

Managing for @ School of Success

Narrative Memory

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Canas de Senhorim Group of Schools

Narrative memory

Well, this task is very difficult because you can't see a real big change in my school, one of those that we immediately notice when entering. Well... there is something different: after the Netherlands, at the end of the day, our students started to pick up their chairs and put them on the table and the next day, in their first lesson, they put them back again, to make cleaning tasks easier.

There, school buildings were very well equipped and had a very efficient and astonishing architecture, what shows the importance of physical structures in/to Dutch educational matters.

But if functional and structural changes seem easier to implement here in Portugal (at least some of them), pedagogical and management practices are not so easy to change - but we should start somewhere....

These Erasmus+ projects may be the starting point, as they give us the opportunity to see other educational realities and organizations. However, we immediately notice that some changes go beyond our (Portuguese Directors) management ability, as they are part of general/national guidelines:

- the time students spend at school per day (they have classes both in the morning and in the afternoon almost every day and sometimes they have three ninety minutes classes in a row);
- the excessive number of subjects (especially from 5th to 9th grade), including very theoretical ones (for example a 9th grader studies Portuguese, English, French or Spanish, Maths, Physics and Chemistry, Science, Geography and History – of course this is too much, if we consider that he/she still has Arts, ICT, Physical Education and Religion);
- and the extension of some subjects' curriculum (along with very demanding and difficult contents). Regarding this latter problem, we've noticed that foreign students that come to our country, to our schools, find it hard to adapt to our curricula. They say they are too demanding and that they had never studied such contents. On the contrary, most Portuguese students that leave our country and enter other school systems say that the subjects are much easier than in Portugal and they get much better marks than they used to have.

And these three restraints are too much, when/if compared with our European neighbours. In the Netherlands and in Spain, basics / primary school students (as we saw when we were there) don't have lessons in the afternoon and they have free time to either go home or do other things, like attending extracurricular activities. In Portugal, they only leave school at the end of the day, then they have to catch the bus, arrive home around 6.30 pm, do their homework, have dinner and try to be with their families. They have no time to play, to have fun and if they have any extracurricular activity they only arrive home at 9-9.30 pm. On this issue, some weeks ago, CNE (National Committee of Education) published a very good study, comparing the time spent by Portuguese students at school with other OCDE countries. These are some of the conclusions:

I - The extension and intensity in curriculum approach is projected on how we organise school time and on how we plan the teaching and learning process. This may be the difference between good learning environments and failure contexts.

II - A second dimension in the organization of school time is that of its relation with students' behaviour. Time loads concentrated on some days of the week, extensive "blocks" of the same subject, poor distribution or short break times, may have a relevant impact on students' behaviour, on their capacity of concentration, on their availability to learn or even on reaching a saturation point due to fatigue. For all these reasons, it is important to value the way we organise time distribution (timetables) of school and non-school timetables, curricular and extracurricular activities, concentration and recreation periods.

One of the peculiarities of the Portuguese case is the fact that it presents more days of classes in the first cycles of schooling and fewer in the following cycles. This feature defies the generalised principle that states that the number of school days should increase along with age and school paths.

III - The school time - the total amount of time for each school year:

1. While the minimum compulsory time in the first years of schooling (ISCED 1) places Portugal above the OECD average (4932 hours, compared to 4621 hours), in the following cycles (ISCED 2) Portugal (2675 hours) is below the OECD average (2919 hours). This finding suggests that there is some imbalance in the distribution of school hours with an excessive workload in the first cycles of schooling and deficient in the following cycles (when compared to the rest of the countries).

2. One of the reasons for Portugal to present this imbalance is the time of non-compulsory education in ISCED 1 (1303 hours), which places Portugal among the countries with the highest total number of hours at this level of education.

Having these setbacks that we can't avoid/change, we have learnt how to overcome them within our limited autonomy:

- the students and teachers' schedules are adapted to be "softer": theoretical subjects (we have between five and eight) are taught/learnt in the morning (while students are less tired) and practical ones in the afternoon;
- offer at least two/three free afternoons, especially to older kids (secondary ones) for them to study, work in groups or just enjoy some free time.

The thing I liked the most in the Netherlands was the way students and teachers worked (in teams). In classes, students were working in groups (sometimes alone) and we hardly saw teachers. But they were always there (in a kind of "teacher shadowing") - helping, coordinating, monitoring, checking.

And we could also see that teachers worked together, inside and outside classrooms. And not only teachers.... When municipality (politicians), headmasters and companies (business organisations) got together in meetings, they did it in a very constructive way, they had fruitful discussions, trying always to do more and better things for their students' future and always defending the quality of education.




In Portugal, this dialogue is difficult and rare and, when it exists, it is "rusty" and all the actors (specially the political ones) are very concerned with "looking good in the photo", (Portuguese idiom that means that they just care about being popular, trying to get vote(r)s for the next elections.). School meetings with government representatives take place in big auditoriums with the school directors of a whole region (50 at a time) where they dictate national rules to be obeyed, rules that don't take into account the different realities of schools in Portugal. Exemplifying: each class must have at least 24 students to be authorised. Of course, this target is easily achieved in big cities, especially coastal ones, where younger population is concentrated. In small villages like ours, where depopulation and emigration, along with the decline of the birth rate, that number is hard to reach. This implies terrible negotiations with our Regional Educational Coordinator (and her staff) and most of the times she keeps inflexible because there can't be exceptions to the law!


I think these aspects I have referred to are the most difficult to manage. Anyway, I think we are going a good way. For example, General Councils of schools include politicians


(municipalities representatives), businessmen, social and artistic organizations who might help achieving some of the school aims or solving some of its problems. And, very recently, government has published a law that allows schools to manage till 25% of the curriculum, choosing some areas/subjects to work complementarily, in a more flexible way. But, of course, if we want to lighten a bit our students' burden, the first step to take is either shorten the curricula of some subjects (especially the structural ones, Portuguese and Maths) or reduce the number of subjects. I hope that government representatives start participating in this type of European programmes, so that they can experience and get in touch with different school systems, their good practices, and see what's wrong with ours. I think this could function!

