

LIFE SKILLS

Learning Innovation through Foreign Languages and Entrepreneurship Skills



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REAL LIFE CONNECTIONS



LIFE SKILLS – Learning Innovation through Foreign Languages and Entrepreneurship, is an educational project financed by Erasmus +, aimed at promoting mobility of young people.

The objective of the project is to teach young people skills that they can use in a world that changes rapidly. In the future, new learning skills will be essential for young people but they will still have to meet the demands from the traditional subjects of the school world. Learning new skills is not about throwing all the existing subjects and experiences away and only focusing on the future.

LIFE SKILLS will connect to the every-day school with new ways of learning and news ways of teaching and focus on these core skills:

- **Learning Innovation through Foreign Languages and Entrepreneurship**
- **Ability for an individual to develop his or her specific strengths**
- **Open mindedness – thinking out of the box**
- **The ability to break the norm**
- **To achieve success in spite of social background**
- **Self confidence and entrepreneurship**

Through the LIFE SKILLS project the pupils have been working with different methods that enable them to become experienced with these skills and this guide is a manual for teachers who want to use LIFE SKILLS in their classroom.

The general method used in LIFE SKILLS is that the pupils learn new skills through entrepreneurship projects. It is during the process of ideation, planning, launching, and evaluation of projects that the learning of the involved pupils takes place.

To ensure a connection to the school's curricula, the entrepreneurship projects will be carried out with a foreign language as the main tool. The pupils will be working with the aims and content in their language classes while at the same time learning about the core skills of LIFE SKILLS. A project model will also be presented in this guide.

Many pupils are stuck in their social pattern and this often stands in the way of their learning and mobility. LIFE SKILLS operates with a method that can help teachers and pupils to break this pattern.

This guide will give teachers the necessary background information and tools to run LIFE SKILLS projects in their own classroom.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CLASSROOM

Most people know what an entrepreneur is and some have even tried to establish their own business. Entrepreneurship has always had a close connection with business start-up, therefore it has been included in schools' curricula as a separate business subject and not a horizontal knowledge and transversal theme throughout all of the schools' subjects.

In the light of globalization and current changes in society, in economy, in the labour market, and considering the ever changing employment needs as well as broader and more demanding job requirements, countries worldwide are determined to integrate entrepreneurship and innovation in their school and education system. However, the understanding of the concept of entrepreneurship extends from a traditional business related to a wider notion, and it now encompasses social as well as cultural entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship in schools is defined as: ***When you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, and social.*** (www.ffe-ye.dk)

This broad definition is widely accepted in the education system and teachers can easily see the connection to their daily practice. The aim is to impart pupils and students with the knowledge and competences that can be used in many different contexts, to give them the skills to discover opportunities and to create value in a wider sense and not only business related. The problem is how to connect entrepreneurship with all the other issues in the daily school life.

It is important that entrepreneurship is seen as something that enhances and enriches the pupil's outcome and it is therefore crucial that we can work with entrepreneurship along with the ordinary subjects. If the entrepreneurship teaching isn't an integrated part of the subjects, the pupils will see it as an irrelevant disturbance. The purpose is to give the individual the opportunity and the tools for forming his or her own life, to educate dedicated and responsible fellow citizens, to develop knowledge of and ambitions for creating companies and jobs.

So, traditionally entrepreneurship in schools was about forming a business and writing business plans. Now, the concept of entrepreneurship continues to expand and a more modern approach is now beginning to appear in schools and it is generally aligning with other competences that pupils will need when they leave school. There is today a close connection between entrepreneurship and the so called 21st century learning skills (<http://www.skills21.org/>) and the eight key competencies for lifelong learning described by the European Union.

(http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11090_en.htm)

The Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship has developed a teaching model for entrepreneurship called *The Progression Model* which exemplifies overall dimensions that can function as a



framework for the learning outcomes in the school and education system. The model intends to be a starting point through which dialogue and new perspectives will arise in relation to the future development of progression, learning outcomes, and teaching methods.

Considering these, the Progression Model focuses on four central elements: action, creativity, environment, and attitude. The model aims to collect tendencies from ongoing research and can therefore be used in all subjects and in different parts of the education sector. It is important to stress that the four elements have to be seen in the context of the actual teaching and, in the case of the Life Skills project, it will of course be developed in language classes in the first place, but as things move along, the four elements will probably suddenly appear both in the didactic thinking of the local school as well as in other projects not directly related to Life Skills.

