emotional). Mistakes are not corrected but analysed. In this way the ideas and mind-set of a student can be understood and supported in a goal-oriented way. Difficulties have to be discussed together with the student and can be dealt with by using special support measures or tasks. By analysing the source of their mistakes, students do not have to adapt superficially and do not feel at the mercy of their difficulties. Instead, they learn how to develop individual strategies for facing their problems.

In this respect, successful learning means continuously steering the learning process and working on mistakes by both teacher and student and not merely the search for the best methods.

Possibilities for assessing learning processes:

- observations
- small, everyday tests
- tests after a long working phase

Tests that assess learning processes act as an indicator for the teaching and learning process. They enable the students as well as the teachers to check the level of achievement. Gaps and insecurities can be filled with additional tasks.

Possibilities for testing:

- observing students while solving a task
- accurate viewing and analysis of the completed tasks
- individual conversations about completed tasks
- asking questions about the way a problem was resolved
- short tests

Out of observations and conversations about the way students work on tasks and about the sources of their mistakes, individual goals arise that the students set themselves, that they work out together with the teacher or that the teacher can set for them.

When applying this kind of assessment in our teaching, the logical consequence is also a shift towards:

- goal-oriented learning instead of purely content-oriented learning
- individualised teaching instead of teaching where everybody works on the same task

Assessment of learning achievements: summative assessment

Assessment of learning achievements (or summative assessment) gives an evaluation of a student's achievement in a nutshell. It sums up all acquired knowledge and competences. It acts as an instrument of feedback to the parents, the students and the teachers. It can also form the basis of goal-oriented support. These kinds of assessments are used after long sequences of teaching and learning through observation and tests. They inform the different addressees to what degree the students have reached the different goals. Examples of assessment of learning achievements are all kinds of tests that ask for the students' accumulated knowledge or competences of a certain subject area over a certain period of time (for example, democracy quizzes, maths tests, vocabulary tests, social studies tests). Assessment of learning achievements is commonly used in schools in all subjects. Even though it is necessary for grading the students and give the teacher selective information about the students' overall performance, summative assessment brings with it various problems.

Prognostic assessment

Prognostic assessments act as a means of estimation and prediction of a student's future career. Prognostic assessment combines basic aspects taken from an assessment of learning processes and an assessment of learning achievements and tries to formulate a diagnosis for the student's future. It asks questions such as: "How can we support individual development and positive learning processes?" Prognostic assessments become very important at different stages in a student's academic life such as:

- school enrolment
- repetition of a year
- switching classes/schools
- transfer to a different type of school (for example, special education)
- transfer to a higher school

In this respect, discussions have been going on for the past few decades as to whether prognostic assessment can really be described as a form of assessment or can rather be viewed as a function of assessment.

5.3 Norms of assessment

Task:

1. Read the text.
 2. Underline the most important information.
 3. What are the assessment norms that are used in your country/your school/your class?
 4. Take notes to prepare yourself for a joint discussion with your colleague.
-

Assessment in school is a wide-open field. Not only does it influence explicit things that can be observed such as students' qualifications or their position in society (depending on their grades) and thus their academic career, assessment in school also influences other aspects within the individual such as self-image, self-esteem and the general concept one has about his or her own competences and abilities. School has an enormous influence on the self-perception of competences. Its direct influence depends on the way assessment is chosen and carried out in school.

Social criterion

Because of the social context in which learning in school takes place, using the social criterion as a measure can give essential information about competences in comparison to other students. At the same time, estimates about competences in a comparative social perspective strongly influence the self-image and self-concept of students.

Individual criterion

Using the individual criterion for assessment means comparing intra-individual differences with each other. What is the difference between the student's achievement in FACE last month and now? It is a temporary comparison that is used here. Young students especially tend to prefer this criterion as a tool for assessment. The amount of "added value" is being recorded over a certain amount of time. This makes it possible to give feedback to the student about the range of his or her achievement as well as the way in which it has increased or decreased. Achievement is not compared to the achievement of other students. Rather, the progress of each student is in focus. This method of assessment also corresponds with the informal learning processes that take place out of school where the student evaluates his or her own competences autonomously.

Objective criterion

Academic achievement is being compared with a learning objective. An individually achieved learning progress is being compared with a realistically achievable goal. This

method of assessment is an objective-based norm and informs about the approach towards a goal which is defined as the perfect achievement. Comparing the student's achievement with other students' learning progress is not of importance. Criteria-based tests are oriented towards clearly defined goals. They measure achievement with reference to a certain characteristic which the teacher selects. This also means that the teacher has to set and present the goals the students have to attain in their achievement. Thus, achievements of the student are not compared to those of other students. According to various studies in this field, social processes of comparisons between students only occur when there is no objective criterion used in assessment.

What are the results of this discussion? If a teacher wants to strengthen the self-image and self-concept of his or her students, assessment should happen following an objective criterion. Goals given by the teacher have to be clear and have to be communicated to the students.

5.4 Giving feedback to students: from lecturer to facilitator

Task:

1. Read the text.
 2. Think about the way feedback is given in school and about how you give feedback to your students.
 3. Think about what it means to switch the role of the teacher.
What will change for you?
 4. Discuss both questions with a colleague and formulate 3 questions to ask in the plenary.
-

The students on the FACE programme are capable of working on their own and – depending on their age – understand written instructions or can work together with colleagues. Nevertheless, your task as the teacher will be to provide individual support to those who need it. In the course of the FACE school year your role will develop more and more into that of a coach and you will spend less time as a lecturer.