Branston Junior Academy – United Kingdom

Narrative Memory: May 2017

Country	Date	Topic	Gap Tasks / Post-Actions	Self-Reflection
	January 2016	"Lift Off" – The launch of the whole project!	Various Powerpoints and Word documents were created in preparation for this event – to introduce the UK educational system in general and the pedagogy and practice behind Branston Junior Academy in more detail.	My 'One Note' journal states: <i>"What a fantastic, passionate and enthusiastic group of people, I have been fortunate enough to be chosen to work with! What an ambitious and exciting project...visiting 5 different countries and observing various aspects of their educational systems...having the opportunity to question different speakers...exploring different methodologies...exploring and expanding pedagogical skills, knowledge and understanding...creating video diaries, e-books, Erasmus+ courses, and an international seminar! I feel honoured that they chose me to represent the UK."</i>
	April 2016	Autonomy Part 1	A Powerpoint was made in preparation for the visit, to explain the current landscape of 'autonomy' in UK schools and the current and future concerns. Following the visit, Val and I examined BJA's use of data, particularly national and international data. We also contacted the NAHT 'Primary Futures' scheme to begin to introduce more aspects of 'the World of Work' at BJA.	My 'One Note' Journal states: <i>In preparation for this Training Event and most certainly during and following the week, I have spent time thinking about my role as Headteacher, what Autonomy I have in my role and how I can use it effectively. The discussions held during the week have certainly contributed towards my latest MA Module linked to 'Leadership, Autonomy and Foucault'...especially as a lot of people in the group were kind enough to complete surveys – the results of which I can use in my Module!</i> <i>I am beginning to notice changes in my thinking and actions. This project is certainly inspiring me to think more about 'Leadership and Management' and how I am privileged to be able to use my Autonomy to make a difference to the children, families and staff at BJA.</i>
	September 2016	Meeting	Many decisions were made regarding future activities in the project.	My 'One Note' Journal states: <i>How fantastic to meet up with everyone again...albeit the smaller group!.....</i> <i>...we got loads of tasks completed and made decisions regarding the forthcoming visit to the Netherlands and the ongoing completion of the project as a whole. I cant wait to meet up with everyone at the next training event – s'Hertogenbosch, here I come!</i>

Country	Date	Topic	Gap Tasks / Post-Actions	Self-Reflection
	January 2017	Autonomy Part 2	<p>The task prior to the visit was to create a powerpoint to explain how self-evaluation works in UK schools in general and BJA in particular.</p> <p>Following discussions about 'how leadership can be evaluated', with the whole group whilst on the visit; I created various 'monitoring and evaluation' documents to tighten up and amend policies and practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching, Learning and Assessment • Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare • Leadership and Management • Safeguarding • Appraisal <p>These were then presented to Governors and Staff.</p> <p>Various other ideas seen, heard or discussed whilst at the Netherlands, were 'stolen' and used as part of an Inset Day – coming up with 5R's (Respect, Reflection, Relationships, Resilience, Responsibility) to use for our new Code of Conduct and general ethos.</p>	<p>My 'One Note' Journal states:</p> <p><i>Yet again, it was an inspiring and thought-provoking week! I managed to discuss 'The use of different Leadership Styles' with many Headteachers from the different countries....not only verbally, but also because many of them willingly completed surveys I had created for my MA Dissertation!</i></p> <p><i>The M@SS Project, coupled with the reading for my MA Dissertation is certainly having an impact! I feel much more in tune with what I am doing as a Leader and why. I feel empowered to take control and am proud of my efforts and achievement - despite the continuing uneasy quagmire that is the current state of the British Education System. In this era of budget cuts; lack of behavioural, emotional and academic support; and continued drive for collaboration (and potential Multi-Academy Trusts), I am thankful that I have this opportunity to consolidate and strengthen my pedagogical thinking.</i></p> <p><i>It is through this Erasmus+ project - the opportunities to visit other schools and share pedagogical concepts with other Leaders, that I have more self-confidence in my skills as a Leader. Through my MA Dissertation reading, I am becoming more and more interested in feminism with regards to changing the ways in which women are depicted in society and in the media. In this era where high profile politicians feel it is ok to make derogatory comments about women, I am beginning to explore how my fortunate position in society can be used to help others. I have just started to explore the work of groups such as 'UN Women'.</i></p>

Country	Date	Topic	Gap Tasks / Post-Actions	Self-Reflection
	February 2017	Self-Evaluation Part 1	<p>The task prior to the visit, was to create a Powerpoint to explain how self-evaluation works in UK schools.</p> <p>Following the visit, small groups of participants were asked to work together to answer some questions about 'measurement'. The UK was put with Spain and the Netherlands – whilst the Netherlands and the UK shared their answers with each other; I think Spain must have sent theirs direct to the organising team in Portugal.</p> <p>Also following the visit, Val and I moved further on with our 'Primary Futures' event and introducing the 'World of Work' to the children. A chocolatier worked on a project with the whole school and a large event has been planned for 15th June. Our school joined a proactive 'Peer Review' Group and I have reviewed two schools and been reviewed myself. I have been able to take my reflections and actions from the M@SS Project and share with them HT's from these other schools.</p> <p>Following the Spain visit, I was asked to make a short presentation about the M@SS project to another Erasmus+ group who were visiting Lincolnshire. They came from Italy, Germany and Poland.</p>	<p>My 'One Note' Journal states:</p> <p><i>...for me, Headship is not an act – in order for it to be effective, it has to be authentic; and in order for it to be authentic, it has to be a magnification of one's personae, one's morals and values. The person has to be strong enough to stick by this authenticity despite the ever-changing quagmire, that seems to be the current state of education, no matter which European country you are working in! Leadership is more than adhering to theoretical ideology spouted by educational bureaucrats in their offices...Leadership is having het confidence and strength to do what is right for the children, families, staff and local communities that they work alongside. 'Good' leadership is being able to do this effectively – developing and empowering all stakeholders so that excellent ideas are taken from all sources, which might even include the odd 'excellent' governmental paper!</i></p> <p>In April 2017, BJA was inspected by Ofsted. The latest inspection criteria have an extremely strong focus on leadership and management. Whilst our International Work was mentioned and celebrated, I believe the opportunities I have had to discuss and reflect upon 'leadership and management' with my project colleagues, has undoubtedly helped me to develop in pedagogy and self-confidence to espouse and live it.</p>

Vila Nova de Paiva Group of Schools

Narrative memory

The project “Managing for @ School of Success” has allowed us to observe, analyse and share the educational contexts of different European countries. As it is evident, each country possesses its own identity that derives from its own culture, its socioeconomical level, its political system and its educational policy in particular. Despite the fact that we have only been present in Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain, it becomes evident the divide between the countries from the North of Europe which are more progressive, and those from the South, which are more conservative and traditional.