The four dimensions are defined as:

Action

Action is understood as a pupil's or student's ability and desire to implement value-creating initiatives as well as the ability to realize these initiatives through cooperation, networking and partnerships. At the same time, it is the ability to communicate in a purposive way and to organize, specify, plan and lead activities. The aspect of Action is also emphasized because students acquire entrepreneurial skills through practical actions and the students' active involvement in the process.

Creativity

Creativity is understood as the ability to discover and create ideas and opportunities.

Environment

Understanding the environment is perceived as knowledge about and understanding of the world both locally as well as globally. This means that there is a need for interaction with the world outside educational institutions through the collaboration of different external partners.

Attitude

Attitude is the personal and subjective resources with which students meet challenges and tasks. It is the faith in one's own ability to act in the world and thus to realize dreams and plans. It is also the ability to accept and learn from others' and own failures.

The task for the teacher is to use these four elements when he or she is planning activities with the students and to some extent see the four dimensions both as a tool and as goals for the students. When the elements have been used as starting points in the planning it will be easier for students to evaluate their projects and their own outcome.

The full version of the four elements can be found here: <http://www.ffe-ye.dk/media/44723/Progression-model-English.pdf>

It is enhanced that the different types of core subject knowledge will form the four dimensions. And, due to the differences in the types of core subject knowledge, professions and study programmes, there will be variations in the way the four dimensions are unfolded so as to become social, economic and cultural value.

So, how can schools strengthen the four dimensions and relate them to the core subject knowledge of their particular institution? The key is to lead students to make continuous experiences with value-creating entrepreneurial processes as part of the teaching. Experience is here understood as the personal active involvement in processes and the experience of connections between theory and practice. The aim is for individual schools and institutions to incorporate the professional knowledge, contents, didactics and methods in a way that is relevant to their specific context.

However individual and particular the Progression Model's adaptation is, it requires that all four dimensions are taken into account at various schools and institutions and that throughout their education, students gain experience from several entrepreneurial and innovative processes.

In a narrower sense, the model can be used for the planning of teaching and adapted by teachers to whom it impels to integrate core subject knowledge and entrepreneurship in their classes so as to ensure that students acquire valuable experiences and skills that they can use in the future.

A specific view of learning is required when core subject knowledge, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial experience are profoundly connected. In this view, the teaching should not only be planned in a form that considers the educator the only communicator of knowledge about entrepreneurship and innovation; it should be planned in a way that students get the opportunity to be involved in projects related to their own interests and ideas as well as their own and the teacher's approach to the core subject knowledge.

This way, students need to gain experiences with being creative while interacting with the outside world and the referred experiences should become a starting point for future activities. At the same time, they need to develop a higher self-esteem and build up success stories throughout their education.

BREAKING THE PATTERN



Research shows that all persons breaking a pattern have one thing in common: at some time in their lives there has been an important adult that the child/adolescent trusted and whose opinion mattered to them.

PUPIL - “ADULT” RELATIONSHIP

Improving teacher – student relationship plays a central role in creating an environment where improvement of student success rates become possible. It might, however, be difficult to reach everybody, particularly the pupils who far too often disturb the lessons due to their behaviour. Negative behaviour often places focus on the “disturbance” rather than the pupil. A consequence of this might be, that teachers become restrictive in their educational behaviour and begin to work on basis of behaviour regulation instead of the pupil himself/herself.

The advisor or student councillor – has the best possibility of establishing good relations with the children/adolescents that he or she interacts with. This can be done by:

- Seeing the child/adolescent instead of the pupil.
- Creating an environment based on confidence by listening – **really** listening.
- Taking time to show in words and action that you **want what’s best** for the young person simply by being present in the now.

Living up to these criteria can help to facilitate the breaking of the pattern.

Children and adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a long history of failures, may not have many good stories to tell about themselves. The disadvantaged child’s/adolescent’s identity is often based on a negative self image, as he or she is often confirmed through his or her negative behaviour. Such pupils need:

- Good experiences in order to begin building up a new identity based on a more positive self image.
- To grow, slowly but surely, as he or she experiences adults who want to spend time with them and actually enjoy it.

