A challenging situation has developed in large parts of the EU. Many young people face marginalisation and find it difficult to access the labour market. Incomplete studies, high school dropout rates and youth unemployment are problems shared by many European countries.

The project Education for Equity – Social, Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion is an Erasmus+ project, a strategic partnership between Alt Valley Community Trust, Liverpool, BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg, Berlin, and Uppsala University.

The project’s overall aim is to develop knowledge concerning:
• why young people become disaffected and disengaged from school and vocational training
• why young people leave school and/or vocational training prematurely
• what strategies, methods and approaches might improve this situation.

This anthology focuses marginalised groups’ potential within education, employment and society as a whole. It presents approaches and innovative methods that can contribute to an understanding of the mechanisms that affects young people’s barriers in education, and how it can be improved.
Education for Equity – Social, Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion
Education for Equity
Social, Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion
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A challenging situation has developed in large parts of the EU. Many young people face marginalisation and find it difficult to access the labour market. Incomplete studies, high school dropout rates and youth unemployment are problems shared by many European countries. In addition, Europe is experiencing an increasing number of immigrants and unaccompanied refugee minors. These are challenges that, besides the school system, involve other parties and social institutions relating to young people.

When the call for the new European Union programme Erasmus+ was published in 2014 we initiated talks with partner organisations, and after fruitful discussions the Centre for Professional Development and Internationalisation in Schools, Uppsala University, decided to apply for a project within Strategic partnerships (KA2 – Cooperation and Innovation for Good Practices) with the FBA as coordinator for the project. In the summer of 2014 we were informed by the Swedish Council for Higher Education that the application had been approved, and so we entered an interesting, sometimes eventful, but rewarding learning journey together with our partners.

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1 The long and complicated name in English will hereafter be abbreviated as FBA, which is the Swedish acronym for Fortbildningsavdelningen för skolans internationalisering.

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The project *Education for Equity – Social, Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion* is an Erasmus+ project. Its objectives are consistent with the EU goals to improve quality and performance in education and vocational training.

The project's overall aim is to develop knowledge concerning

- why young people become disaffected and disengaged from school and vocational training
- why young people leave school and/or vocational training prematurely
- what strategies, methods and approaches might improve this situation.

From the outset, we all recognised that we would encounter problems based upon cross-cultural differences surrounding definition of terms, practices and legal/political parameters. Based on this, we formulated our methodological approach of comparative perspectives on international issues. The unison between the partly similar and partly differing social contexts, knowledge bases and traditions, actually created the potential to enrich the project’s inquiry with broader perspectives and action-oriented strategies. This project aims to compare, combine and transfer knowledge and good practice between partner organisations, from diverse backgrounds, across Europe, learning from the experience of different countries and types of organisations that are working with marginalised and vulnerable groups.

The main target groups that have been in focus are dependent upon the individual organisation’s operations and scope of action. But, first of all, this project is intended to increase levels of knowledge among staff in each partner organisation, and by doing so enhance our professional practice and improve upon previous best in our work with the Professional Development of Teachers, Vocational Education and Adult Learning. It was also recognised that in order to address the entrenched problems we would need to adopt a collaborative approach and adopt processes which would engage a range of stakeholders including Policy Makers, Local Authorities and Key Influencers.

**The partners in Liverpool, Berlin and Uppsala**

The project’s international approach includes perspectives from three different contexts. We sought organisations with knowledge and a proven track record in the fields of education and inclusion, working in close cooperation with the local community and labour market.
Alt Valley Community Trust (AVCT) in Liverpool was a natural choice of partner. For several years this organisation has carried out interesting and ground-breaking work in regenerating a community experiencing significant challenges. The earlier cooperation between AVCT and Uppsala University, was centred upon planning courses, seminars and study visits, in order to share knowledge and experiences. This has led to the formation of a trusting, efficient and mutually supportive relationship.

BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg (BWK), Berlin, was recommended by Humboldt University, Germany, and was invited as a partner, because it educates young people in both vocational skills and theoretical knowledge, in close cooperation with employers. When discussing the project with BWK, it became clear that they had extensive experience from working on international projects and a very good reputation for their work.

The three project partners work in different fields of education, but together we formed a comprehensive and diverse team with the required expertise and capacity to address the issues of Education for Equity - Social, Linguistic and Cultural inclusion.

Alt Valley Community Trust, Liverpool

Alt Valley Community Trust, AVCT, is a non-profit making Social business based in the North East of Liverpool. It serves several electoral wards experiencing significant social and economic challenges (as identified by the ‘indices of Multiple Deprivation’) It was founded as an Educational charity in 1987 but has since developed into a multi-faceted anchor organisation contributing to Individual Well-Being and sustainable Communities.

AVCT’s vision is to contribute to sustainable communities where everybody achieves their full potential and leads happy, healthy and fulfilled lives. Their mission is to bring about positive change in Alt Valley and the wider community by developing innovative partnerships to maximise opportunities in community engagement, education and training, sport and wellbeing, business and enterprise.

In a report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Alt Valley Community Trust was identified as a key factor that had influenced improvement in the North East of Liverpool:

This Social Enterprise (AVCT) was credited by many as a key reason for improvement in Croxteth. This is partly for its education, training and employment programmes, but also for the Leadership it provides within the community, challenging other service providers to use their resources for maximum local benefit. (IPPR Report, Joseph Rowntree Foundation ‘Rebalancing Local Economies’. October 2010).
The organisation has harnessed education, training and employment programmes as a means of building capacity and improving opportunities for people living in disadvantaged circumstances. Several programmes are designed to engage young people who have not progressed into the labour market or continued their education beyond the age of sixteen. Almost 10% of Liverpool youngsters aged 16–19 are classified as NEET, (Not in Education, Employment or Training), according to Department for Education (DfE) statistics, Liverpool rates are almost double the 4.7% national average.

AVCT's programmes are designed to support young people aged 14 to 24 who may not have the appropriate skills or work experience to gain employment and the Vocational Educational provision is adapted in a bespoke manner to meet the needs of Individual Learners.

A successful model of recruiting and training young people excluded from employment and training has been established and the focus is based predominantly upon offering ‘wrap around’ support to help young people develop the appropriate Life Skills alongside their formal Vocational qualifications. AVCT has also linked training to the requirements of employers and has been able to use mainstream training contracts to address these needs. As a community-based anchor organisation they have earned a reputation for devising innovative solutions to complex problems by promoting effective partnership work.

In November 2016 OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) reported that:

AVCT is highly committed to improving the Community-based Learning Centres and are particularly active and in the forefront of Local and National initiatives. The Trust is highly respected in the Liverpool region for the contribution it makes to learning and particularly for supporting learners from areas of considerable deprivation (OFSTED 2016).

**Bildungswerk in Kreuzberg, Berlin**

BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg (BWK) is a training company founded in 1983. Its mission is to support disadvantaged and underprivileged groups, with an emphasis on young people with immigrant backgrounds. Often these young people have experienced fragmented schooling and have difficulty entering the labour market. BWK provides participants with vocational and social qualifications that will enable their integration into the world of work, and society as a whole.
In cooperation with industry associations, employers and public bodies, BWK runs vocational courses, educational guidance and counselling support for young people. BWK is also involved in various local and international development projects in the field.

BWK is a profit-making organisation and has an average of 700 – 800 participants (adolescents and adults), in three locations, in different Berlin districts. With its main office in Kreuzberg, the BWK is committed to its multicultural location.

Through a number of successfully completed and current projects aiming to integrate disadvantaged groups into vocational training programmes and employment, BWK has acquired extensive knowledge and experience, in particular concerning the range of causes which account for participants dropping out of training.

The BWK also has an extensive and secure network in place, which includes relevant organisations in the educational field as well as important multipliers, which serves as an interface for the project’s target group.

The FBA, Uppsala University

FBA is a department in the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Uppsala University. FBA provides schools with information and resources, principally in the areas of internationalisation, culture and language didactics. In 1964 the FBA was given national responsibility, by Parliament, for providing professional development for teachers with a focus on internationalisation. To this end FBA organises courses, seminars and conferences; produces publications in Sweden and abroad; provides tailor-made in-service training for individual teachers, teaching teams, schools and municipalities. The aim is to provide high quality professional development, which combines research with proven experience of the reality of working in schools. The FBA also works with research, development projects and expert commissions in the field.

The remit also includes continuing professional education for mother-tongue teachers. In recent years, the focus has increasingly been directed towards immigrants and unaccompanied refugee minors and their schooling. The huge influx of immigrants escaping war zones, deplorable living conditions, oppression and other challenges in their home countries poses many dilemmas for Swedish society in general, and more specifically, to the Swedish school system which must adapt quickly to changing circumstances. Because of the desperate situation in Syria, Sweden opened the borders for refugees from that region. As a result, in 2015, the number of asylum seekers was 162 000, 35 000 of these being unaccompanied children and
young people. The influx of more than 100 000 new pupils during 2014 – 2017 presented Swedish schools with a variety of complex difficulties.

The newly arrived young people often have weaker, or different, educational backgrounds, language barriers and health problems, and they also often carry social and emotional scars, associated with experiencing trauma. For those schools with a large number of newly arrived pupils, this, of course, poses a significant challenge for the Head Teachers and all staff, who deliver and support learning in school. One problem is that it is difficult to predict the number of children who will need to be taken care of, and therefore how many resources (such as staff, classrooms, equipment and so on) will be needed. This may vary from time to time, and often arrangements have to be made at short notice. Follow-up studies undertaken by the authorities indicate that it is particularly those newly arrived who are in their teens who face difficulties in school. About 75% of pupils in this category do not meet the requirements necessary to be accepted on a national programme at upper secondary level. Those who are not accepted into the national programmes are directed to introduction programmes or other activities.

As FBA’s role is to facilitate and deliver continuing professional development (CPD), the team is neither directly involved in education nor is participating in everyday school work. Because of this, FBA made a contract with an upper secondary school in Uppsala, Celsiusskolan, and they have made an invaluable contribution to our research and discussions. Celsiusskolan has one division called Language Introduction Programme (In Swedish this is called Sprint). This partnership with experienced and skilled school practitioners has been a most rewarding and fruitful experience.

All three partner organisations have competence, capacity and long term experience in promoting social, linguistic and cultural inclusion, and improved educational achievement for marginalised groups. Although each partner has its own scope of action, tradition and institutional circumstances, we share the same questions about how to help young people who are at risk of failing and becoming disengaged from school.