What have I learnt with this project?

1- Autonomy and leadership

In Portugal the topic of schools autonomy has been constant in the politicians’ speech. Yet, that speech has been pure rhetoric. Reality reveals that the level of autonomy is residual. This project, by allowing the comparison with the involved countries reality, enhanced this conviction.

The Portuguese educational system is hostage to the educational policies that change with the government switching. In this context, there’s a lack of time to implement measures and assess their impact.

On the other hand, schools have little autonomy as long as nearly all aspects are regulated and controlled by the structure of the Ministry of Education, as, for example, recruitment of teachers, allocation of financial resources, allocation of funds to maintain buildings, acquisition of material, definition of the curriculum, approval of courses and classes. Teachers have some flexibility in the pedagogical management inside the classroom.

In contrast, the Netherlands have an educational policy marked by schools autonomy, with a specific educational project, centred in the pupil, with a flexible

curriculum management and with humanized and versatile educational environments.

In this domain of autonomy, I could identify some aspects where I have been able to intervene. Despite the few financial resources, it was possible to start a humanization process of the school spaces, by painting some rooms with lively colours, motivational phrases and comfortable furniture. This is an ongoing process.

On the other hand I try to get students and parents more involved in educational issues. Every three months I meet with the classes representatives in order to listen to the problems that might have occurred, to ask for suggestions and proposals for school intervention. I have also met with groups of parents, mainly with those whose children are going to move to a new study cycle, to exchange perspectives and information about the school educational offer.

2- Internal and external assessment

The educational Portuguese system assumes the existence of internal and external assessment processes. The internal assessment is the school's responsibility, being its duty to define a proper model or adopt an existing programme. In the case of Agrupamento de Escolas de Vila Nova de Paiva, the assessment has been centred in the monitoring of the academic success, of the vertical and horizontal articulation.

The external assessment happens in two ways. On the one hand, there are assessment tests ("provas de aferição") (2nd, 5th and 8th grades) tests in the end of the cycle(Portuguese and Maths in the 9th grade) and national exams (11th and 12th grade) which are focused essentially in the students' academic success. The Portuguese educational system also adhered to the tests: Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

On the other hand, we have Inspeção-Geral de Educação e Ciência (IGEC), which, periodically, undertakes a global assessment on schools functioning, focusing on the following domains: Results, Provision of educational service; Leadership and

management.

In Spain, the internal assessment is centred essentially in the indicators relating the success rate and the satisfaction level concerning the sectoral functioning of school. This assessment is done mainly by teachers and students and focuses on domains, like, for example, bilingual programme, study trips, management, library. In professional schools there are other indicators, like, for example, school dropout rate, employment rate, indiscipline rate. Assessment is based on the analysis of the achievement of previously defined goals.

The external assessment results from the application and the results achieved in the different international instruments : Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA); Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS); Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS); Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); European Survey on Language Competences (ESLC). On the other hand there is the application of national tests in the 3rd and 6th grades of primary education and in the 4th grade of secondary education.

At the internal assessment level, this project led to a self- reflection about the nature of the model adopted in Agrupamento de Escolas de Vila Nova de Paiva. Having this in mind, I shared my doubts with some colleagues and elements of the self-assessment team. In the domain of the academic performance, we are going to start making a homologous (annual) comparison (comparison of the school results between homologous periods from different school years); analogous (similar) comparison (comparison of the school results between the term in analysis and the results of the 3rd term from the previous school year, in the grade below).

In the domain of provision, we intend to assess the level of satisfaction concerning the services of the school group and the management, by listening to students, teachers, technical and learning assistants and parents.

Gemeente 's-Hertogenbosch - The Netherlands

Narrative memory

During this project I met passionate school leaders from Portugal, Spain, Poland, Italy, and Great Britain, who have changed me personally, as a school leader. We had beautiful conversations in the week we spent together, all discussing the different aspects of being a school leader. Even though our contexts are often very different, you always take a lot from it and compare it to your own situation. You reflect on your role as a school leader and build on that. It is evident that (other)school leaders are in networks that can contribute to expanding and exploring your own ideas. In Portugal, I saw an example of this. Seven Portuguese school leaders are involved in this project and have the opportunity to think with foreign colleagues, to exchange experiences on key aspects that make a school leader successful. I was sorry that I was the only school director of the Netherlands in this meeting, as you miss a sparring partner. Certainly, in the continuous line to Secondary Education, it is an added value to also have a representative of secondary education in this project. We have seen that the relationship with the local government in our city is crucial because this project was initiated by the municipality of Den Bosch. A Bossche educational agenda will be created, which will jointly invest in important educational developments such as the formation of Child Centers from 0 to 13.

In Portugal, I saw two large schools, primary and secondary education, together in one location. Here I found good examples of a suitable education initiated by one school leader. These are inspiring examples that strengthen me in the idea of making suitable education better in the Netherlands; to ensure that the students do not need to leave their neighborhood, but feel they belong there. The discussion of the uniforms has been conducted. Does it help all children to have equal opportunities? That is the main reason they use uniforms in Portugal and Great Britain. In the Netherlands that is unthinkable. There is a lot of attention and space for the students in the Netherlands to develop their own identity. Clothing is also an important aspect. Of course there are big differences. It is interesting to ask children how they think about it.

Do they experience equal opportunities?