This will, in turn, give him or her the strength to change the patterns that has been inhibiting him/her. It is particularly important that these experiences imply no educational requirements, as their main purpose is to improve their self-esteem – **you are important, because you are you** and not because you achieve something – the latter is useful to strengthen the child’s self confidence (the difference between praise and recognition....) For this reason, it is very important to focus even more on the good experience rather than the educational method to support the self esteem of the pupils challenged by their background.

INCLUSION

In order to readjust the troubled pupil and to make room for him or her in an educational setting, certain parameters need to be in place. It is important to see inclusion as the understanding that

“agonized children or youths” suffer from an inability to do what they want (read: to behave like everybody else...) The language used when addressing troubled youths and children plays an important role in the outcome. The following examples show how changing the words we use can change the way we see a challenge rather than a problem:

- Pupils causing some worries – rephrase the wording to: *pupils challenging the teachers in a different way*
- He apparently does not want to be helped – *he keeps everybody at a distance for some reason*
- This is what I think you should do – *I am curious and neutral. I don't have all the answers (no condemnation).*
- Why do you act as you do? - *how I help you change your behaviour?*

With this in mind we put forward a hypothesis as to what is important for the student – this process will automatically create more understanding and lead to reflection. In other words – we must accept that we shall not define the answers. When we think we have one explanation we often stop looking for more. Reflection is therefore a useful tool to stay neutral and curious.

Thinking of a pupil as unable to be reached educationally will create a feeling of powerlessness – which in turn will make the teacher more restrictive in his or her educational attitude. It is therefore important to realize that for each special rule we set up, we confirm that there is something wrong with the pupil, and we end up disqualifying him/her and establishing a workday where recognition is rendered impossible. It would be more constructive to:

- Give recognition to the pupil. Recognition should be given by a person other than the councillor/advisor; e.g. a teacher. In order for a pupil to accept recognition he or she must have a feeling that the recognition is given without any ulterior motive
- Focus on positive/unique exceptions – when did the pupil last succeed in solving the problem? What happened then? What did the pupil do? Which abilities/strengths did the pupil demonstrate? With this knowledge in mind, how can I/we support the pupil in the future?
- Write/talk about the things the pupil can do, instead of what he cannot do.

The key to recognition is to understand the pupil's situation – remember no pupil wishes to be a “troublemaker”; if they could stop – they would (the agonized children).

Key words for successful inclusion:

Curious, Neutral, Listen, Understand, Reflect, Change requires courage, Appreciative attitude, Self-esteem, To dare.



A NEW STORY TO TELL

Cooperation between pupil, school and home & a project creating room for all types of people from all types of backgrounds.

Target group:

Pupils wishing to break the patterns that impede them from acquiring knowledge, skills and competences taught in school (the pupils challenged by their background / the pupils having to learn to keep agreements).

Aim:

- To prepare pupils for acquisition and learning
- To create a better educational environment for everybody
- To give more time and energy to teachers

"Pattern":

- Advisor and pupil talk to formulate sub-targets, strengths, challenges, and so called "life lines"
- Advisor/teacher talks to present the above
- Talks with advisor and parents to inform the child's home of the process and their role
- Weekly talks pupil-advisor
- The teacher is responsible for informing the advisor immediately if any problems arise etc.
- When a period has elapsed the involved parties (pupil, teacher, parents) evaluate with the advisor. On this basis new sub-targets, strengths, challenges and "life lines" are formulated. The advisor meets the involved parties individually
- IMPORTANT: there is an ongoing personal contact with the pupil's environment (school, spare time, home and friends). In this case it is the advisor
- The pupil must either go to sports and/or work during his spare time
- Weekly pupil-advisor activity. Can also take place with other "pattern breakers"
- The pupil is offered possibilities to participate in a number of self-esteem building activities and educational trips

SUCCESS BREEDS SUCCESS

Building up self-esteem:

The pupils should have the possibility to create new stories about themselves – based on success and the feeling of "I'm okay". Therefore, we invite the children/adolescents to a number of activities, e.g. fishing trip, a trip to the theatre, common dining, sports, Christmas trip, trip to an amusement park, trip to London, ski trip...

Cooperation partners could be:

- school, social authorities, police
- Organization with focus on youth contact
- Local business chamber
- Charity organisations
- Local businesses

THE POSITIVE CONVERSATION

The way we choose to describe a very disturbing pupil forms the basis of all further thinking and communication concerning the pupil in question.

