

Comenius 2.1. project: EU-mail.

Report on UK: visit to schools. September, 2004.

General information: We've been to 2 schools, both very big, seen from a Finnish and Norwegian point of view: nearly 1000 pupils in each school. We've found some very good practice, but we're not convinced we've seen real mixed-ability groups according to the Nordic definition. However, the schools let us visit **year 7** in both schools and in these forms there are definitely more a mixture of abilities than in the classes where they have streamed/setted the pupils according to ability. In one school we also experienced in action a co-teacher who was in care of the less gifted pupils.

| Bullet points | Our notes |
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| <p>1) Examples of best practice in dealing with mixed ability individualized learning <u>in and outside lessons</u></p> | <p>1) Both schools focused on targeting in all subjects. It puts the focus on the individual. They had "Objective boards" in the classroom where the teacher wrote down the target for that lesson. It was widely used.</p> <p>2) The form/subject teacher discusses details of their personal targets with pupils every year. The pupils are expected to be committed to that.</p> <p>3) These targets are written in the pupils' personal "Planner"- a small "Diary" which they get every year. Sometimes targets are also a special mark which they should work towards.</p> <p>4) Focus was on "Learning together" in team- and pair-work. Teacher put a lot of care into the groups and pairs- who should be with who?</p> <p>5) Task were often open-not necessarily only one correct answer. Process was important.</p> <p>6) Pupils should be "stretched"- meaning they will get a task that is a little beyond their capacity.</p> |
| <p>2)Results of comparison and reflection on the findings and their evaluation taking into account the specific situation in each country- as done in exchange with the couples and the general exchange with all other visitors on Friday morning.</p> | <p>1) The <u>size of schools</u> make comparison very difficult since we represent the Nordic system with schools averaging 300 pupils. The English system provides better support both to teachers and pupils in many fields; for example in school development. There were experts on hand to provide in-service training on vital topics.</p> <p>2) The English system demands <u>school development plans</u> which were very detailed. One school had involved teachers in the development of a plan and they called it "Teaching and Learning"- indicating that also teacher had a life-long-process of learning. This indicates a way of thinking which could provide individualized learning for pupils.</p> |

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| <p>3) Factors which influence individualized learning in mixed ability groups positively/negatively</p> | <p>1) Positively: We thought that the focus on targeting is an important influence on individualized learning. Then the focus is more on the process of each individual.</p> <p>2) Negatively: the focus on assessment in League tables which is published- often in local newspapers.</p> |
| <p>4) Aspects concerning the effect of individualized learning on the acquisition of curricular and social competences</p> | <p>1) Acquisition of curricular competences: -Assessment in English schools is frightening in all its aspects. We've never seen such a system of control. You've got the League Tables which publish the results and the local newspapers which pick it up and write about it in every detail. We are thinking about the less gifted pupils who have had their own targets and who have achieved a lot on his/her level. We thought this was inconsistent when you look at the general policy of schools which is that pupils should like to be there and have a good life. All schools have to be tested in some way, but not to this extent. -The subject competence of teachers was very high.</p> <p>2) Acquisition of social competences: The English are quite good at that. We found the pupils to behave very well and also relations in class to be very good. The emphasis put on social skills was obvious. We never got around to check if they set targets in this field. We would in the Norwegian system. We're not in doubt that this influence individualized learning.</p> |
| <p>5) All other aspects, factors, details which will help conception and testing of modules for teacher training and teachers' further education at home in your country</p> | <p>1) Team skills. Make sure teachers know how to apply the skills for collaboration <u>in their own work</u> and in the classroom.</p> <p>2) Modules on how to teach social skills to pupils. It's been in the Norwegian Curriculum since 1997 and many teachers need this as in-service training. I'm not sure how much there is in the teacher training.</p> <p>3) We also believe that the aspect of learning through discussion is something to use in a module. In Halden Teacher Training College there is a teacher who is using the "Teaching –thinking"-method which shows some of this .</p> <p>4) "Learning styles" seems to be "on" in the UK. It's also very much discussed and used in other countries. We suggest modules on this for all countries.</p> <p>5) How to care for the talented pupils: strategies.</p> |

This has been redrafted after the visit due to very little time in Manchester.
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October 17th., 2004.