In the Netherlands we discuss how much autonomy a school leader has to set up the curriculum. In this context I have shown how art and culture, study around a theme and child special needs education are spearheads of the childhood center 't Schrijverke. The management, which tasks leads a school leader, determines the school development, the innovative power. You, as a school leader get the opportunity to focus on the educational side: curriculum, expertise and professionalization of your team. In my case I have shown that, as a school, I am part of a foundation in which 23 schools are included in which you are supported as a school leader in personnel affairs, facilitation, financial and educational matters. There is a strategic policy plan, which you can translate into your own situation. In conversations with foreign school leaders I see similarities with Great Britain. Other partners experience less (autonomy). The continuous pressure for results stands in the way of new developments. In secondary education, school leaders in the Netherlands also experience more autonomy and always try to move their education in relation to the labor market. They are also focusing more on international developments.

In Madrid we have seen wonderful schools and passionate school leaders at work. An example for all school leaders, as you see how they invest in the relationship with children and make the children aware of their own responsibility in their development, being coached all the time by the teachers. The director shows that he is interested, involved and sincerely curious about the children. In the groups it was clearly visible what the goals were that students should master in any particular phase. I also saw that a serious investment is made in the relationship with the parents. Educational Partnership by taking an active role as a school. Parents are not yet seen as a participant in the learning process. Training in continuing education, matching the students' future opportunities, were wonderful examples for all of us. An example was the hotel school and the school in which autotechnics were taught. Impressive.

During this trip, each partner gave a presentation about the quality care monitor and the various instruments used. Here too, autonomy was discussed. What quality tools are required and where are you allowed to make a choice for your school in particular. Here again, it became clear how the returns demanded by the inspection put

Managing for @ School of Success

pressure on school leaders, which often prevent new developments. They are too specific and isolated. It obstructs the holistic view of children and gets in the way of the integration of subjects. Also, the team's expertise and time available for professionalization have been discussed intensively. Major differences have been noted. Most of the professionalization activities are still being directed by school leaders. We unanimously agree that teachers should also gain autonomy. They themselves can determine what they need as long it is in line with the vision and school development.

Financially, there are major differences between the countries. Also private or state funded education produce major differences, which limits chances. Resources are then a frustrating aspect in development. Time and money are indispensable in innovations. Also with regard to the status of the teacher's profession, there are major differences. Salaries vary widely. In the Netherlands, salaries are highest. Everywhere we see the problem that there are too few male teachers, especially in primary education. We conclude that a school leader with all participants and stakeholders has to formulate a clear vision that needs to be precisely laid out. All partners must feel they own this concept and jointly enter the mission. It is important that the team feels competent and confident to shape the vision. Appropriate professionalization is sought. Clear plans are made in a PDCA cycle. Time and resources are linked to the development and those results are being monitored in the meantime to make possible adjustments.

In this project we got the opportunity to step out of our direct school environment and to engage with foreign partners with different perspectives to identify factors of successful leadership.

I Społeczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące im Unii Europejskiej w Zamosciu – Poland

Narrative Memory

Participation in Managing for @ School of Success is a totally new experience for I Społeczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące im. Unii Europejskiej in Zamość – all the projects implemented so far under Erasmus+ programme involved exchanges of students or teacher training. The M@SS project, undoubtedly ambitious and prestigious, is dedicated to the management and related to managing educational institutions, leadership and determinants of success. The objective of the activities implemented under M@SS project is to answer the following questions: What does the school's success depend on? How to manage the school efficiently? What leadership skills should the management have? Cooperation with foreign partners allows for having a closer look at the school management process in terms of autonomy, evaluation, and soon, during forthcoming meetings in Italy and the UK, in terms of school curricula. Of course, all of us we realise that these are not the only areas that affect the school's success, and that each institution may perceive the success criteria in a different way. In Poland the indicators of a good school are the following: graduates are well prepared for further stages of education, high final exams results, high achievements in competitions in particular school subjects, high indicator of the Educational Value Added (EWD), high number of applicants for particular schools. These are tangible indicators, but it should be emphasised that meeting such high level expectations depends on numerous non-measurable aspects of the institution's activity, such as good and friendly atmosphere, teachers' personalities, meeting young people's needs, developing interests, emphasising the students' strengths and many others.

At this point a question arises: Is I Społeczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Zamość a school of success? Undoubtedly, yes – the evidence is: 100% of our students pass their final school leaving exams (Matura Exam), our students' Matura Exam's results are one of the highest ones in Cracow Regional Examination Board and in the whole country, high position in a prestigious ranking of Polish high schools published by 'Perpektywy' magazine (1st position for many years, top ranking in Lublin region and very high nationwide position), over 130 laureates and finalists of competitions in numerous subjects (since 1992), the highest Educational Value Added (EWD) indicator of teaching effectiveness in the town, and the fact that the majority of the graduates study at prestigious universities (medical, technical, economic and related to humanities). What is more, the number of applicants for I SLO is constantly growing. All these could be achieved through:

- hard work of a team of teachers, including very experienced ones and with interesting personality;
- flexible timetable, meeting the needs of students, and allowing for unique and unconventional combination of extended subjects, not typically applied in state schools (e.g. Polish + Biology, Maths + History, Maths + Chemistry + Biology + Physics);
- conducting numerous mock examinations aiming at students' knowledge consolidation

and examination stress adaptation;

- effective work with talented pupils and young people with average and low educational potential, allowing for the maximum individualization of the teaching process;
- numerous after school activities both compensatory or interest-oriented (special interests groups, school magazine, school radio, volunteering);
- the students and teacher's engagement in Erasmus+ projects implementation;
- well-tested way of teaching foreign languages in groups of different levels, regardless of the class profile;
- unique atmosphere created by close relationships between students, teachers, headmaster and parents, based on respect for individuality, tolerance and thanks to suitable requirements.

However, we are aware that success is not given to the school once and for all, we still need to improve, adapt to the changing needs and the environment. That is why we are so enthusiastic about working under the M@SS project, seeing it as a chance to:

- exchange experiences related to different educational systems;
- have a fresh look at issues related to management and school reality;
- get to know 'good practice' implemented in partner schools and institutions;
- transfer and implement new educational and organisational ideas on the local ground;
- see how others deal with similar problems;
- improve the organisation and management of our school;
- develop the leadership competences of the management staff.