The following example is about a boy in the eighth class, who has been an almost daily challenge to his teachers throughout his entire school life:

One way to consider a pupil.....

Peter:

- Turns round constantly
- Disturbing
- Malicious
- Never sees himself as having any share in conflicts
- No sense of reality
- Unable to concentrate
- Troublemaker
- Lies/is not to be trusted
- No respect for adults

This makes us easily:

- Become restrictive in our educational attitude – e.g. we instruct him to go to the headmaster's office
- Think that he is outside educational reach – no matter what we do....
- Become frustrated, because what we had just agreed upon, he does not stick to.

Agreements, restrictions, punishments only adjust his behaviour – and may be necessary – but they do not bring us any insight into the pupil's universe and create no understanding....



A different way to consider the same pupil....

Peter:

- Needs a comprehensive view
- Education must make sense to him
- Finds it difficult to understand other people's feelings
- Tells stories
- Needs to know what shall happen
- Difficult for him to trust others
- Low self esteem
- A pupil with different demands to the teacher

It will be easier when the team members ask each other the following questions:

How can we best help him?

and

Why does Peter react the way he does?

Always remind each other that the way to recognition is based on how well we understand Peter's situation – remember that no one wants to be a “troublemaker” – if he could stop it, he would – he is one of the suffering children – suffering from being unable to do what he wants to do.

In the team it would be brilliant to:

- Focus on the positive/unique exceptions
- When did Peter last succeed in fighting the problem?
- What happened then?
- What did he do?
- Which abilities/strengths did Peter show to possess?
- With the knowledge we now have, how can I/we in future do our best to support him

It is important to use an externalizing language to separate Peter from the problem...

E.g. Peter has a problem – instead of Peter is a problem



SCAFFOLDING



Language support

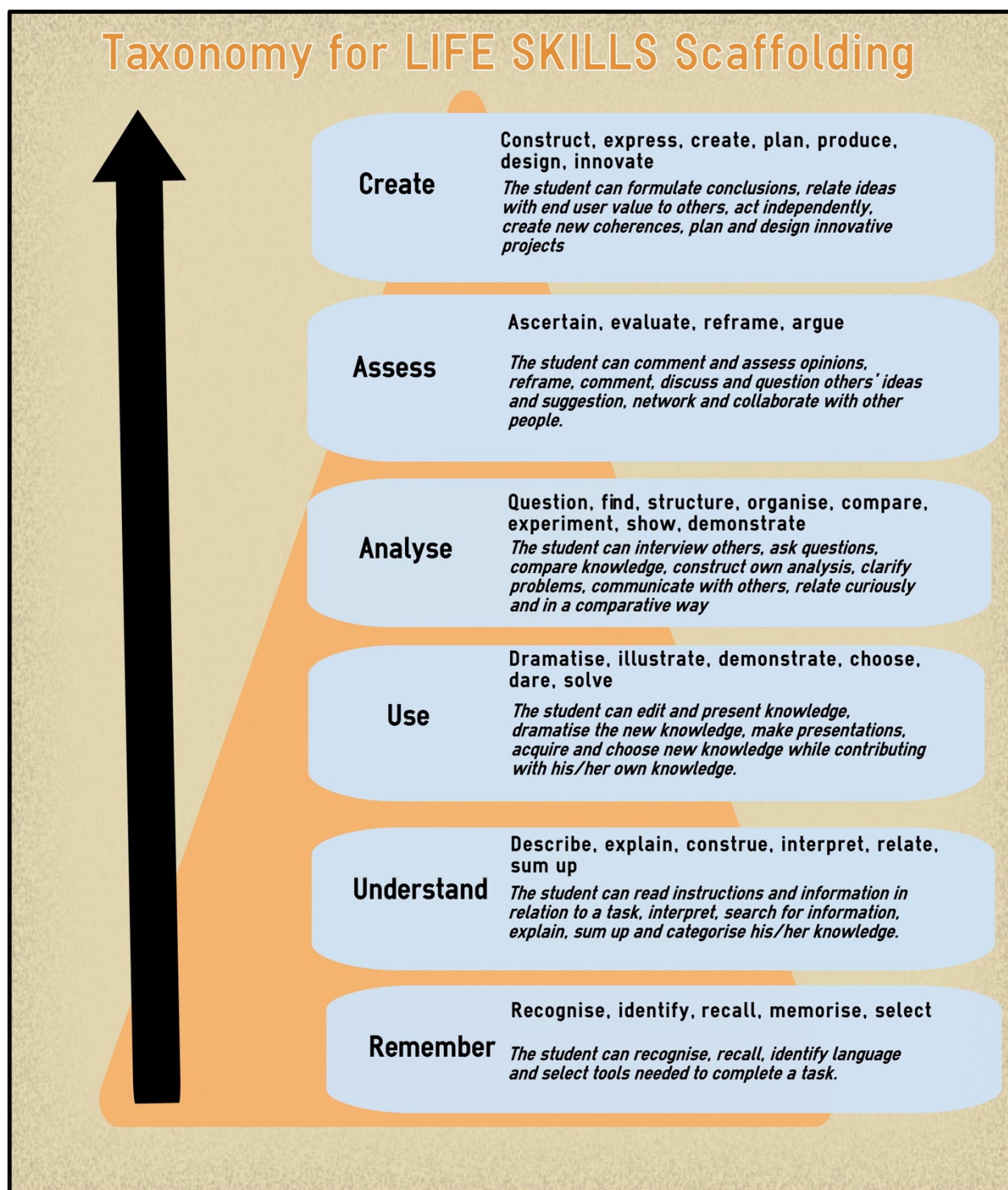
The Life Skills project is based on the principle that entrepreneurship and innovation can be taught in connection within the context of foreign language classes. In order for a project to be successfully implemented through the use, learning, and acquisition of the foreign language, it is important to incorporate the necessary scaffolding.