You can either put yourself into the role of a coach by walking around and answering individual questions or you can assign this role also to a student who has already fulfilled the task. Make sure to not always choose the same students as the role models. They may become stigmatised and less popular with their classmates if they are always assigned that role.

Giving direct feedback

Results of various research studies about factors that influence students' achievement show that the most important factor is personal and direct feedback given by the teacher. During the FACE programme, make sure that you reserve enough time for giving feedback – not only in written form but also during lessons – to your students. When you have switched your role from lecturer to facilitator this will happen automatically. You will get to know your students' work and performance a lot better than you used to. You will follow his/her progress much more closely and you will be able to comment on his/her individual work on a much deeper level. You will also have to deal with a lot of different products in terms of quality.

The idea of sharing

Switching from the role of lecturer to facilitator does not mean that the teacher loses his/her role of presenting contents and facts. However, his/her role as a moderator will increase and this includes steering the desired learning processes in the students. This accounts especially for situations where a discussion or a debate about something has to take place. In the booklets, this is also described as “discussion” or as “sharing”. “Sharing” means to take an interest in others, to know what they achieved, how they did it, what they think, what their reasons are, as well as explaining oneself, one's actions and reasoning, one's opinions and experiences.

Chairing a discussion, or a sharing

The criteria of a good “chairing” include the following:

- The students speak more than you do
- The students also ask questions, not only you
- When you ask a question or give a prompt, more than one or two students answer
- The students start questions and answers among themselves at least once
- The sharing stays focussed: you (or a student) compare, summarise, bring the sharing back to the point etc.
- Personal and lively: you (or a student) ask for the opposite, for a personal opinion from several students, for a concrete example, what they would do outside school etc.
- Take and give enough time, so that only three or four themes are covered within a 15-minute sequence

Writing feedback

Remember to react primarily to a few points you are interested in: what the student did well, where she/he surprised you, what the main point was in your eyes. Then you can add one question where you want to hear more, or one concrete tip about how the student could act differently next time.

5.5 Giving feedback to parents

Task:

1. Before you read the text, recall a positive and a negative situation where you gave feedback to parents.
 2. Read the text.
 3. Do you agree with these hints? What are your personal strategies for giving feedback to parents? Can you share something with your colleagues?
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“Your son is doing well. He is doing ok in his academic subjects... just keep it up.”

“She understands the lesson.”

“She is friendly with her classmates.”

Comments such as those are risky and too open for errant interpretations (e.g. how ok is “ok”?) To the parent, it can mean that the student is performing perfectly, thus any sudden dip in future test scores can cause stress and worry. It may also seem that the teacher is not keeping an eye on the students. Further, it is unrealistic and does not help solve any problems in academic performance.

Teachers cannot and should not avoid chance meetings with parents, when parents will most likely ask for instant feedback. Though unavoidable, teachers can do several things to prepare themselves in order to provide authentic feedback.

1. **Collect brief anecdotes regularly.** If you have a large class, your anecdotes need not be exhaustive. A set of criteria for collecting observations is crucial. Focus on very significant incidents: the student wasn’t able to finish a classroom task or assignment, he/she came to school without homework, failed quizzes and their frequency, etc.
2. **Confer with other subject teachers regarding their feedback,** especially if you are the class adviser. To accomplish this in less than an hour, focus your meeting on observed performance and recommended solutions.
3. **If your school doesn’t have a feedback system for parents, organise one with your principal and co-teachers.** Determine a suitable schedule so as not to compromise your teaching tasks and preparation, while keeping in mind that not all parents can be available at any given time. When ready, articulate the feedback system to the parents, since they are part of the school community.
4. **Give feedback when necessary, even when not on schedule.** Incidents such as consecutive quizzes where the student barely achieved a pass merit a phone call to the parent. Think of it as a preventative move on your part that may help avoid serious academic problems. Any parent will surely appreciate your concern and promptness.

5. **Organise your anecdotes.** This will help you deliver concrete reports and recommendations. List the items in order of priority. Some things may be not worth mentioning at all.
6. **Listen to parents,** and take down notes during or after the feedback meeting. Parents may mention incidents outside school that may be significant to the student's class performance. Since parents have known your student longer than you have, they may mention insights on how to best motivate their child.
7. **Parents are your team mates.** With their input and insights, your ultimate goal is to form resolutions that will best help improve the student's academic performance and offer opportunities for personal growth.

These simple steps will help the teacher do away with vague reports to parents which sometimes serve only as false hope. Our clients deserve the best service we can give in terms of being accurate and timely.

Teachers who communicate student performance effectively are able to provide help readily by alerting parents. Well-informed parents are then able to take the best corrective action at their end. Such action should run parallel to whatever intervention the teacher makes in the classroom. Thus the need for teachers to be more articulate and specific in giving feedback.

Just like any new policy or change in policy, this will work best if formulated as a community. Teachers, the school administration and parents should and must all contribute to creating and implementing an effective feedback system.

Taken from "The Learning Chronicle": Online under: <https://thelearningchronicle.wordpress.com/2012/08/15/giving-feedback-to-parents-its-not-ok-to-just-say-ok/>

