



Pestalozzi Programme

Intensive trainer training course (ITT)

Strasbourg March 2015

Pascale Mompont-Gaillard

The event was planned to offer an intensive training for the pedagogy and methodology promoted by the Pestalozzi Programme (learner-centred, learning-by-doing, cooperative, inquiry based, explorative and task-based etc.). The training focused on the following areas/pedagogical and developmental approaches:

- Action research as a professional and personal development approach
- Competences based model of personal and professional development: Transversal attitudes, skills and knowledge (TASKs) for democracy
- Cooperative learning principles
- Alternative assessment and evaluation methods
- Online professional communities
- Peer-training (micro-teaching)

Preparations:

In the second half of January 2015 a team of trainers was invited to start online preparation for the meeting: Branko Bogнар, (Croatia); Miguel Ángel García López, (Germany); Ildikó Lázár, (Hungary); with Pascale Mompont-Gaillard (France) as trainer and coordinator. The team met face to face the day prior to the meeting to finalise all preparations.

The activities for the participants started early February, with the preparatory tasks on the online platform. Participants were divided in eight base groups, each of three or four members. Each team member acted as mentor for two base-groups. Each participant was invited to join the discussion thread for his/her base group, greet peers and complete the needs assessment questionnaire to send to their mentor.

The needs assessment showed that participants were quite familiar with cooperative learning theory but not very experienced in practice; some were quite familiar with the TASKs model and some not at all; most participants expressed the wish to learn more about alternative assessment and a majority pointed out that they had little experience in action research. It was therefore decided to give quite some space to action research methodologies throughout the programme, so as to prepare for their inclusion within the Pestalozzi approach in the future.

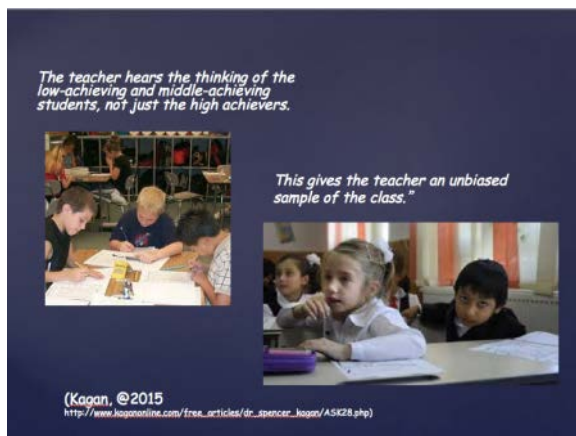
The meeting

During three days, participants were involved in different activities and along with that they collected data and reflected these activities within small-scaled action research projects that also served as a continuous evaluation process.

A large part of the programme was devoted to peer-training: participants prepared and conducted their own 20-minute activities. After each activity they had 10 minutes for peer feedback. Some of these sessions were videotaped.

Apart from the labour-intensive activities, which were connected with cooperative learning, evaluation, education for democracy, and action research, some of activities provided opportunities for unstructured communication, building good relationships, relaxed atmosphere and fun.

*“In fact Pestalozzi training sessions are nothing but **JUST** hard work... Lots of positive energy mixed with great fun in sharing knowledge.” (L. M. Lopes Santos Vicente, personal communication, March 3, 2015)*



Guidelines to give feedback on Methodology issues

- The methods used promote the objectives
- The flow is coherent - the activities are in logical sequence
- The timing was good
- The instructions were clear
- The activities are interesting and motivating

At the end of each day, participants worked in their base-groups. They discussed and reflected on the data they gathered (though interviews, surveys, multi-media collections) related to their action research topics: learning, cooperation, critical reflection and creativity. They reported on these reflections and made plans about the next steps regarding their individual action research project. In addition, they kept online research diaries.

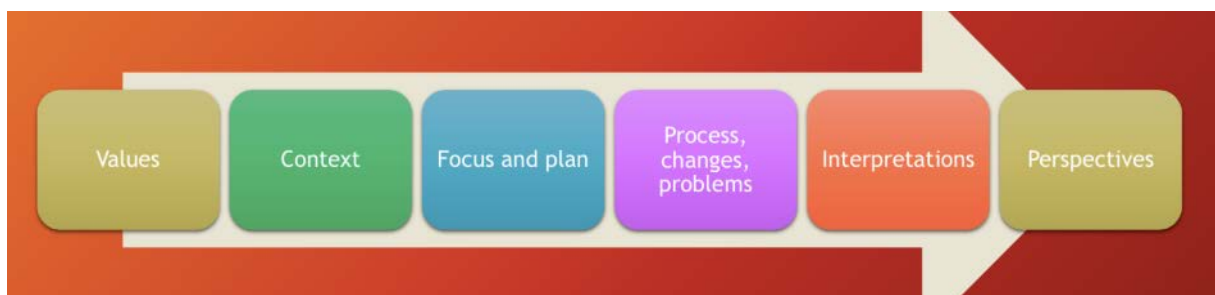


Figure 1: the process of action research followed during the training

Results:

- The training event provided various topics important to participants' practice and offered opportunities to learn new methods.
- Participants were actively engaged in the realisation of all planned activities.
- Participants enhanced their facilitation skills through the preparation and facilitation of 20-minute activities, the feedback they got and the modelling of democratic principles, cooperative learning and learning by doing, at all stages of the training event.
- Through the alternation of work-intensive and less demanding and laid-back activities that ensured learning in a positive and relaxed atmosphere, new friendships were made at an international level.
- A body of very attractive and interesting teacher training and teaching activities are now available for the trainers of this group to use in the programme as well as in their own practice.
- A group of 27 trainers is now motivated and empowered to continue working within the Pestalozzi programme to further its goals.

"I have experience from many different conferences, seminars, workshops, but you have to know that you are the most energizing and inspiring people I met last few years. This makes me a better person. Thank you for that." (Ž. Burcar, personal communication, March 3, 2015)

Challenges:

This pilot training gave the team, and the Pestalozzi Programme organisers, opportunities for learning and planning for the next *Intensive Trainer Training Course*. The approach of the Pestalozzi Programme is a complex one with many embedded threads. Conveying these various pedagogical approaches with enough depth requires an integrated approach that takes time and effort to develop: trainers should have previous experience working together, be willing to take shared ownership for the whole process and work very tightly together to tie in the various threads together. Such an endeavour is a big challenge and therefore requires time and planning to achieve as well as enough face-to-face work for the team and with participants to develop fully. Only this effort and resource will allow for a balanced intensive training involving all learners through their head, heart and hands.

Follow up:

Participants are invited to upload their activity plans, with instructions for trainers, on the online platform. They are now receiving further feedback on their session plans. The possibility to publish these training plans - thus making them available for all members of the Pestalozzi Programme online Community of Practice - is envisaged. The videotaped sessions can be further exploited to continue individual action research, with critical friends from the group.

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