Scaffolding is a cognitive approach to language learning, and just as the name suggests, is based on the idea of creating support while learning is being constructed. In a Life Skills project scaffolding involves linguistic support in the target language, self esteem building, and providing relevant entrepreneurship tools.

It's important to remember that working on projects is not something that we just do. We can't anticipate success if we start by throwing the students into the deep end, and expect them to swim. Hence it is important to ensure that the pupils have the necessary skills, knowledge, and competences to complete the tasks at hand. Consequently, we need to focus on scaffolding before the Life Skills project can take off.

This means that generalized learning or teaching techniques that are applicable across content areas also need to be applied in the Life Skills lesson plan. Educators in the foreign language classroom make use of a wide array of instructional strategies, of which they choose the most effective for specific teaching and learning purposes.

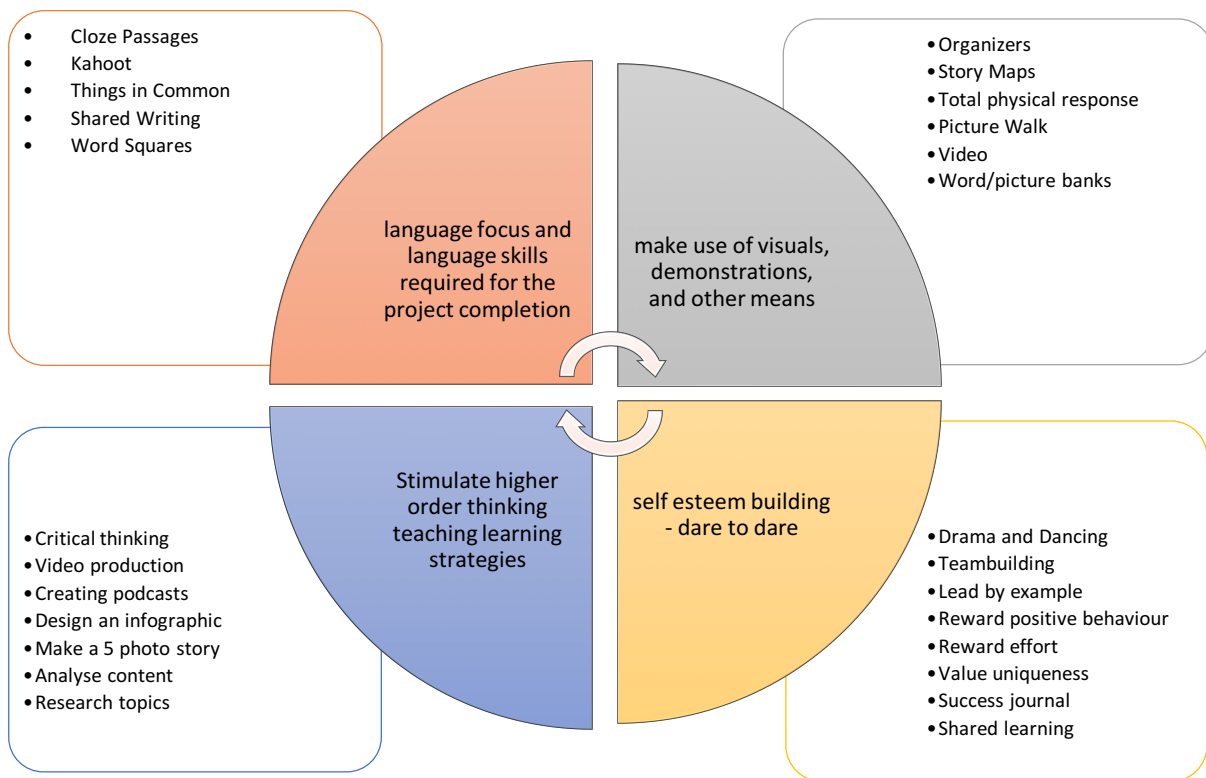
One way to help scaffold a learning activity, is to use Bloom's taxonomy.