This triad opens up the possibility of exchanging experiences, sharing good practice and peer reviews in order to devise strategies for the integration of access to education and training for the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups. In addition, the partnership has been able to devise

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2 Read more about Celsiusskolan and the Language Introduction Program in the chapter by Gunilla Grass Renn; Reflections on Education for Newly Arrived Pupils
models and frameworks, which encourage these vulnerable young people to pursue higher levels of formal qualifications and employability.

**The Process**

FBA at Uppsala University has been the coordinator for the project. But all partners have contributed to planning, delivery and evaluation of the project delivery plan. In some phases one partner has taken the lead, followed by initiatives from another partner. In the initial phase there were many issues raised concerning organisation and communication such as:

- How to ensure information about the project could be accessed on each partner’s website
- The need to get in touch with relevant local and regional organisations
- How to organise staff into different themed groups
- Issues relating to time and resources
- How the project would be anchored horizontally and vertically in the organisations and their networks
- How to establish an accountancy system and techniques for planning and time control, as well as designing systems and methods for quality assurance of activities and results.

Of particular importance for establishing the organisational and communication issues were the previous connections between individuals in each organisation, and also the face to face meetings that took place immediately following the project’s launch. Although there is so much advanced technology available in our time (such as email, Skype, Adobe Connect), we all felt that it was more than worth the time and money to be able to meet as a group in order to enhance our effectiveness. The meetings gave us important opportunities to enrich our understanding of the partner organisations and their operations, in a more profound and meaningful way. An almost self-evident fact that most people would recognise is that all the small moments outside the conference room and the scheduled day, were so important for getting to know one another, and thus, enhancing future communication and cooperation.

When reflecting back on this time, the face to face meetings and our well-prepared project development plan, which originated in the project application, were crucial for getting the work on track.
**Same, same, but different…**

This saying reflects the belief that similarities and differences between social settings, organisations and different cultural contexts are commonly expressed in comparative analyses. And it has also been a lesson learned in this project. Most people would say that the British, Germans and Swedes are very much alike and share a common social history, basic values and world view. In the project it became obvious that this was the case in many ways, but it also became clear that there were many differences. Although the partners first seemed to share a common rationale and route map for action, we ultimately were obliged to revisit these issues in order to ensure that a standardised approach was in place. Sometimes the discussions seemed endless, and the progress made did not appear to match expectations. Although we shared the same concerns and focus about the situation for the marginalised young people, it was sometimes difficult to fully understand the diverse contexts. This was in part due to language problems. Most people are under the impression that we master the English language, as a second language, quite well. This may be true when thinking about everyday conversations, but when it comes to more complicated issues we often have to admit that there are severe shortcomings in nuanced language skills. It could also be a matter of use of different terminology and the interpretation of concepts in different social and cultural contexts.

The methodology in this project was to a certain degree built upon the idea that the differences in traditions, cultural contexts and knowledge bases would enrich the discussions and the mapping of good practices. This presumed synergy succeeded in the long term, but it was sometimes a frustrating road to follow.

In all organisations there are changes. People who were very engaged in starting up the project left their jobs and new people became part of the project, and it took time and efforts to assimilate them and brief them about the project, and core expectations.

But diligence, optimism and commitment from all three partners overcame these setbacks, and throughout our deliberations we continually reminded one another to “Trust the Process”.

This book

Plans for this project were ambitious and, as we see it, relevant in many ways. This anthology shows the different scopes of interest and work completed within the partner organisations. In all of the talks and discussions between individuals and organisations in this initiative our respective areas of interest have been mirrored and adapted when encountering other social contexts, knowledge bases and traditions. This process has broadened and deepened our self-perception, and the understanding of our own organisation’s processes and operations. The structure of the chapters in this book is to a certain extent organised according to area of interest and content. But we leave it to the reader to find the link between one chapter and the next!

What the chapters have in common is the focus on marginalised groups’ potential within education, employment and society as a whole. And, what constantly has been in focus – to find approaches and innovative methods that can contribute to an understanding of overcoming barriers in education, and facilitating improved outcomes for young people.

Over and above this book the partner organisations have together, or by themselves, organised courses, conferences and seminars. A short film has also been produced to capture an insight into the EfE project.

Further information about the processes and results from the project can be found on www.educationforequity.eu
Specialist Intervention for Disengaged Young People

Alma Mason
Alt Valley Community Trust, Liverpool

Discussions amongst Education for Equity partners acknowledge that many of our young people in European societies are finding life more challenging and stressful and that this can affect the process of successful transition into adulthood. There is a heightened risk of underachievement and NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) status because of multiple factors such as being from a low-income background, having Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities, those newly arrived from another country, Child in Need and similar lower attaining classifications.

Schools are increasingly being tasked with meeting the needs of students who have complex profiles. Teachers talk of an urban challenge being exacerbated by cuts to services (which schools must compensate for), intensive audit culture and seemingly increased levels of student disaffection. That being the case, it is noted that the majority of young people enjoy their school experiences and transfer seamlessly to further education or employment but there remain pockets of learners who increasingly find school difficult to cope with.

Such students can be described as being ‘at risk’ of becoming classified as NEET and this chapter presents an insight into how one Liverpool Secondary school developed a specialist learning base in order to support the needs of its most vulnerable learners and thereby reduce this risk.

Alma Mason is a Director of AVCT and has worked in the Educational sector for over 39 years holding a variety of leadership and consultancy roles with schools, Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations.
Alternative Creative Curriculum Encouraging Student Success (The ACCESS Centre)

Alsop High School established their ACCESS Centre in order to address the rising numbers of school refusers who were finding mainstream education difficult and students whose challenging behaviour had led to permanent exclusion processes being initiated. Two members of staff volunteered to establish an ‘in house’ facility in an attempt to re-focus the young people and encourage them to re-connect with their learning. They were given one large room in a detached school building, which had previously served as a Rectory and charged with facilitating positive change for individual students by any means necessary. It must be emphasised that the students who were referred for ACCESS centre provision were all completely disengaged from mainstream school either through persistent non-attendance or were about to be instructed to leave school due to significantly poor and challenging behaviour. Once permanently excluded from school students would be faced with fragmented learning opportunities and in general invariably fail to secure positive results in their formal G.C.S.E examinations (General Certificate of Secondary Education, the national benchmark qualification which determines post-sixteen progression routes).

Within one term of being established School Leaders noted that a paradox had arisen...how could the school's former most challenging students all be gathered in the same room exhibiting positive, on task behaviour? The transformation prompted several visitors likening the scene to a traditional formal lesson associated within Public School environments such as Eton. Many colleagues openly expressed their amazement at how some of our most challenging students were working harder and learning more in here?

The Centre staff who led the successful initiative both had background experience as Learning Mentors so they held a secure skill and were highly proficient at helping young people overcome barriers to learning, but this had previously been conducted on a sessional basis. They expressed their initial concerns when establishing the Centre as they would now be responsible for providing full time formal educational provision to a mixed age group of fifteen or so teenagers (predominantly boys). It was quickly recognised that their students had complex needs and shared many common characteristics such as; living in an area of social deprivation, mental health issues, special educational needs particularly Autistic Spectrum Disorder and some experience of physical/emotional deprivation. Their educational model evolved in an organic manner and they outline how
through a process of trial and error they produced a generic template of systems and processes to secure positive outcomes for their learners.

Initially the focus was upon delivering core National Curriculum subjects to prepare students for G.C.S.E. examinations at the age of sixteen. The practicalities of teaching mainstream subjects were significantly challenging as the students initially continued to demonstrate disaffection and apathy. Consequently, staff began to recognise the importance of empathy by becoming aware of the barriers to learning for these young people. The staff articulated their commitment to engaging in dialogue with learners by placing strong emphasis upon taking time to explore and understand the world that the young people experience. They regularly assert that, *there are no problem students... just students facing problems.*

Further analysis of student profiles suggested that some key factors had contributed to young peoples’ failure to adapt to secondary school life and these were; complex and often chaotic family backgrounds resulting in poor socialisation, low levels of emotional intelligence, particularly self-esteem, resilience and confidence, attachment issues, cognitive dissonance (students had absorbed negative labelling) and the pace, size, pressure and complexity of the daily school routine.

New approaches were introduced alongside informed decisions relating to the gaps in learning and social experiences for very complex students balanced against the pressures of school life and their families’ ability to provide a secure, nurturing environment. Frequently, teenagers struggled against their family values and those of their peers and this created additional pressures on individuals. The new framework focused upon offering a balanced holistic curriculum divided between formal National Curriculum subjects and an overarching package of life skills which promoted personal efficacy. The work of the Centre reduced the potential NEET rate by improving student attendance, reducing exclusions, improving family engagement, extending opportunities, developing skills and personal qualities by a sustained focus upon raising the confidence, resilience and self-esteem of students. Without these competencies young people can easily lose their sense of purpose and, with that, can lose hope. The Centre practitioners regularly express their sense of surprise at how the young people embrace the adapted provision and develop such positive attitudes to school and life in general.
The practitioner’s perspective
When asked what factors have contributed to the success of the intervention the Centre leaders identify six aspects namely:

- To have *unconditional moral purpose* to secure the best possible outcomes for students. Three core teachers now remain with the students most of the day and deliver the programmes of study, (at times they escort students to some practical lessons such as Physical Education or Technology). The intensity of the day is ultra-demanding upon these professionals and numerous setbacks demand high levels of personal resilience and bounce-back ability.

- Underpinning factors of remaining consistent at all times, being brutally honest with students, giving plenty of time for listening opportunities and the use of humour as an engagement tool.

- Recognition of the need to promote primary as well as secondary socialisation processes. Clear reference is accorded to Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, which the staff address in numerous ways on a daily basis. They tell visitors that *everything we do and say makes a difference*

- Students remain in one learning base for most of the school day and follow National Curriculum subjects. A flexible approach is adopted and staff do not adhere to fixed timetabling of subjects, they swap and change according to the needs of the learners.

- Alongside the mainstream National Curriculum subjects students receive intensive care, support and guidance with a comprehensive passport of Life Skills sessions which prioritise the development of emotional intelligence competencies as well as practical support and sign posting to aspects such as health, relationships, completing application forms, opening up bank accounts and coaching to enhance interview techniques.