Currently, considerable changes are being introduced to Polish educational system: the structural changes (junior-high schools are going to be replaced by longer period of primary education and longer high school education), curricular changes, changes in work organisation. Such turbulent circumstances require well-thought actions, and all the experience of our participation in M@SS project fosters further adaptation activities undertaken by the school management. The observations we find most valuable and important are the following:

Schools in Portugal:

- no division into the pedagogical supervision body and the management body;
- possibility of fast contact with the Ministry of Education representatives;
- bureaucracy unfavourable for school autonomy.

Schools in the UK:

- broad autonomy of the head teacher;
- introducing elements of vocational pre-orientation at elementary stages (visits to entrepreneurs');
- developing entrepreneurial attitudes of the youngest students.

Schools in the Netherlands:

- work with the youngest students focused on teaching children to take responsibility for their own development and education;
- shaping entrepreneurial attitudes;
- flexibility and individualisation of work with students;
- focusing on cooperation among students, teachers and managers;
- the head teacher is the leader for the school staff.

Schools in Spain:

- involving students in group work;
- looking for role models outside the school, which contributes to positive effects of working with problematic young people;
- school as a place where students feel good.

It is worth mentioning that the benefits from our participation in M@SS project do not refer to the school itself, its organisation and management only. Each participant involved in the project activities had a chance to get new experience, develop one's competences and have a look at school reality from a different perspective. Here are some of their comments:

Bogusław Klimczuk – the head teacher of I Społeczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Zamość:

M@SS project is of high importance to me as it enabled me to get to know educational systems in various countries and helped me understand their issues considered to be most important in the head teacher and teachers' work. Thanks to the project I understood different meanings of the notion of 'good school'. In some partner countries good school is, first of all, the school where students 'feel good' (the atmosphere, relationships, empathy, respect for others), in other countries the 'good school' term refers to one having high exam or competition results and high quality certificates. This variation of understanding of school work quality is reflected by the head teacher and the teaching staff's activities. A very essential thing for me was to have the ability of comparing our educational work and methodology to solutions implemented in other countries.

Andrzej Garbacik – deputy head teacher of I Społeczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Zamość:

Project meetings helped me gain new knowledge and experience connected with organisation of educational institutions in the Netherlands and Portugal. Seminars and visits to schools were very interesting parts of those meetings during which I could observe the school and teachers' work management and the organisation of the teaching process. I find it very important to be able to see different management styles presented by partners to M@SS project, I strongly appreciate their openness to changes and willingness to search for new educational solutions. Undoubtedly, the project allowed me to look at educational problems from a totally different perspective, which helps me solve problems in a way different than before, and makes me more confident in implementing new organisational solutions in our schools.

Elżbieta Kędrak – Management Board member of Zamojskie Towarzystwo Oświatowe (the association running the schools), teacher at I Społeczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Zamość:

Participation in M@SS project gave me a broader look at educational processes in Europe. It made me realise how different the educational systems in various countries are, and how these differences influence students' achievements – which are the main aim of education. The PISA survey (Programme for International Student Assessment) classifies countries in terms of these achievements and I had a Chance to see how educational systems and schools operate in countries with different PISA rankings. The differences in school systems and management are considerable. The adaptation of good and

effective practice in our institution is one of the opportunities given by the M@SS project. As a teacher of Maths, I am really interested in teaching methods of 'my subject' implemented by the schools we visit, and I look forward to the module concerning school curricula.

Katarzyna Garbacik – teacher at I Społeczne Liceum Ogólnokształcące in Zamość, school project coordinator:

M@SS project is so important for me as it enabled me to compare my professional experience to school practice in other countries. This wide range of school activities and a completely different approach to teaching and work organisation helped me both to appreciate the autonomy of my working in a non-public school, and inspired me to undertake new educational and organisational activities. A good example is the creation of the Academic Class under the auspices of Warsaw School of Economics. I conduct many extra-curricular activities for the students of this class, e.g. visits to Warsaw School of Economics, didactic games, Entrepreneurship Marathons, educational projects. Making use of organisational experience connected with my participation in M@SS project, I have applied for a new Erasmus+ project and thanks to the project training sessions I have considerably improved my communication skills. All the gained experience is of great value to me and I consider it to be useful both in the management and the teaching process.

Sátão Group of Schools

Narrative Memory

Experiences and Learning

This project allowed me to know directly, up to now, two different educational systems of the Portuguese educational system and to establish comparisons: from the point of view of autonomy in resource management, school organization and self-assessment.

These comparisons showed that:

- schools have more autonomy than they initially recognize;
- that it is possible to be creative even when regulation is very tight, as in Portugal;
- that we have many qualities in the Portuguese educational system and that the Portuguese State has invested in the quality of school organizations despite the many contradictions that we can also find between the intentionality and the applicability of norms.

The fact that I was attentive to the provocations that had arisen in our group discussions allowed me to rethink the school as a field of possibilities and an area of freedom, within the limits imposed by rules.

On the other hand, the fact that I have been in contact with the Dutch school situation and the Dutch partners led me to understand more intensely the need for schools of innovative leaders, leaders who think of students and their life project and to think of concrete organizational responses to the learning and development needs of students. I especially emphasize the experience in Netherlands like a civilizational shock, from the point of view of the freedom to create and implement various educational projects with state funding.

At the same time, I realized that along with the freedom of initiative in the creation of educational projects and in the hiring of people, there is the responsibility to be accountable for the results of the project. The management of financial resources by the Dutch State is stricter than in Portugal. If we compare what was spent on the remodeling of schools by Parque Escolar (12,500,000 Euros / school on average) and what was spent on Helicom VMBO (6,500,000 Euros), and if we compare the quality of construction and school spaces, we can see a clear superiority of Dutch school buildings. It is that the accountability and the responsibility are asked of the right people, those who are responsible for the way money is invested. In Portugal, this does not seem to have happened or is happening. That makes one to think that mismanagement in the central decision-making structures leads schools to lack financial resources, sometimes to essential things such as reclaiming degraded spaces. In this field, as a citizen I became much more alert.