The taxonomy for LIFE SKILLS Scaffolding is Based on Bloom's revised taxonomy



Some examples of providing scaffolding are provided in the LIFE SKILLS toolbox. Below you can see an overview of a few examples.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT



A project is a larger single activity, limited in time, resources and content. It has its own organization. A project process is a four-phased working model with additional specific tools for working progress. In this context it is defined by entrepreneurship, youth to youth teaching, and learning.

Entrepreneurship in schools is defined as:

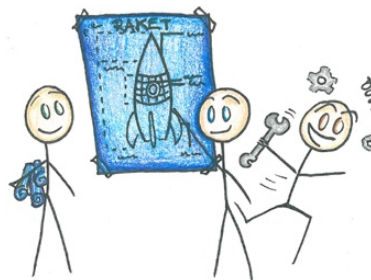
When you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others. The value that is created can be financial, cultural, and social. (www.ffe-ye.dk)

THE PHASES

A project is divided into four phases:



1. Phase of ideas



2. Phase of planning



3. Phase of launching



4. Phase of evaluation

Phase of IDEAS

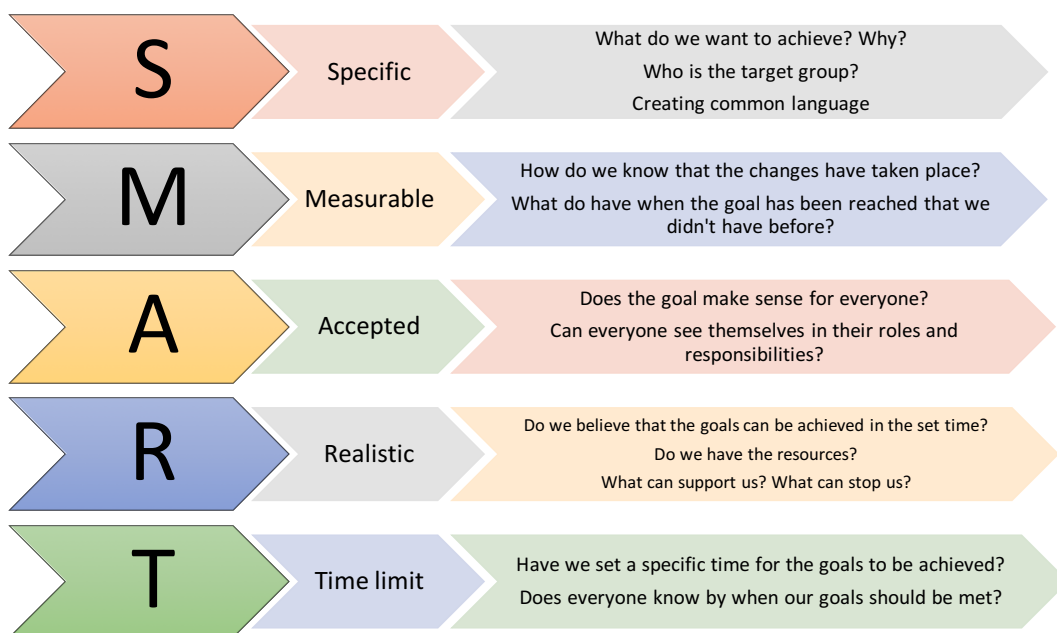


Who wants to do the same thing over and over? Think out of the box.