- Dissonance reduction is acknowledged and the core staff apply cognitive psychology principles to help the young person alter their negative self-image and transform this into positive, future focused scenarios.
The Learners’ Perspective

In order to gain knowledge and understanding of learners we deployed interpretive methodology in the form of unstructured interviews with students in the ACCESS centre. We felt a need to break away from traditional quantitative research conventions by deciding to speak to the young people in order to seek new knowledge, verstehen and insight into the world they inhabit so that their voices inform us about what makes a difference to their school experiences. Our interviews with young people indicate that students feel safe, exhibit positive attitudes, behave well and they identify aspects of school life which cause disengagement. They articulate clearly the factors which had most effect and created transformational experiences for them. Soundbites from our talks with students highlight the distinct climate for learning in The Access Centre:

- Staff talk to you like a normal person
- They don’t look down on you like other teachers do
- They show us how important it is to get the best exam results you can but help us understand what to expect in life when we are grown up and leave school
- Give me more support and attention
- Relationships are good
- Get more work done as there are less distractions
- Work is hard but made fun most of the time. Not moaned at when you can’t understand things
- You do more work, it is all marked and we get praised
- They don’t keep bringing things up that you did wrong in the past
- They tell you how it is
- We get lots of time to discuss lots of issues
- In normal school some teachers are nice to you but others are not bothered about you
- Sharon and Paul are different from other teachers – they know more about you
- If it was not for the ACCESS Centre I would have been ‘kicked out’ of school, not have got onto my College course and would probably be at the ‘jobby’ (Job Centre)
The researcher’s perspective

Researchers from Alt Valley Community Trust spent time observing sessions within the ACCESS centre and talked at length to students and staff. They recognised some salient characteristics which had contributed to the success of the initiative.

**Teacher autonomy and flexibility**

With staff in schools facing a relentless focus upon target setting and pressure to improve pupil’s academic progress it was empowering for the teachers in the Centre to be accorded a *carte blanche* and be able to design a relevant and meaningful curriculum for students. They embraced the challenge of tailoring provision to meet the needs of individuals without being required to follow established programmes of study delivered at set times within the school’s weekly timetable.

He sees them crouching at the desks, indiscriminately flung together, the misshapen and the well-proportioned, animal faces, empty faces, and noble faces in indiscriminate confusion, like the presence of the created universe; the glance of the educator accepts and receives them all (Buber, 1947, in Blenkinsop, 2005; p285–307).

Here Buber (1947) reminds us of the uniting force which brings most pedagogues into the teaching profession and ACCESS centre staff demonstrate how it is still possible to tailor educational provision to meet individual’s physical, psychological and practical needs.

In 2016 Michael Wilshaw (Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools) recognised the efficacy of bespoke support and intervention for vulnerable cohorts of students;

Inspectors looked at some Local Authority areas where groups of pupils with multiple characteristics had achieved well in Primary School but had substantially underachieved in Secondary school. The schools seemed unable to replicate the quality of the support, guidance and care that was offered by Primary Schools. Parents and Officers saw secondary schools as too big and too impersonal. (The Annual Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills. OFSTED 2015–16; p64)

In some educational regions schools are developing a lower school curriculum model more closely aligned to Primary provision in order to facilitate good transition for its most vulnerable pupils. The ACCESS centre resembles a Primary model with key teachers delivering most subjects within a
static learning base. The difference is that this provides intensive intervention with an equal balance of academic studies (focus upon development of key skills in literacy and numeracy), personal effectiveness and life skills. Prompt action is taken to prevent under performance when key indicators such as attendance, attitude or work output deteriorates. Parents, counsellors and a range of external agencies will be engaged in order to address the issue.

Enabling environment

Centre staff ensure that they suspend previously held views relating to students who join their group and no matter what reputation they bring with them they are met with complete positivity and encouragement for high achievement. Consistently high standards and expectations with regards to pedagogical practice, student behaviour and positivity all combined to influence students and alter their mind sets. Staff demonstrated significant and noticeable aptitude for devising creative solutions to meet the needs of individual students. The simple question to ask is what is best for this child?


Their secure ability to think laterally in terms of the wider needs of a vulnerable cohort of students and to offer qualitative, focused provision to meet this need achieved what could be described as results beyond the ordinary.

Nurturing relationships through social and emotional aspects of learning

The Centre provides a unique climate for learning in order to connect with young people by prioritising respect, care; empathy and challenge. Significant relationships were formed with students who had identity, self-esteem and attachment issues.

As Buber (1947) suggested:

The infant is unable to become fully adult without being immersed in relationships and then coming to full awareness of it, and it is the educator who can play a pivotal role in supporting the development of this adult relationally through encounters with both individual humans and the larger non-human world. (In Blenkinsop 2006)
This case study illustrates the correlation between social and emotional aspects of learning and improved behaviour, academic performance and as a result reduced school dropout rates.

A clear focus upon ‘soft’ skills helped to raise levels of motivation and engagement and this chimes with Angela Venza’s sentiment “helping disconnected or NEET youth recover their sense of self-worth through life skills was a powerful step toward their setting goals for a more productive future and feeling confident that they can reach them.” (www.ifynet.org)

**Goal setting and Future Focus**

High importance was placed on visualising the future with improved preparation for the next stage of Learners’ studies or employment. Reality checks and *practical walk throughs* for aspects of adult life. Another focus was the development of a ‘growth mindset’ (Dweck 2006), which created a positive approach to learning and a resilience that is the basis of accomplishment in most peoples’ lives.

The intensive intervention process enables learners to re-engage with the formal educational system, take ownership of their education and rejoin their path towards employment opportunities. The overall objective was to help these students become happy, stable and economically active members of society and the ACCESS centre had quantifiable and qualitative impact upon students who had been designated as *dropouts*.

In 2016 eighteen students took their GCSE examinations and sixteen of these achieved a pass in eight subjects, two students achieved passes in three subjects. Every student progressed to further learning, employment or training and none became classified as NEET. Demonstrable impact therefore in quantifiable performance measures which the school is judged upon during OFSTED Inspections but more meaningful is the effect that the Centre had upon improving the feelings of self-worth, value and general improved life chances of their students.

Spending time in the ACCESS Centre will lead any outside observer to conclude that the young people are receiving qualitative, bespoke, holistic learning opportunities and most noticeably are developing invaluable life skills. D.I.C.E (Drama Improves Lisbon Key Competencies in Education) suggests that there should be an additional competence relating to ‘what it is to be human’… they describe this as ‘All this and more’ which epitomises the focus of this specialist intervention. (2010).

Reflecting upon the three perspectives from learners, Centre staff and external researchers the overriding conclusion is the power and efficacy
of working relationally with young people which Dewey (1938) acknowledged:

Every experience is a moving force. Its value can be judged only on the ground of what it moves toward and into. Failure to take the moving force of an experience into account so as to judge and direct it on the ground of what it is moving into means disloyalty to the principle of experience itself. The educator is false to the understanding that he should have obtained from his own past experience. He is also unfaithful to the fact that all human experience is ultimately social: that it involves contact and communication. (Dewey. 1938, p38)

A powerful testament to the impact of specialist intervention can be seen in a response to the Centre from a parent in the form of a letter, sent when her son left school.

Dear Sharon and Paul,

I was thinking of a nice present to get you but thought a letter would be very nice.

Well were do I start, there’s so much I could write but I will try and keep it short.

I never thought in a million years would the time come when Liam officially left school. I thought that had happened in 2014 when he failed his trial transfer to another secondary school. But then I was told he could have a trial in The Access Centre or go to a behaviour unit somewhere else.

It turned out to be the best trial ever, and Liam has loved every minute of it.

So that’s why I would love to say the biggest thank you ever because the two of you understood him and I think that it was the first time ever Liam enjoyed going to school.

Liam was a target in most teachers’ eyes, but the two of you looked after him.

I suppose that Liam spoke to me like you were his friends not his teachers and that was lovely for me to hear and see.

If it was not for the two of you. I suppose Liam would be hanging around street corners, and I am so grateful for that.

I also know that Liam is so grateful for what the two of you have done for him, so if I had my way I would be keeping him there in sixth form, but that would mean he was in school and not the Access centre and that is not what he wants.

The two of you have done so much for Liam, I really hope he can repay both of you by doing you proud and achieve good exam grades.

Even though most teachers gave up on him “Well all of them really” you two never, and I am so grateful and thankful for that.

Words Liam would use to describe you.
Let's see.
1 Boss
2 Sound
3 Funny
4 On our level
5 Proper Scouse
6 Friends
7 Nicest people ever
8 Respectful
9 Honest
10 Just the best ever
So that says everything about the two of you
To be honest I don’t think I can thank you enough. I am proud of what you did for Liam. You took him under your wings and protected him, taught him and gave him two boss years in school.
I'm stopping now because I have a tear in my eye.
So take care. I wish you the best of luck and health and from the bottom of my heart a massive Thank You for Everything

Lots of Love

Liam Murphy's (Mum) xxxxx

P.S Don't Laugh at my spellings (ha ha)

With thanks to staff (Paul O’Kane, Sharon Westhead and Matthew Wright) and students from Alsop High School, Liverpool.
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Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, London, December 2016

Motivation – A Crucial Factor for School Success

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Introduction

The Erasmus+ project Education for Equity – Social, Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion (EfE) aims towards finding both guidelines and innovative methods for educational professionals. In the Swedish part of the project we have focused on newly arrived students’ school situation. In this chapter we will focus on motivation and its relevance for educational success. We are convinced that motivation is equally important for school success in any context. We claim student motivation also to be an important factor in the process of successfully integrating newly arrived young people into the Swedish school system and thus reduce the risk for them dropping out and become marginalised in society. The category of newly arrived students is very heterogeneous. Some students have long experience of education in their home countries, while others are nearly illiterate. However, low basic skills, low grades and incomplete studies are more common among migrant students despite the fact that many of them initially are highly motivated for school. How can educational professionals work to strengthen and enhance motivation for newly arrived students and thus support success in education?

In this chapter we will initially give a brief overview of motivation as a concept. We will then present the result of our study of motivation factors,
based on interviews with teachers and students. In the Discussion section we will analyse and reflect on how educational professionals can work towards school success by activating, persisting and maintaining intensity in student motivation. One main goal of the EfE-project is to suggest innovative methods leading to educational success. Therefore we will conclude with an Appendix containing three innovative methods which we believe can be strongly motivating for students.