In terms of experience in Spain, there was a great enrichment, as the differences in the education system allowed us to perceive some of the benefits of the Spanish educational system and some of the benefits of the Portuguese educational system. We perceive the reuse of spaces in an integrated way in the local environment, as well as a better articulated vision of the organization of the educational offer. Vocational schools are located at key points in the region and

are endowed with the appropriate resources for students to learn. These schools function as companies and their model of self-assessment is also business (EFQM). I really enjoyed it.

I also found the type of relationship between schools, municipal structures and businesses very clear. It was very important for me to hear business people say what they expect from school: to form "big" people, with a critical and entrepreneurial capacity, with autonomy to think for themselves. This charmed me since I always understood the educational activity as a humanization project. With regard to the various models of shared self-assessment, I believe that in Portugal we have already achieved a level of self-evaluation procedures that I consider to be more in-depth and useful for the development of schools. Although many of us seek to articulate self-assessment with external evaluation, which I think is not a negative thing, since the schools have to make a great effort to make these same processes coherent to produce concrete, observable and measurable improvement actions also by external observers.

What has changed in my management practice

1. I became more bold. I made a school success promotion project that involved all local entities, and shared them with the success of the students.
2. I have invested more in valuing and training people, coordinating with training entities some training actions for non-teaching staff.
3. I was more persistent in aspects like the analysis of academic results, contributing with my personal reflection to the reflection of the teachers in the curricular groups;
4. I have delegated more roles and responsibilities to be freer for key aspects of management, such as visiting schools, listening to people, and networking with external school partners.
5. Improved my ability to think about school in the long run.
6. I further involved the Pedagogical Council and the General Council in decisions about the life and future of the School.

Therefore, I am grateful to have been able to participate in this activity, for what I shared in human and technical terms.

Istituto Omicomprendivo "Ridolfi- Zimarino" – Italy

Narrative memory

What we have learned from this project, what has changed in our School or will change

Thanks to the experiences lived and the thematic studies, we have had the opportunity to compare the various educational systems which characterize the countries that are taking part into the project. Compared to North countries, a significant delay has been highlighted; this delay is about the investments in the structures and in the innovation process in the educational field. This delay appears more evident for the Secondary Schools (whose pupils are from eleven up to nineteen years old). On the contrary, it's less evident in the Nursery and Primary Schools, where some pedagogic principles are more widespread and consolidated. In this sector the Italian school is not inferior to other models, which are nevertheless more advanced. The problem is not due to the rules: a lot of principles and methods are not far away from the directions given so far by the National Documents.

We seem to have the possibility to realize what we have been planning for a long time, but indeed we can't reach it in a generalized way.

We can focus on the following differences and try to accomplish the expected changes which have not been carried out so far.

The Curricula

North Europe

The Curricula have a common basis for each student: some subjects are compulsory; others are optional and are chosen by students. If students need they can have a teacher's help.

ITALY

There is a great difference between the Low and High Secondary Schools. In the first one teachers share their targets, their aims; the didactics gives the main importance to students, they have a central role in the learning process. The Cooperative Learning method has a great importance. While the High Secondary School still uses some strict, fixed programs and teaching is based on frontal lessons. Students are driven by teachers who don't recognize their

independence in their choices.

The learning environment

NORTH EUROPE

A lot of technologies, materials for practicing, cooperation, groups of interest. A lot of laboratories and lots of practical activities. A good organization of spaces and time promote the individualization or routes.

ITALY

School buildings are still of low quality if we consider rooms and technological devices. The school timetable is full of subjects, without independent works or laboratory lessons. Traditional ways of teaching don't allow cooperation and individualization among students.

The teacher's role

NORTH EUROPE

Teachers have a great social value. They work all day long at school and, together with their lessons, they support pupils who are in difficulty. Schools quality is good and the results achieved by teachers are evaluated by pupils themselves, headmasters, some experts and the Department of the Ministry of Education.

ITALY

Teachers work at home too. There are any comfortable rooms where teachers can have their social relationships and organize their lessons. There isn't any perspective of a future career. At the present time, some interventions which evaluate professionally teachers are being adopted.

Some social, pedagogic principles

In North Europe learning is connected with students' real life, with their daily experiences. At the end of the school, students will have knowledge in action, thoughts process, personal and social skills that will help them to obtain a good job in their future life. They will achieve their goals as citizens, people and workers. School buildings own some gyms and experts. Sport activities are considered very important in the educational system. Sports improve the school environment and the psychological health of students. The best way is analyzing process and results only in a second moment. It's necessary to follow the process of learning of each student.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES USING THE SPACES GRANTED BY OUR DIDACTIC AND ORGANIZING INDEPENDENCE

The learning environment

In a short term:

Put questions about the usefulness of classrooms, corridors, desks,

Managing for @ School of Success

furniture and about the relationships among students.

In a long term:

Finding out curricula which have to belong to the cultural heritage and to all students' competences. Building some rooms with some furniture and equipment suitable for each subject. The teacher can plan his/her lesson, while students can move from a classroom to another, according to their individual or group workshops, depending on their interest or level.

- Low Secondary Schools: Math and Science laboratories; a music room, an Art lab. High Secondary Schools: Science laboratories, a wine making lab, a language lab.
- Developing the project called “School without schoolbags” all over the Primary school classes and starting this project in the Secondary School classes, too.
- Teaching based on competences:
In a short term: keeping on the activities of research and action, in order to create a school curriculum which aims to the achievement of competences for each subject;
In a middle-long term: cooperation among the various subjects. Starting activities of co-teaching that is planning for competences as a result of a cooperation among teachers.
- Improvements in the process of evaluation.
- Research-action about the use of evaluation books, in order to certify, attest the competences achieved. Spreading the use of reality tasks methods.

Nelas Group of Schools

Narrative Memory

What have I learned from this project?