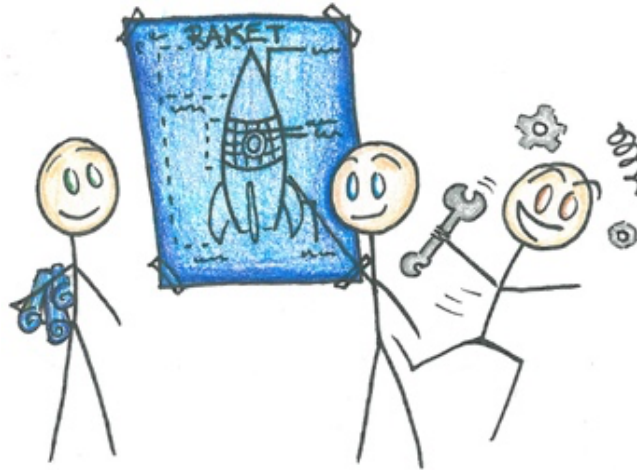
How to think out of the box:

- make a backwards brainstorm and create great ideas through our bad ones; What would you NOT do?
- get philosophical, think big and be ambitious.
- get funky: We're more likely to be creative if we're having fun.
- last but not least: we could use the 'Smart' method; something that's Specific, Measureable, Acceptable, Realistic and Time bond.

The SMART method is based on the idea that a goal should be specific, measurable, accepted, realistic, and set on a time limit. The goals should be shaped on the basis of the pupils' subject knowledge



Phase of PLANNING



Get a hold of your ideas and prepare thoroughly before you get started.

We should...

- find out who's in the project. Who and how many do we need to make the project work?
- hand out the responsibilities. Who does what?
- make a time schedule, to be sure we'll make it on time. When do we do what?
- find out what the project needs and what it costs. Who pays and how? Is it a teacher, a parent, a sponsor, or yourself? Maybe the participants?
- make a plan B.

Phase of LAUNCHING



Enough chit-chatting, planning and good ideas. It's now or never.
We have to...

- stop thinking. It's time to get our ideas into the real world. Don't let perfectionism get in the way of what's possible.
- hold up our end of the bargain and help each other.
- Stick to the plan and see what happens!
- make sure everyone has a great experience.

Phase of EVALUATION



What worked well? And how can we do even better next time?

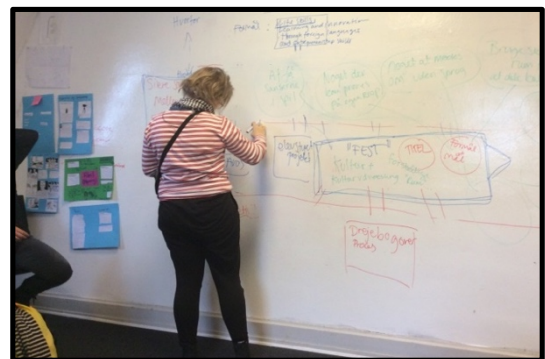
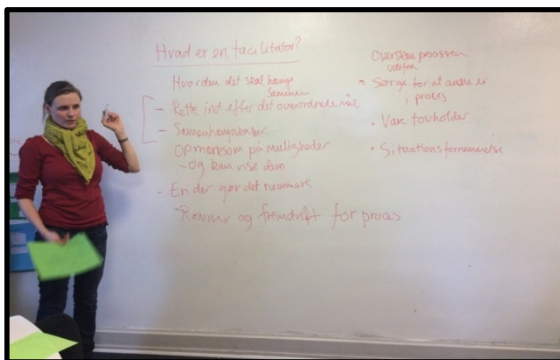
We will...

- talk about our project over a snack or a cup of coffee.
- ask each other and the participants "How did you like the project?"
- focus on the things that worked and let the success spread.
- consider what we can do better next time.
- find out when our next project will start...