Motivation as a concept

An overarching definition of motivation is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviours, which can be summarised as what causes us to act. Motivation is a complex and multi-layered concept containing numerous aspects. It is directed by several different factors, it varies between individuals, over time and depending on task. It can be described through the components: activation, persistence and intensity. In order to reach a goal, the individual first has to make a conscious decision about initiating an activity or a behavior (activation), and then, through effort, persist in working towards the goal, despite obstacles and problems which might occur along the way (persistence). An important component for success is the person’s concentration, energy and vigour in pursuing a goal (intensity) (Stipek, 2002).

Motivation is often categorised as being either extrinsic or intrinsic. The first type, extrinsic motivation, is characterised by actions and behaviours being directed by expectations and demands from outside the individual. The desire to do something depends on external influence, such as praise, points, grades, rewards of different kinds, or pressure and threats, which can push a person to act in a certain way in order to avoid negative consequences, criticism or punishment. Intrinsic motivation however, is the opposite, when the driving force to do something comes from inside the individual, from a personal interest, pleasure or satisfaction. To determine which type of motivation we are driven by, we can ask ourselves: would I do this activity even if no reward or punishment followed? If my reason for doing something is only to pass a test or get paid, then the motivation is extrinsic. But if I pursue an activity for its own sake, for the enjoyment and satisfaction it gives me, then it is likely to be intrinsic. In our daily lives we constantly perform numerous activities and behaviours, and our reasons for them are in reality often a mixture of both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, additional factors, conditions and circumstances,
other than motivation, also determine if and how we reach our short- and long-term goals in life (Williams & Burden, 1997).

The above mentioned aspects on motivation are significant in all human activity and behaviour, not least in educational contexts. Thus it is important for educational professionals to consider how motivation works within individuals and groups, and how the educator’s own actions can affect – help or hinder – the students’ motivation (Hattie, 2012). Not least in the context of teaching newly arrived students, it is important to reflect on which approaches, methods and practices can enable intense and sustained motivation. Research into processes, which help migrant students succeed in their studies, indicates that goal setting, positive self-appraisal and feedback from teachers are significant for the development of long-term motivation (Dörnyei, Henry & Davydenko, 2015).

**Motivation, a study**

This chapter will present a study of both newly arrived students’ and their teachers’ opinions about motivation and its relevance for school success.

**Purpose**

The purpose of our study is to explore which factors teachers and students find relevant for students’ motivation and how these factors affect motivation. Based on the results of our study we will suggest methods and approaches which can be considered good practice in activating, persisting and maintaining intensity in students’ motivation. Finally we will suggest three innovative methods that we believe can enhance students’ motivation.

Our main purpose is not to produce complete and comprehensive research data, but to contribute with some food for thoughts and some useful suggestions which can hopefully be helpful to educational professionals in their efforts to encourage students’ motivation.

**Procedure**

In order to find out what newly arrived students and teachers believe influence student motivation we asked three different language introduction classes at Celsiuskolan to work with a mindmap. The purpose was to process the concept of motivation and to find what factors students believe work for or against high motivation in school. The outcome of the work with the mindmaps then became the basis for our more thorough inter-
Summary of students’ responses to the mindmaps.
What hinders my motivation to succeed in school?

Me
- Recurring failures
- Impatience, goals far away in future...
- Difficult to catch up if I fall behind

Family
- Loneliness - longing
- Reduced or no contact

Friends
- Problems with Swedish
- Slower progression than my friends
- Bad company

School
- Bad atmosphere
- Wrong level of teaching - too easy or too difficult
- Studying below my level because of poor Swedish

Society
- Difficult to know if I will succeed. Will I get the job that I am studying for?
- Permanent residence
- Loneliness
- Accommodation

Surrounding world
Summary of teachers' responses to the mindmaps.

What motivates the student to succeed in school?

Student
- Personal interests - goals - dreams
- Self confidence
- Will-power

Family
- Demands
- Support
- Understanding demands from society

School
- Motivated and engaged teachers
- Security
- Clearly defined roles, demands and expectations
- Individual support
- Encouragement, praise
- Student democracy - active participation
- Flexibility

Friends
- Role models
- New friends/contacts
- Community and understanding

Society
- Understanding how important education is in order to succeed
- Study grants

Surrounding world
What hinders the students’ motivation to succeed in school?

**Student**
- Slow progression
- Health, physical and mental
- Lacking understanding regarding studies
- Problems with Swedish
- Poor study technique
- Time management
- Resilience

**Family**
- Separated
- Poor continuity in contacts
- Cultural clashes
- Lacking experience/understanding of Swedish school and society
- Reversed family roles

**Friends**
- Experiencing that they study at a lower level than their peers

**School**
- Heterogeneous groups; illiterate—secondary students
- Lack of language support
- Lack of relevant teaching materials
- Invisible demands

**Society**
- Accommodation and living conditions
- Permanent residence
- 20-years rule
- Possibility to earn money
- The gap between goals and reality

**Surrounding world**
views with students and teachers about approaches, methods and organisation. The interviews were semi-structured and in the form of an open conversation. Each interview lasted 60–90 minutes and were recorded and transcribed. They all took place at Celsiusskolan in Uppsala, Sweden, during 2016. Three groups of students, in total 16, were interviewed. The students were studying at the Language Introduction Program for newly arrived young people at different levels. Some of the students had been in Sweden for less than a year while others had lived here between one and five years. One interview was carried out with assistance by an interpreter. Four teachers, who were interviewed at three separate occasions, were asked the same questions as the students.

The results will be presented as summaries of the most frequent answers, categorised into three types of motivation factors, and in the form of voices. The categories are Teaching factors, Support factors and Social factors. In addition we have included a graphic overview of the students’ and teachers’ responses, fig 1 and 2.

The three innovative methods that we believe enhance students’ motivation are Dragons’ Den, Europass and Guided Inquiry. Information about these innovative methods was supplied by teachers and librarians at Celsiusskolan and Lundellska skolans in Uppsala, Sweden and through literature. The methods are presented at the end of this chapter.

Motivation factors

In this section we present the result of the interviews. The following account of motivation factors is a compilation of the respondents’ views on what helps and hinders motivation in school. The factors are divided into three categories; Teaching factors, Support factors and Social factors. Since the motivation factors expressed by both teachers and student groups largely correspond we have chosen to present them as one entity, frequently illustrated by quotes.

Teaching factors

Under this heading we list factors which relate both to school organisation and classroom practice.

Objectives – Working towards clear goals and objectives stimulates and challenges the students. Goal oriented work methods also help students understand the relevance of the course content in relation to the overall goals. Since the Swedish school system encourages students to actively en-
gage and set up their own targets, the objectives can vary between individuals and over time. In order to maintain and strengthen students’ motivation, teachers must continuously discuss the relation between efforts and goals with their students. One teacher describes it like this: *Motivation is elusive. It is determination, drive, enthusiasm and having fun, but the motivation doesn’t always last… A common reason for losing motivation is that the student can’t see the how the lessons lead to an ultimate goal.*

The fact that the students’ dreams and career plans are often in a distant future implies that their motivation may decrease over time. Sustaining the students’ interest and motivation is a process where the teacher consistently has to stimulate the student and remind them of the goals. They have to be flexible and find solutions to revive lost motivation again and again. One way for the teachers to achieve this is to break down the course content into well defined partial goals for different skills and courses. Some sub targets may last over a whole term, others only a week or two. In this way the students can feel that they succeed and see their own step by step progression towards the ultimate goal. *You lose energy when the goal is too far away. Sometimes you think: now I’m going to work really hard, now I’m almost there. But the next day, it’s like: no, I won’t make it, I can’t do this, I don’t want to carry on, I may as well give up. But if I can see that I’m moving in the right direction, that gives me motivation to continue. (Student)*

*Progression* – The experience of success and progression is central for motivation, according to both students and teachers. The students emphasise how important it is that teachers make students’ improvement clear. – *When I come to school every day and learn something, then I want to learn even more. (Student)*

One way to make a student’s progression visible is to ‘rewind’ and let the student compare previous skills and knowledge to the level where they are at present. *Students rarely use their ‘rear view mirror’, they live in the present and compare themselves to students who seem to be more advanced. But that shouldn’t be their focus, it’s their own progression that is interesting. Teachers have to help them see that. (Teacher)*

*Demands and expectations* – Both teachers and students point out the importance of explicit communication around the school situation in order to avoid misunderstandings, which in turn may lead to feelings of failure and lost motivation. Again it is important that teachers clarify which demands and expectations the students have to live up to. How is teaching and examination structured? Who can the students turn to for help and
support? What does ‘to be on time’, ‘to be well prepared’ or ‘to complete the homework’ really imply? What do the goals and grading criteria in the curriculum mean and how do we define terms like ‘be familiar with’, ‘understand’ and ‘master’? These things often differ between countries and school systems. *In my home country I only had to learn by heart. Here they also want me to understand.* (Student)

For students with a limited previous school experience this is particularly relevant. These students also need clear structures and extra support. Students must also be made aware of the expectation to be present, which is a prerequisite for school success. Increased absence is an indication that the student has lost motivation for school work. Therefore schools should have a well developed strategy for checking and reporting nonappearance as well as for taking action in case of frequent absence. Teachers, school leaders and school health team need to cooperate in the efforts to reduce truancy. Many newly arrived students struggle with various problems and challenges, which sometimes put school work in a less prioritised position. It is then important to discuss the situation with the student and try to find keys which help the young person back to school. Staying at home can never be the solution to the problems. *No matter what your problems are, if you come to school you have one problem less.* (Teacher)

**Level** – Teaching at a level adapted to the student is another important factor for increased motivation. The level must be just right in order to be challenging. Too difficult or too simple tasks are equally demotivating. *The students must have demands, realistic ones. Studies should be stimulating and enjoyable too.* (Teacher)

Adapting to students’ varying levels is difficult and demanding for the teachers, but necessary for a motivated classroom. Within the Language Introduction Program it can be difficult to offer tasks which are tailored for each individual student. There is often a considerable gap regarding the educational background and the level of Swedish between the students. It is not unusual that students experience that their proficiency in Swedish is an obstacle to their progress in the Swedish school system and that they are forced to study at a lower level than their real ability. This can be highly detrimental to motivation. Suggestions have been put forward about allowing students with good subject knowledge but poor Swedish to focus on intensive Swedish studies for a period of time and after that to continue their subject studies at an adequate level. *It would be better if I could concentrate on Swedish for a year and then go to upper secondary school at the same
I studied in my home country. Then I wouldn't waste time and I could study with people my own age. (Student)

Responsibility – Many students lack understanding for the purpose of education and their own personal responsibility for learning. Teachers need to discuss these issues with the students, pointing out the importance of active involvement and responsibility for educational success.