In this project, Managing for @ school of success, the contact with other European realities gives us an opportunity to better understand and broaden the way of interpreting and applying the concepts of autonomy and leadership. Each country has its cultural, social and economic traits that define their own way of seeing education and bring strong traditions into the education policy (principles and government policy-making in the educational sphere, instead of educative policy). It was in these contexts, so far with significant differences in Portugal, the Netherlands and Spain, that we identified different ways of exercising autonomy and leadership in a school.

So far, I emphasize the following aspects:

I –about autonomy and leadership

a. In the context of Portuguese schools

Portugal has implemented a set of changes in the educational system in the last 10 years. One of the most relevant is the organization of groups of schools, larger or smaller organic units that gather, under the same leadership and management, several schools in a county or a region, sometimes very far away from each other. This kind of school organization brings together several schools in a single educational project which implies that Students from 3 to 18 years old, teachers of different cycles and non-teaching staff from different backgrounds mix together to develop a mission. These units are led by a director who is appointed by a council of teachers, parents, students, municipal leaders and other relevant community and institutional representatives.

The organization of schools has undergone changes, but the management and administration model remains the same non-regarding of the number of schools in the same group. This fact makes each group of schools have its own dynamics, most of the times very different from the closest Grouping. It is possible to exercise autonomy in small decisions that promote good practices in each school but communication between groups of schools is not so common and from this point of view we consider that it is interesting to have them spread and shared in this project.

b- in the European context

The way in which the Portuguese educational system is organized, compared to the Dutch system, for example, leaves little autonomy for schools, which are very much controlled and dependent on the central administration.

The proximity to the local administration and the transfer of some issues to the Town Hall (transport, non-teaching staff, social action, maintenance of some buildings) requires a management that does not facilitate effective leadership. In this context the project allowed me to realize and understand the differences between countries and the conditions that allow greater or lesser autonomy and how leadership is exercised in each context.

As far as I could see perceive / understand about this issue of the project I think that we need to focus on educational conditions in our schools, mainly on organizational issues (classes, schedules,,,), teaching methodologies, diversity and inclusion.

1. Teachers and students in Portugal are too stressed out with large curricula, too many students per class, too many hours at school, etc. Teachers need time to analyse, to reflect, to share ideas, to communicate with their partners, to try different learning approaches and to interact with students in the classroom, to promote their autonomy and help them to develop their responsibility, their critical sense so as to grow up as thinking citizens (I would say critical citizens).
2. As far as facilities are concerned I learned that schools in northern Europe are engaged in improving rooms/open spaces and make them comfortable, cozy, functional, adapted to multitask activities performed by the students.
3. Time spent at school is another issue that makes a difference and requires some reflexion and discussion in our schools: how much time a day should a student spend at school? We could realize that in our partners' countries students have more free time out of school.

Portuguese students spend between 5 and 6 hours in the classroom but some of them spend more than eight hours at school – it's the so-called full time school. Some experts say that "the more students spend time at school the more they learn, as they are provided with activities of good quality." Should school concentrate classes in a part of the day and offer extra-activities to keep students engaged, help them improve their creativity and learn solving-problem activities after lessons?

Full time school has been required by parents and it is a social response for many parents mainly low income families with low wages that cannot pay for extra-activities to keep their children busy. However, some students would rather prefer to go home than spending so many hours at school.

I wonder if my school can have another kind of schedule that can combine both needs, such as

- free time for students to learn by themselves at home
- activities for those students who need time at school, mainly those ones from socioeconomic underprivileged backgrounds

4. Teachers' professional development is another issue – they need time to work together, to collaborate with each other, learn new methodologies and strategies to promote / encourage effective learning in classroom. This kind of work implies an additional workload that should be done after lessons at school. I learned from our partners' schools how important it is to have teachers working

together at school instead of working alone at home so as to provide experiences that allow teachers to plan lessons, discuss student performance, curricula, as well as, provide encouragement and support. It would also allow teachers to share experiences and discuss student and school issues in a reflective practice.

5. Effective communication is another important issue at school “Which is the best way to communicate with so many people in different schools and commit them with the leader’s vision and school goals?” I learned that you can change a learning community if you manage to communicate clearly with them.

II – Internal evaluation of schools

Internal evaluation is a process recognized by all the schools and countries that take part in this project as a mean to encourage a culture that promotes accountability well understood and accepted by the leaders and the school community.

Everyone agrees that internal evaluation contributes to the school improvement.

As a conclusion:

Despite all the differences and similarities, I can observe that schools, headmasters and teachers from all the countries involved in the project are concerned about the future and the role of schools to help students face an unknown world after they leave school. Society is changing and schools have to respond to new demands, new roles and new jobs in the future. What will the world be like ten years from now?

The future starts today. Or did it start yesterday?

Confederacion Espanola de Centros de Ensenanza Asociacion C.E.C.E. – Spain

Narrative memory

This Project is being pretty interesting to observe the reality that other European countries have against the organizational and curricular aspects in an educative system. It is also very enriching and rewarding to share experiences and inquisitiveness with head teachers from other schools and entities related to educative system.

By the starting point that we strongly consider a necessity the fact of breaking the four walls of the school in order to grow up as a community and to improve the teaching task. This project gives us as teaching members to be able to do it; a privilege impossible to do without the external and economical aids.

It is also important to emphasize on the strong dedication of the different institutions which participate on the project direct or indirectly. These institutions are taking care of us and also trying to make us understand a global vision about their working. That's why for me it is essential to thank them for considering my school an important part of this project.

On the same way, it is a great opportunity to do “waterfall formation” in our schools. That means after an individual formation or experience it is important to share this new knowledge with the rest of school members (teachers, families and also students) with the aim of improve the teaching-learning process.

During the Holland visit I learnt a lot about the importance of working autonomy in young stages offering students a wide variety of resources to make them elaborate their hypothesis and to work individually and in groups. Students were able to manage their learning time and teachers developed a different role: guiding and checking students from a passive role. This fact made me think about how roles have changed in Spain and how difficult it is to “teach” students to be competent in society; to “teach” them to take decisions and not to

feel disappointed when failures. To “teach” them that results are not the most important facts and that the process is what really means. In order to help them understand all these concepts it is important to start changing methodology and evaluation.