HOW TO TRAIN PROCES FACILITATORS – HOW TO BECOME ONE

Seen from a student's perspective

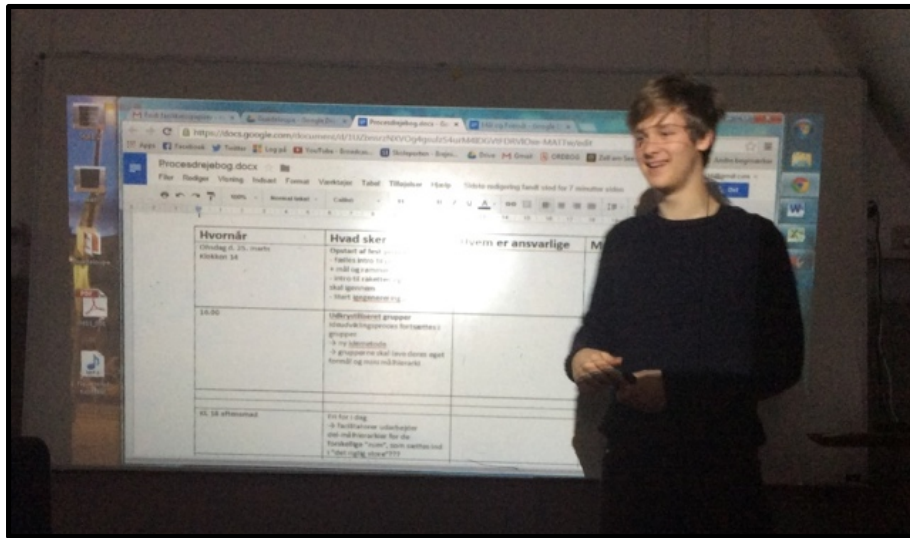
To help our "project X" come true, we needed someone to control it. Of course it had to be ourselves. So seven students said, that they would like to be one, and this is how the lesson "to-become-a-facilitator 1.0.1" began. An intense course in guidance without making decisions.



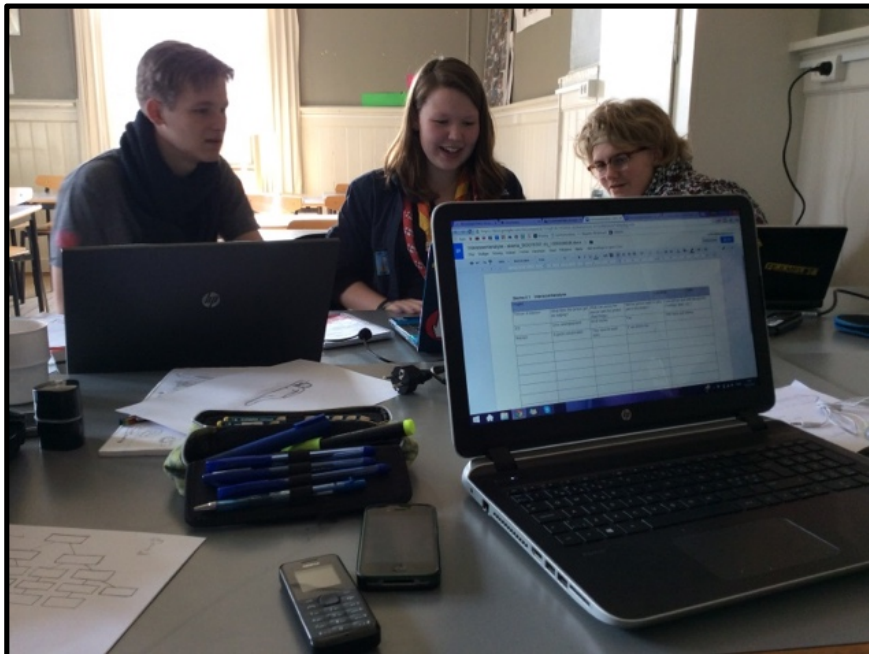
In order to become a facilitator, we had to know what the assignment was. On the picture Ditte, our teacher, is teaching us what the "rules of the game" are, so to speak. One of the rules was, that we were not allowed to make any decisions on the behalf of the group. Our task was to guide the project workers towards the goal – The Project X evening event.

The specific task was project X, so we were asked to find out which goals we wanted and what we wanted to achieve with this event. We agreed on our main goal:

To create relations across cultures and language barriers through self planned projects and activities.



Our first step was to write a script for the event, so everybody knew when there was a break, and where we should meet to catch up. It is important to have a script because we need to know what the next step in the project rocket is, and which items and materials are needed.



Final project tools are being translated, so we had our educational stuff ready. Our assignment also included teaching others in the use of project tools. Which actually was quite a big part of our job.