Young people who have experienced more authoritarian school cultures, with a high level of control and punishments, often find the Swedish school undemanding. They cannot see any direct consequences if they don't live up to teachers' expectations. Many of them are used to systems which favour 'doing the right thing' but not necessarily learning something in the process. Therefore it is vital to make this responsibility for learning clear to students, right from the start. The teachers have to help and support the students in this process. The students want to please me, they want to show that they have completed the task. Even if they have been cheating they don't see it that way. They don't understand that they are responsible for their own learning. As long as they hand in a completed assignment, they think it's OK. (Teacher)

Safety and security – Migrant students often have painful experiences and memories from war, oppression, violence and risky journeys to safety. Some are traumatised. Creating a safe and stable environment in school is fundamental, before any learning can take place. School should be a safe haven where students can feel secure and relaxed, make friends and focus on school work. In order to make this possible, it is essential that educational professionals acquire knowledge and insights about students' personal situation and emotional status. Some students need professional help to handle their traumas. In those cases a close cooperation between the school health team, teachers and other relevant people is necessary. Traumatised young people, for obvious reasons, often have less motivation for school work. But even if dealing with their problems must be given priority and take time, the everyday routine of going to school can often provide a sanctuary from a chaotic life situation.

The students also need to feel secure in the classroom. Some of them have experienced harassment and corporal punishment both from teachers and fellow students in their previous schooling. It's good to feel safe in school. In the country I come from the teachers are very strict and if you are not learning properly they get angry and beat you. But here in Sweden, the teachers are kind and help me. So now I like to go to school. (Student)
Thus teachers’ relations to their students are essential. Students who are seen as individuals every day, in every interaction, feel safe and secure and can focus on learning. We have to show our students respect as individuals and recognise their knowledge. These particular students need a more personal relation to their teachers, that we can step a bit outside the strict teacher role. (Teacher)

Another important aspect of safety is the students’ inner peace. Educational professionals need to help these students build up their self-confidence and self-esteem. Creating an open atmosphere where students are encouraged to ask questions, experiment, try things out even if it sometimes goes wrong, all contributes to enjoyment and motivation for learning. The main thing is not always that the end result is 100% correct, it’s the learning process that matters the most. We want to encourage free thinking and critical thinking. (Teacher)

Newly arrived students have specific sources of worry in their lives; one is the process around permanent residence. Periods of uncertainty causes stress and ill health and leaves little room for dreams and plans for the future, which in turn is demotivating. While waiting for decisions regarding their permanent residence, students are not eligible for the national study grant. This fact adds to their already problematic situation and hinders their motivation even further. When I came to Sweden I didn’t know if I would be allowed to stay. Now, after three years, I’ve got my permanent residence. This is a new beginning in my life, now I have to study. My permanent residence was a crucial factor for my school motivation and for learning Swedish. Now I know that I can stay. (Student)

**Flexibility** – Students learn in different ways, using various learning strategies. In order to motivate the students the teachers have to be open minded and flexible in their teaching. When certain methods or activities prove not to stimulate students’ learning, teachers must be able to switch strategy. It is always a good idea to vary teaching methods to enhance motivation. It’s important to combine various teaching styles; lecturing, group work, interactive tasks, discussions, written work …. That’s an optimal approach. (Teacher)

**Feedback** – Another important teaching factor is feedback. Understanding what was good and what needs to be improved is vital for students’ ability to develop and progress, providing that the feedback is informative and fair. Feedback should also to be constructive and students need to realise that they are not in school to please the teachers but to learn. By asking the students – What do you think? – Are you happy with your results? they
are encouraged to reflect on their own learning process. Too low or too high expectations on the students’ performance is equally detrimental on motivation. Praising a result below the student’s ability may even reduce their drive to work hard.

Teachers’ motivation – Enthusiastic teachers who are passionate about teaching their subject strongly influence the students’ attitude to school work. A positive classroom atmosphere where learning is fun and meaningful is crucial for motivation. Teaching and learning is reciprocal. If the teacher is motivated it affects the students and if the students are motivated the teacher is encouraged. (Teacher)

Democratic participation – Offering the students possibilities to voice their opinions and make decisions about their education is another important teaching factor which stimulates motivation. The structure of the curriculum, activities, choice of text books, work methods and forms of examination, etc. are matters which the students should be welcomed to have an influence on.

Support factors

Here we list various kinds of support, within school and in cooperation with external expertise, which students and teachers have expressed to be significant for motivation.

Extra support in Swedish – The Swedish language is a key to knowledge and educational success, and many of the newly arrived students are in strong need of extra support in order to take part in daily classroom activities. Initial help from interpreters would be very beneficial both for speeding up their language learning and for their motivation for school in general. My first goal is to learn Swedish and after that start my education, get a job and be independent. Swedish is very important. Without Swedish I can’t do anything. (Student)

Few of the newly arrived students find opportunities to practice their Swedish outside school, but most of them strongly express the wish to do so. It’s really hard to find people outside school who we can speak Swedish with. It’s difficult to find places where we can meet Swedish teenagers. School could be a place like that. They could start a football team for example, where we could play with Swedes or start a language café where we could meet Swedes and chat about everyday things. That would be great fun, a great way to make friends and speak Swedish at the same time. (Student)
The Language Introduction Program is often located in a separate part of a school building away from the mainstream school activities. As a result, the spontaneous contact between student groups is prevented and the newly arrived students feel excluded. *In this school we don't mix with the Swedish students. We just speak to our teachers. Of course we speak Swedish in the classroom, but then we all have another mother tongue. If we are going to learn Swedish quickly we need to talk to Swedes. Many newly arrived students can't learn Swedish properly although they learn it in school. They study the language, but they don't use it. They read and write well, but they can't speak it.* (Student)

It would be very valuable if educational professionals could facilitate contacts within the school and also between school and the surrounding society in order to create opportunities for young migrants to meet Swedish people in every possible way.

During holidays many students don't speak any Swedish at all, which means they might even lose some of their ability. In order to stimulate and encourage them to keep up their Swedish studies it is important to give some homework over a longer break. It could be in the form of specific activities, books, TV-programs or writing assignments.

**Support in study techniques** – Many migrant students have a limited number of years of schooling or no schooling at all, when they arrive to Sweden. They need to learn study techniques in order to make progress. What does it mean to study? How do I structure my work? What techniques can facilitate my learning? Illiterate students sometimes have problems with abstract thinking. They may need extra help and support to learn abstraction and exploring theories in texts and other teaching materials. They all need various tools to make efficient learning possible. One good way of teaching students study techniques is to offer organised homework, supervised by educational staff, after school.

**Support for special needs**

– *You mustn't lose control. If you do, it's really hard to get it back again.* (Student)

As in any group, there will be individuals in need of special support among the newly arrived students. It is important to identify these special needs at an early stage and not confuse them with general difficulties and challenges which all newly arrived students meet. Addressing the special needs early on will allow the students to develop learning skills and to enhance their motivation.
Career Advise – Close cooperation between career advisors and teachers is important to promote students to take responsibility for planning their future. *When we talk to the career advisor we can find out what subjects and grades are necessary for different study programs and what jobs they can lead to. They can advise us about the best ways to reach our goals.* (Student)

The career advisors can also inform and explain the grading system to the students and what requirements are necessary to transfer to programs at upper secondary level including alternative routes such as various forms of adult education. *Students need information about options and possibilities, but also which demands they will face in various study programs and future professions.* For us it’s a balance to describe alternatives in a realistic way without ruining students’ motivation, hopes and dreams. (Teacher)

Some migrant students have very narrow ideas about their future careers, which make their choices more limited and opens up for disappointment. For them it is particularly important to broaden their views and point out a number of different educational options and job routes which would be achievable.

In the Swedish context it is also central to take into consideration the age limit at 20 years, after which a student can no longer apply for a national program at upper secondary level. Many students mention this risk of missing out on entering a national program as a strongly stressful and demotivating factor. *Most people get worried when they are nearing their 20th birthday and wonder what they are going to do. Then we have to motivate them to find a place where they can continue their studies. Show them that there are other ways that can lead to their goals.* (Teacher)

School health service – Newly arrived students often experience severe anxiety and struggle with traumatic memories, which hinder them from focusing on their school work. These students need help, advice and support. Close cooperation between the school health team and other educational professionals makes it possible to discover serious problems early and direct students in need of professional medical and/or psychological care to the right services. Given the appropriate treatment and support even traumatised young people can continue their education. A safe and predictable school environment could even be beneficial for recovery (See further the chapter: Health issues among young migrants and the relation to schooling and learning.)
Social factors

This category contains students’ social relations mainly outside school, but significant for motivation and school success.

*Mentors outside school* – Young migrants arriving in a new unfamiliar country where they don’t understand the language, often feel insecure and confused about how society works. A person who speaks the student’s mother tongue and who can explain social codes, rules, cultural traditions and customs can be a very positive support.¹ This mentor can also help explaining the school system and thus motivate the students for education. *I had a mentor. She helped me a lot, not only with school and Swedish but also when I had problems. It felt good to have somebody who could support me when things were hard and I was sad.* (Student)

*Role models* – Role models who the students can identify with and who have succeeded themselves are important for inspiration and stimulation. *Meeting and talking to former students from the Language Introduction Program who have now transferred to a national upper secondary program can be highly motivating.* (Teacher)

*Friends* – Many students have described how social contacts outside school can affect their motivation both in a positive and a negative direction. In the same way as friends can support and help each other in their school work, bad company can have a strongly negative influence on motivation for school. Students who mix with people who spend time on less suitable activities, minor crime etc, may be tempted to stay away from lessons and gradually drop out of school. This can be difficult for teachers to tackle, but by discussing life outside school and choice of friends, students can be made aware of what consequences their relations may have on their school success and future opportunities.

*Parents and/or guardians* – Both teachers and students emphasize the importance of parental support for school motivation. Parents and guardians can guide and help their children psychologically building up self-confidence and enthusiasm, but also with practical things like making sure they actually go to school, complete their homework and show up well prepared. *My guardian calls me all the time. He calls in the morning and tells*

¹ See the chapter The Relevance of Social-cultural Codes for Social, Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion – in a Swedish school context.
me to get up. It helps a lot but at the same time he is a real pain, ha, ha .... (Student)

However, many parents/guardians lack knowledge and/or time to support their children sufficiently. Some form of parent/guardian education where head teachers and teachers can give information about the Swedish school system and explain school culture, content, grading, etc. would be beneficial to parents/guardians. This would facilitate a dialogue between school and students’ homes and enable a better understanding of what is expected from both parents/guardians and children.