In all changing processes there are also contradictions and at this point most of schools and teaching staff are trying to change methodologies without having enough

prepared teachers and making them feel terrified against the change and even sometimes rejected. Administration may create spaces for teachers formation during the school timetable.

In Holland I could see how the schools were doing this change progressively and strongly mentally prepared about this teaching and learning routines as a cultural thinking; teaching skills and abilities that will be useful for students to face real-life situations.

Families also must be direct participants in this methodology change. I am not talking about versioning educative models from other countries because society and culture are different; but take into consideration these differences to improve. For me it was quite surprising to see how shops closed doors at six in the evening. In my opinion this fact contributes to have a familiar wealth and it allows families to have more time to spend with children. In Spain this fact is absolutely different and that’s why students have to join extra activities at school to combine and balance their timetable with their families’ ones.

About the schools autonomy; in Holland I realized they can redo groups and timetables as well as reinvest the money and grants they receive from the administration in the things or aspects they think are more important. These confidence given to schools make them work more comfortable and to improve individual realities and necessities. In Catalonia we are a community that even having center autonomy we have to fit into very strict models which limit our freedom.

In my school we have elaborated timetables taking into consideration the needs and priorities of our students awarding more hours and subjects in English; hours to develop projects; writing workshops... following the curricular objectives and competences. In order to guarantee the effectiveness it is important to have annual internal evaluations. These tests are not public but very important for the administration. This is another aspect I would like to highlight; the transparency that exists in other countries according to the results of students in external evaluations sometimes even uploaded on website pages.

This project is helping us to deeply analyze our schools and centers not only in a comparative way but also to apply the good practices we could observe in our own schools. It is necessary to use tools and instruments to understand where we are at the moment as an institution and also where is the point we want to be and the methodology we will use to achieve it. The school must take a stance on it and to have clear in mind the important pillars it want to be supported by. Team and group work is the key to achieve success as well as communication and sharing of abilities.

We as directors of schools we may know the profiles of our teachers and motivate them to improve and participate on this methodological change. Taking decisions wouldn't be only a task from the director but from the consensus and agreement of the staff. In my opinion we might forget about imposition and start making aware about the importance of this methodological change. After my experience as a teacher I think there is not enough communication nor time to share what each teacher or specialist does in his/her own lessons. I believe it is important to find moments to reflect on and its our responsibility as directors to make it possible. Personally I think this is one of the aspects I need to improve as a head teacher; I should find moments to reflect and to elaborate projects in which teacher cooperate and collaborate.

The instruments or tools to measure and to evaluate internally our school making participate all the educative community is another aspect that made me think about in my experience in Holland. In my school we have selection and satisfaction

surveys, interviews, we collect information about the complains and also about the improvement plans but we do not measure the feedback nor if the improvement proposals have been really useful or not. We might start using other strategies to improve; more personal interviews and also to create forum groups.

Another aspect to take into consideration is the relation with the environment. In Holland most of schools are linked to the environment. In Spain, nursery and pre-school are pretty isolated with primary. It exists a narrow relation with future jobs and this fact made me be conscient about the necessity of students to go away of the class; to create a bond between our students and our environment; to create projects with other entities of our neighborhood and shops. We created a Radio project with a high

dissemination in our district; we contacted with the stores and using a “family card”;

our families had a discount on their shipping.

We have talked a lot about this topic but I think we as directive members we have to consider that our role in the educative institution is a heavy position against our teachers, students and families. The social network has to show our strongholds. We must become into marketing experiences because in Spain birth rate is decreasing and this will be a short time problem for us.

It is important in future meetings to talk about emotional education and also about values. This is important to avoid problems such as bullying; having a decisive profile and foresee and prevent the problems that can appear in future. For that it is also important to write down and develop actuation protocols.

Penalva do Castelo Group of Schools

"Narrative Memory"

Participation in the Managing for @ School of Success project has allowed me closer contact with other experiences of school organisation, originating a different vision of organisations' functioning internally, in their relationship with the surrounding community and with central and local administration.

Concerning **internal organisation** I have paid special attention to the organisation of school time and spaces in the different schools involved. I consider there is much work to be done in this field, and much can be learned from the experiences of the partners involved in this project, particularly regarding the time pupils spend at school and consequent management of teachers' time in order to produce effective collaborative work and reduce the isolation of their practice. It has been very important to observe the dynamics that are established between top management and intermediate management and classroom functioning: opening up the classroom to other actors and it ceasing to be an isolated island. Discovering different ways of carrying out self-assessment was also an enriching experience, in that we found there are various approaches to this, depending on the internal dynamics formed and on top and intermediate management – what matters is that the actors see themselves in the processes.

As for the **school's relationship with the surrounding community**, besides top and intermediate management, this is another aspect I want to highlight in this project, as it provided me with another vision: getting out of the classroom, going to workplaces, stimulating contact with life in a real context, as school prepares for life and this is not only done with books. It was enriching to see how partners enter and interact with the school and help to define its educational project with very definite and objective medium and short-term goals.

Regarding how the **school and central and local administration** relate to each other, this experience has given me contact with other forms of school functioning, as the organisation becomes subject to effective decentralization of competences to local authorities in the area of education. At the stage in which we find ourselves, taking the first steps towards decentralization of some competences from central government to local authorities, I hope to develop competences in this domain, aiming to gain clear and sustained advances in the organisation and management of educational resources, in quality of learning and provision of opportunities to improve citizens' levels of training.

Over a year has passed since this project began, and at this point I can say that although I am still at a learning stage, my aim is to change some procedures in my practice as leader of my organisation. These changes will be focused essentially on the classroom, as this is where everything that is most important takes place, and in my opinion, where most change is needed. I intend to promote the opening up of the classroom not only as a physical space, but also as a place to share experiences with other actors, placing the emphasis on each pupil's full development.

I hope to continue to discover and share other different forms of exercising management, as together we will more easily be able to design paths with a view to achieving the success of the school.



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