Discussion

Exploring motivation in a school context has been an interesting and rewarding experience. The interviews we carried out with students and teachers at the Language Introduction Program at Celsiusskolan have given us new knowledge, insights and understanding of a complex and challenging teaching and learning situation. Getting to know the students we were taken by their maturity and wisdom when they reflected on their own situation. Their vulnerable position (loneliness, insecurity, traumatic memories, health issues …) obviously affects their motivation to plan for the future. However, these students are strong. Most of them have clear goals and dreams for the future, but they need help and support in order to reach them. Meeting these needs is a new challenge for the traditional school system and in some cases old structures, methods and approaches must be adjusted to this large group of newly arrived students. So, how can educational professionals work towards school success by activating, persisting and maintaining intensity in student motivation?

In our material we have identified and defined 19 different motivation factors, which we divided into the three categories: teaching factors, support factors and social factors. These categories are not fixed and some factors may connect to more than one. However, we chose this structure to present the material in an accessible and reader friendly way.

Analysing our data, we found that students and teachers to a large extent are in agreement regarding which factors are relevant for student motivation. Regardless of category of motivation factors, many answers, descriptions and reflections are concurring in the interview groups. Despite the fact that some of the interviewed students have a limited level of Swedish, they have been surprisingly able to express opinions and thoughts in a balanced and detailed way.
The Swedish school system is based on democratic values and requires active student participation. The newly arrived students need to be informed about these basic principles and included in this way of thinking about education. They also need to adopt this stance by practicing democratic participation; voicing their opinions, make choices and argue for their views. We believe this approach is fundamental for motivation in general.

Regarding all the teaching factors it is important that educational professionals are both perceptive and explicit in their interaction with the students. The teachers have to clarify the connection between the daily work in the classroom and the final educational goals. They also have to explain in detail the demands students need to meet. In this way teachers can help students sustain motivation and pursue their goals even when they experience problems and obstacles. The students also have to understand that the responsibility for their development, learning, progression and ultimately their ability to reach their full potential lies within themselves, while the teachers’ role is to help, guide and support them. Students who have reached this level of understanding operate largely on intrinsic motivation and have greater chances of school success.

Another important aspect which promotes motivation is a close and trustful relationship between teachers and students. In our interviews the teachers have emphasized that this is particularly important regarding newly arrived young people. Educational professionals need to understand their students’ personal situations so that they can create a safe and inclusive learning environment. They also need to be respectful, empathic, flexible and perceptive in their general approach when building relationships with their students. As one teacher puts it: These particular students need a more personal relation to their teachers, that we can step a bit outside the strict teacher role.

If problems arise; students lose motivation, misbehave or stay away from school, then a trustful relationship may enable educational professionals to bring students back on track again.

There must be support systems in place in order to help students who struggle with lacking motivation. Educational professionals need to cooperate to find suitable support, in school or outside. To reduce the risk of young migrant students dropping out of the school system and ultimately become marginalised, career advisors have an important supporting role. Cooperation between teachers and career advisors enables a more systematic help to students finding their talents, abilities and interests and directing them towards possible lines of study and future career options. For
newly arrived students this is of particular significance since they often lack knowledge about the education system and labour market.

The Swedish school health service is well developed and can provide most students with the care and advice they need. However, newly arrived students are in many cases in need of more specialised treatment (See further the chapter: Health issues among young migrants and the relation to schooling and learning). It is urgent that schools have a procedure in place when the school health service is not enough and external help is required. Students without basic wellbeing can not be expected to be motivated for school.

In our interviews the students have repeatedly emphasised their strong wish and need for more opportunities to practice Swedish. Students attending language introduction classes often feel isolated even though they are part of a regular secondary school. Their teachers might be the only people they speak Swedish to. Also in their spare time the migrant students have difficulties finding natural situations for interaction in Swedish. Lack of these opportunities can be devastating for motivation. The school (educational professionals and fellow students) should make efforts to improve the interaction between groups, for example by organising various social activities in school and by inviting sports clubs, cultural groups or other associations who can offer the migrant students social, linguistic and cultural inclusion. A good progression in Swedish is a key factor for school success and integration in society.

Student motivation is also strongly influenced by social factors outside school. Relations to parents/guardians, mentors and friends can have an impact both in positive and negative directions. It is of course not possible for educational professionals to have a full picture of the students' social life or to affect it much. What they can do is develop good communication with parents or guardians and make it a joint effort to motivate and encourage the young people to persist in their school work. They can also help students find role models who have succeeded in education. Such a role model can be a powerful inspiration to activate a student's unawakened motivation.

In conclusion, there are many actions educational professionals can take to stimulate all aspects of student motivation; activating, persisting and maintaining intensity. Above we present our suggestions of good practice which can lead to strengthening the migrant students' intrinsic motivation for school. However, we believe most of the described motivation factors are relevant regardless of student group and can be generalised also in other contexts.
Fulfilling all of these responsibilities and demands is a big challenge and may not be possible in every single situation, but the main thing is that educational professionals are perceptive, flexible and constructive in their approach. Cooperation with colleagues and external expertise as well as respectful relations between teachers and students are fundamental for success. We are convinced that educational professionals who systematically work with strengthening student motivation contribute to reducing the risk for young people to drop out of education and become marginalised.

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Appendix

Innovative methods

In this chapter we have presented a number of motivation factors which students and teachers agree are important for school success. We have also discussed how educational professionals can work to promote and strengthen motivation in various ways.

One main goal of the EfE-project is to develop innovative methods leading to educational success. In our effort to elicit factors which improve motivation we have observed some interesting methods which we believe can be strongly motivating for the students. These methods – Dragons’ Den, Europass and Guided Inquiry – are innovative in the context of teaching migrant students in Swedish schools.

The innovative methods correspond to many of the motivation factors we have discussed in this chapter, as illustrated in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation factor</th>
<th>Dragons’ Den</th>
<th>Europass</th>
<th>Guided Inquiry</th>
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<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
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<td>Progression</td>
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<td>Demands and expectations</td>
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<td>Level</td>
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<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td>Safety and security</td>
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<td>Flexibility</td>
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<td>Feedback</td>
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<td>Teachers’ motivation</td>
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<td>Democratic participation</td>
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<td>Support in study techniques</td>
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<td>Career advise</td>
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<td>Parents and/or guardians</td>
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Dragons’ Den

The method is based on the originally Japanese TV format with the same name. In the program entrepreneurs are invited to pitch business ideas to investors and venture capitalists, so called Dragons, and apply for funding for their ideas. The Dragons decide whether to invest of not.

The pedagogical idea behind using Dragons’ Den in school is to give the students the opportunity to work as entrepreneurs in an inter-disciplinary project which is concrete and realistic. The purpose of the method is to enhance student motivation, creativity, curiosity, enthusiasm and self-esteem as well as improve the connection between school and the surrounding society. In this process teachers assess both subject knowledge and non-cognitive abilities such as motivation, cooperation and social skills.

Dragons’ Den is a competition. The students are divided into groups and asked to develop a product or service which offers a solution to a problem. The group work is assessed in five different categories:

• Best product idea
• Best oral presentation
• Best model of product/service
• Best business plan, including budget
• Best cooperation

The jury is comprised by local politicians and local business people.

The process consists of eight different parts over four days:

1. Introduction
   Group members get together and introduce themselves

2. Brainstorm
   Which problem(s) will the group focus on? Which product or service will be developed and presented to the jury? How does the product/service solve the chosen problem?

3. Draft
   The product/service develops further and the students create a draft. They have to take photographs, write, draw and/or build a model of their idea.

4. Business plan
   The business plan is defined and phrased. The students also need to describe their market, demand, competitors etc.

5. Budget
   The students produce an economic plan and create a budget for their business idea.
6. **Oral presentation**

The business ideas are presented to the jury. The students must create interest for the product/service and argue for its supremacy. They must also explain which problem it solves, who the customers are and how it is unique. Finally the group has to explain how the Dragons can contribute. Financing? Placing an order? ...?

7. **Assessment**

The jury assesses the business ideas based on the following criteria: operability, price, costs, time (the business idea must be operable within one to five years) and originality.

8. **Prize ceremony**

The jury negotiates and makes a decision about a winner in each category. Finally the prize ceremony takes place.

*Students who have worked with the Dragons’ Den project have expressed very positive opinions in evaluations. They have found it strongly motivating both regarding content and work methods. The work has given them new knowledge and competences. In conclusion they have been extremely positive to the experience.* (Teacher)

**Europass**

Europass is a European document aiming towards describing citizens’ qualifications and merits in a clear and uniform way. It consists of five parts; CV, Language Passport, Europass Mobility, Certificate Supplement and Diploma Supplement. Two of them – CV and Language Passport – can be downloaded (www.europass.cedefop.europa.eu/) and used freely. The remaining three parts are issued by national educational authorities. The CV contains the student’s qualifications and skills. The Language Passport is a tool for self-evaluation of language knowledge.

The Europass CV and Language Passport could be useful tools in career advising in school. Working with these documents should be incorporated in the general study of possible future educational opportunities, work opportunities and labour market. The purpose with this innovative method is not only self-evaluation, but also to allow the students to practice presenting themselves, their qualifications and experience in an attractive way. This could be done through role plays, job interviews etc. The method is likely to strengthen the students’ motivation, self-awareness and self-confidence, and at the same time give them more knowledge about the labour market and possible educational routes. Their efforts will in this case also
result in a concrete document, which they can use in meetings with potential employers.

In the CV and the Language Passport all of the student’s qualifications can be listed, including hidden and partial competences. Newly arrived students often have knowledge, skills and experience which are not recognised in the formal grades. Many migrant students are plurilingual but some of their languages may not be taught in the regular school system, and they also often have work experience from other countries. In the Europass these skills and competences can be made visible, and therefore strengthen motivation.

Guided Inquiry

Guided Inquiry is an innovative method that implies a team approach to teaching and learning. Teachers and school librarians work together to design and implement inquiry learning, following the same process as scientists. The purpose is to let the students practice their ability to find, acquire and use new knowledge. They also practice critical thinking, examining facts and sources, reflecting, analyzing and take responsibility for their own learning. Guided Inquiry is a new way for students to acquire knowledge. They start with themselves, their own interests and thoughts and are pushed to find answers to their questions. The method also brings real-world data into the classroom which creates enthusiasm, energy and motivation while it builds up the students’ learning ability and self-confidence. The teachers’ and librarians’ task is to guide the students through the process and help them build knowledge. (Teacher)
The Guided Inquiry process

The work process consists of seven steps:

1. Initiating the research project
   Teachers and librarians introduce the method of Guided Inquiry. How should the work be organised? What is expected of the students?

2. Selecting a topic
   Students, teachers and librarians discuss and agree on a theme. The students phrase questions that they want to pursue and that are worth investigating.

3. Exploring information
   The students explore the theme by collecting background knowledge and develop interesting ideas.

4. Phrasing a focus
   Students identify a focus and clarify their research question.

5. Collecting information
   Assisted by librarians and teachers students assume a frame of mind of concentrated attention and collect information from a wide range of sources.

6. Preparing to present
   This stage marks the beginning of the writing process. Students present their conclusions in individual essays.

7. Assessing the process
   Teachers and librarians assess the work process; what went well and what problems were encountered in the research process? The students make self-assessments which give them a sense of how to approach future research assignments and inquiry projects. What and how did they learn?

Guided Inquiry is a very motivating method. It allows the language introduction students to learn individually, at their own level and in a similar way as the other students of the same age. Since they are all working in the library the Guided Inquiry method also makes the newly arrived students feel more included in the school. (Teacher)
Creating a New Vocational Pedagogy for Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training

Gill Mason
Alt Valley Community Trust, Liverpool

At EU level, young people aged 16–24 who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) are considered to be one of the most problematic groups in the context of youth unemployment. In this chapter I provide evidence of one approach by Alt Valley Community Trust training arm North Liverpool Community College of delivering vocational training to a group of marginalised NEET young people that has been shown to have very positive outcomes.

Local context
Liverpool is an area of high deprivation in the North West of England. It has been one of five Local Authorities in the ten most deprived LAs nationally each year between 2010 and 2015 in all seven domains on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) report (2015) and as such is classified as an area of severe deprivation. The most recent IMD figures show that Liverpool City Region ranks as the most deprived of the 39 LEP areas in England. The area has the highest ranking of relative deprivation for income, employment and health deprivation and disability. It also ranks highly for deprivation in terms of education, crime and living environment with around 30% of people in income deprived families and 35% suffering employment deprivation; Liverpool has the third highest number of young people not in education, work or training in the UK.

Gill Mason is Principal of North Liverpool Community College, the education arm of AVCT. She has worked in the vocational training and education sector for over 25 years working in some of the most disadvantaged communities in Liverpool and is passionate about vocational training and education as a means of transforming lives and communities.
Almost 10% of Liverpool youngsters aged 16–18 are classed as NEET, Not in Education, Employment or Training, according to a Department for Education (DfE) study. Liverpool figures are almost double the 5% national average.

UK governments claim great concern over the increasing number of NEET young people in the UK. This concern led to the commissioning of the Wolf Report, which was published in 2011, in which the remit was to consider how vocational education could be improved to promote successful progression into the labour market and into higher level education and training routes.

In his foreword to the report, the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, wrote:

Far too many 14–16 year olds are doing courses with little or no value because performance tables incentivise schools to offer these inadequate qualifications. As a result between a quarter and a third of young people between the ages of 16–19 are either doing nothing at all or pursuing courses which offer no route to higher levels of education or the prospect of meaningful employment. (Wolf) is correct to say these young people are being deceived and that this is not just unacceptable but morally wrong.

Yet, despite this recognition from a leading politician, there has been no deep change in the way that government is addressing these kinds of problems, and hence core issues remain and indeed expand.

The project – health care assistant training

The overall aim of our project and indeed our mission at the college is to prepare young people for work and to help them find appropriate meaningful employment through delivering vocational training, accreditation of qualifications and providing work experience. The Health Assistant project had emerged as we had identified a ‘gap’ in the employment market and a skills shortage in the health sector. We attended a Mayoral summit for Health and Social care in Liverpool where it was very apparent that one of our biggest employers, the National Health Service, had an urgent need to recruit a younger workforce as it faced 40% of the workforce approaching retirement age.

We contacted a local Childrens hospital who identified a staffing shortage and a need for Health Care Assistants. We set about recruiting local young 16–18 year old NEETS to attend a potential course which would be
delivered in conjunction with the hospital which would involve a taught element and work experience placement within the hospital.

Following negotiation with learners and the hospital the project ran for a period of 26 weeks, from the September 2015 until June 2016 involving a 12 week taught college based element, 8 week work placement (2 x block placement periods of 4 weeks) and an enrichment element covering mindfulness, yoga, healthy eating et al.

There was a team of 3 tutors working on the project, all of whom were qualified vocational tutors and assessors with many years’ experience of delivering vocational training and education to post 16 learners.

Of the 20 learners who attended 19 stayed for the duration of the 26 week programme and all gained a high level qualification as a Health Care Assistant in a Paediatric setting plus maths and English qualifications. There was a 98% success rate in these qualifications, compared with a national average of 54% for learners coming from similar backgrounds. All involved in the project made positive progressions – for example, into a further education programme, an apprenticeship, or a full time paid job as a HCA or childcare practitioner.

Reflections and evaluation of the project

On designing the project our research into vocational pedagogy and the teaching team’s reflections as experienced vocational teaching practitioners led to the creation of a process that involved the following elements:

- Actively engaging all participants through building and sustaining relationships
- Collaboratively planning the curriculum
- Evaluating the outcomes

Active engaging all participants in the project through building and sustaining relationships

Previous experiences had informed us that the majority of programmes, that were given the same government funding as we would receive, were failing these young people. The funding was given when young people registered for an award, and for attendance; there was little monitoring of the quality and delivery of education that was provided. From what the young people were telling us, they were not being given any training that they experienced as worthwhile.
We were determined that our organisation would offer more meaningful experiences for the young people who attended our projects.

The question was, given so many of them were disaffected by educational programmes, how could we not only actively engage them in the learning process, but ensure that any qualification they gained would lead them on to further productive work or education?

Gaining qualifications was an important element, but as most of the young people had had negative experiences of the educational process, we were not going to be successful in convincing them to participate in yet another tedious training session that was imposed on them. We had to take a different approach, which encouraged them to engage through developing relationships with employers, with staff and with each other.

On interview and induction we welcomed all of the learners personally to tell them a little bit about how the programme might run, and asking how they would like it to be. They were cynical, but they were prepared to give it a chance. As the group were seen to be a disadvantaged group they were eligible to receive a small training allowance from the Lord Mayors fund. The fact that they were receiving a monetary incentive for each session they attended was undoubtedly a factor in persuading them to come to the first session; we had to convince them to return.

We began with the premise that everyone wanted to be there and wanted to learn. We understood that motivation to participate in learning is greatly increased when they are made to feel a part of something worthwhile and there is a recognition that they have skills and abilities that can be used. We needed to achieve that feeling in these demoralised and disaffected young people. We wanted to reassure these young people who sat before us on their first day at ‘college’ that they would experience something different and worthwhile that we could do together collaboratively and co-construct the curriculum.

We asked the question from the outset ‘Can we work together to create something that you will enjoy, and you will feel is worthwhile?’

They were responsive to the request for help. I realised that, rather than us appearing as ‘weak’ in their eyes, they found it empowering to be consulted in this way, right from the outset. We asked them and were interested in what their vision for the future was.

As we told them more detail about the programme and its potential they were enthused with the idea that they might gain permanent employment as a nurse or doctor...they were high on aspiration at the prospect of working in prestigious, local, children's hospital and realised that there was indeed a real chance of permanent employment.
All were keen to gain ‘a proper job.’ They did not like the image of the ‘lazy youth’, but up to now, had not felt that they had been given real opportunities to be any different.

Our aim was to create a positive learning environment, where there were clear boundaries, and where learners were not afraid to fail (Lloyd-Jones, Bowen, Holton, Griffin and Sims, 2010).

However, we knew we could not do that using an authoritarian delivery mode, relying on didactic methods of communication. It was important to show learners respect and to let them know that they are genuinely cared about (Bielby, Judkins, O'Donnell, and McCrone, 2012; Hayward and Williams, 2011; Gutherson, Davies and Daszkiewicz, 2011). Learners needed to be involved in the decision making in relation to their learning at all stages of the process (Gutherson et al., 2011). This included being involved in planning the curriculum.

**Collaboratively planning the curriculum**

To support this programme we were instrumental in creating a new fit for purpose qualification for Health Care Assistant in a Paediatric Setting. Previously Health Care Assistants at the Children's hospital were undertaking a generic qualification which did not meet the different roles and requirements aimed at children's needs. Thus, this was a new project and these learners would be the first to undertake this qualification in the UK which led to great enthusiasm and a sense of ownership by all concerned from the outset. We had before us a blank sheet of paper!

We shared our knowledge of this new qualification, the learning outcomes that we needed to achieve with the young people and jointly planned how we would deliver the qualification. We asked learners what they would like to do. We asked hospital representatives how this could be delivered on site.

There was considerable and lively discussion on how we should approach this and agreed an initial four days per week in college for a period of 12 weeks to gain knowledge of the role and more importantly to build confidence with a four week block placement at the hospital four weeks return to college finally a four week further block release and final week of reflection and finalising portfolios for certification. Representatives from the hospital attended sessions and would be very much part of the process delivering sessions on the more clinical side and mentoring learners in the workplace supported by visits from my team.

This idea had immediate benefits for the young people, which helped increase their desire to develop relevant knowledge and skills and boost
confidence before stepping out into the real world of work. They would become familiar with the role and its demands and with staff from the hospital. All of these factors helped enhance their motivation. Each young person discussed with staff members what their individual learning needs were; and also participated in negotiating how those learning needs were met.

**Evaluating the outcomes**

In terms of its initial brief, then, the project was an undoubted success in terms of its formal aim of enabling young people to gain meaningful qualifications and useful work experience that would help make them more employable.

A major outcome was the quality of relationships that were developed amongst the staff and young people. In their feedback, a number of the learners commented that they felt part of a family, and a real sense of belonging to something.

A recent Matrix inspection (inspection of our advice and support services, which supports individuals in their choice of career, learning, work and life goals) on the college commented that levels of pastoral care were ‘extremely high’

The significance of the outcomes can perhaps be better understood by reading the stories of the individual young people who participated. Two are included here:

**Sam**

*Sam was 17 years of age. Since 3 years of age she had been placed with 8 different foster families, before living independently from her 17th birthday. School attendance at less than 20% was sporadic and she left school with no qualifications this brought a dynamic to the project that needed to be carefully considered.*

*Before joining the Health Care Assistant programme she had attended the programmes of four other providers none of whom were suitable to meet her individual needs of small group support, high level of pastoral care, opportunity to gain a meaningful work placement. In our project, Sam's' attendance was 100%. As it progressed, she showed an increasing improvement in her attitude and motivation. After completing the programme, Sam gained full time employment on a maternity ward at a local hospital.*
When asked how this project was different, she said: “You took the time to know me; my history didn't matter to you. Even when I was feeling angry or frustrated, you were patient with me, and took the time to find out what was wrong with me. I realised that actually you cared about me; and then I wanted to do well, and make you proud of me. You gave me responsibility and a good job, and I loved it. I now feel I have a future, and people who will support me with what I want to do, not giving up on me even when I make mistakes.”

Richard

Richard also had a very poor attendance at school. He lived on a local housing estate notorious for gang culture and his brother had been arrested for gang violence.

He had a negative experience at school and was stereotyped as being difficult due to his older brother’s behaviour. He felt he had received poor careers advice from school in terms of choosing courses or of being aware of the full range of potential ways forward that might be possible for him. Richard expressed how he felt abandoned by teachers and his parents and consequently faced a future of unemployment.

He was NEET for 12 months after officially leaving school and whilst attending one of our sports centres he mentioned that he wanted to be a paramedic or a doctor however he did not know how he could make this happen. Overhearing this our community champion staff member suggested he called our college with a view to attending our Health Care Assistant programme.

He was nervous initially and reluctant to attend work placement. We spent time on one to one sessions, arranged for him to attend placement on a day by day basis and supported him to attend yoga and mindfulness sessions to help relax him and boost his confidence.

Richards’s attendance improved throughout the 26 weeks, and in the final weeks he had a 100% attendance and exemplary timekeeping on his work placement which resulted in a glowing report from his hospital ward supervisor. He is now employed as a care assistant working with disabled adolescents and has applied to begin a paramedic course.

A major point of feedback from all learners, at the end of the project, was that they had felt engaged from the beginning, whereas in other settings, they felt that their specific needs were ignored. Many of them had chosen to avoid education, or not engage with any form of training that was offered to them, because they felt it to be a meaningless process where they were treated as objects to be processed through a machine, rather than as individuals who were valued for themselves.
Significance of the project

There were many ‘success’ stories such as these. The main significance of this project is that it provides an account and explanation of the value of how we can collaboratively develop a pedagogy of vocational training which engages disaffected young people, and supports them gaining success in education and employment.

Our experiences of working with this NEET cohort suggested that there was a need to move away from more formal traditional methods of delivery to engage with our learners who had not otherwise had a say. We needed to provide a means to listen to their concerns interests and needs in order to develop a learning experience that suited their individual needs whilst at the same time meeting a rigid Government system of funding

We needed to have high expectations of these young people and consider their perspectives and ideas – respecting what everyone had to say taking risks sharing, listening, and engaging working together

Following reflection and discussion with partner’s key area were identified as to why the project was such a success. These were;

Delivery of the programme was negotiated; learners actively set the agenda and shaped the service supported by us as educators to create a learner democracy where all voices were equally as important. Such involvement in the process enabled learners to develop explicit skills of reflection and analysis and in this context they learned how to learn as they set the learning context themselves – it was not just listening to the learners it was engaging the learners as concerned partners, coherent contributors and equal agents of change to experience the personal freedom they have in other aspects of their life

Employers and partners were involved from the outset as to how the programme should be delivered. We reshaped the learning outcomes around the needs of the learner rather than the learner being made to fit the outcomes ensuring that they were actively engaged and involved in decisions about their learning journey and not a passive recipient

We acknowledged that our learners are the consumers of our services and recognised that where people have a voice and an influence on decisions they are more likely to participate and to learn from this participation Hargreaves (2004) identified a range of benefits that arise from embedding the student voice – however concluded that learner voice is the most powerful lever for personalising education and ensuring success.
References


Assisted Vocational Training

Jürgen Draheim
BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg, Berlin

Background
A national program was established in Germany in the 1980s. The main focus was placed on the support of the target group: young people who had not completed vocational training. Large school deficits, social disadvantages, inadequate knowledge of the German language due to immigration background, were the main factors to exclude them from vocational training.

In 1984, a company was founded in Berlin-Kreuzberg, currently called BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg GmbH (BWK) that gives disadvantaged young people, mainly of Turkish origin with significant language difficulties and lack of education, the opportunity to acquire a vocational qualification. These professional educations are funded by the Employment Agency.

In order to prepare them for this, special courses for orientation and support were conceived, their knowledge of German was improved, school deficits were elaborated and they received social-educational support. Because at that time the number of training places was still lower than the number of school leavers, vocational training in educational institutes were offered, financed by the Employment Agency. The training contract is agreed between the young person and the institute. Trainees receive special support when they have experienced school difficulties; in case of personal problems a social pedagogue is responsible for them. Professional skills are taught by an instructor in a training workshop. The real practical experience, however, is only available in practical phases, where they get to know everyday business in a company. Although one aim is to transfer

Jürgen Draheim is a Graduate Psychologist and has been working at the BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg GmbH for more than 25 years. He has experienced the changes in the inter-company training and the new demands placed on the teaching staff.
the trainee to company training, this is often without success. However, the trainees are also instructed and prepared up to their final test so that they pass the same examination as everyone else and thus receive the professional qualification.

For several years the funded vocational trainings were gradually reduced and private companies are now prompted to carry out the training of young people even if they have a school and / or social problem. Since the support by experienced teachers and social workers with such difficulties was very successful, trainees and training companies are now offered alternative opportunities, financed by the employment office. In addition, various activating and orientation training courses are carried out both during the last school years and after the end of the school to find the young people appropriate training to their abilities and inclinations. Discontinuations due to social and family problems, or due to a wrong career choice, are reduced considerably.

During more than 25 years at BWK, I gained a lot of experience in supporting young people to access the labour market. I drew their attention to their high absenteeism, excessive delays, refusal of vocational school instruction as a barrier to their access to the labour market. I pointed out their resources, their talents and gave them advice how to reach their aims. While their vocational training was led by the BWK the tolerance to their lack of employability skills was a little higher than with an employer. Nowadays, with the Assisted Vocational Training, it is my responsibility to raise tolerance level of the employer to the barriers facing the young people.

The concept of Assisted Vocational Training

Nowadays, financial support should lead the companies to take over responsibility for vocational training even for disadvantaged young people. Experts estimate that almost every fourth company rejects this. The applicants do not have appropriate school qualifications; their school knowledge is insufficient for in-company training. But in addition to these education-specific problems, there are also social reservations. In order to counteract these hurdles, professional social pedagogical support is given to the companies as well as to the potential trainees. An educational institute provides assistance to both partners: to the company, with regard to the organization of training, the legal conditions, and in questions of testimony; to young people with regard to professional and also private problems.

Vocational training in a school of education offers only a few professions to learn which are determined by job centers based on needs analyzes.
So, an applicant can choose only between those occupations, and there are often drop-outs. A young person realizes that he cannot find himself in the field of work. With Assisted Vocational Training he is now open to a wide range of opportunities, being able to test himself through practical training and thus make his choice.

Small and medium-sized companies are often afraid of the long time required to choose a suitable candidate. They welcome the preselection of the educational service provider, who filters out suitable applicants in advance and only presents those who fulfill the conditions for this profession and have sufficient motivation and knowledge about the field of activity.

**The two phases of Assisted Vocational Training**

The Assisted Vocational Training is divided into two phases. In the *pre-vocational training phase*, the employment agency assigns young people who can fairly express their professional wishes and have already applied unsuccessfully to the training market. For a period of up to eight months, they are to be supported individually, but also in groups by a *mentor for vocational training* in their search for a suitable training place.

In order to cope with everyday problems and to create a positive learning and working environment, they also receive a social pedagogical support. This is intended to create an individual basic stability in case of problems, to intervene in crises and everyday conflicts, as well as precaution against addiction behavior. Through behavioral training, the development and promotion of key competencies is offered across all occupations in order to prepare the participants in self-organization and problem solving in the working world.

The aim of this phase is at last to lead the young person to a vocational training. With the help of the mentor, he reflects his own strengths and weaknesses, deal with his school-based knowledge and achieved degree, is confronted with the advantages and disadvantages of professions and learns to assess his chances on the education market in a realistic way. He gets the opportunity to take part in a real working day in a company and so is able to choose “his” profession.

At first, the competencies and school requirements of the young person are recorded, also possible private problems that can lead to a drop-out. His professional desires are mentioned and he is confronted whether these are feasible or not. His current application is looked up and possible errors are shown. With the support planning, the mentor helps the young person to formulate his goals in small steps, to check what aims he achieved and
what went wrong if he failed. As a central reference person, he provides suitable training companies where through internships company and young person can test whether they want to carry out training.

During the pre-vocational training phase, the support offered to the participants is complex and adapted individually to the needs of the young person. School deficits are usually worked out in groups, application documents are processed both in groups as well as individually. In case of social problems, the social pedagogue can provide possible aid organizations and even accompany the young person.

In order to be able to respond well to the wishes of the young person, the mentor must be able to access on a wide range of professions at various training companies. Long-term educational institutes already have good contacts to companies with whom they have worked through internships and placement of successful graduates. In addition, further companies offering vocational training are being acquired to enlarge the selection and to enable to choose completely different occupational fields. Those receive advice and information on the specific target group, support in the selection of potential applicants and can find a suitable trainee through company internship.

Even companies who have not carried out a vocational training can be won. On one hand, they receive assistance when they have to apply for an apprenticeship to the Chamber. On the other hand, they are assisted by an experienced employee of an education company who advises and supports them in case of problems and difficulties.

When choosing a suitable training company, the applicant's profile will be checked. Possibly special knowledge and abilities are desired, which the applicant should have: foreign languages, handling of PC, professional previous experience. In most cases, the company receives the corresponding application documents and invites young people to a personal interview. The mentor prepares him, lets him research information about the company, emphasizes the special knowledge and skills that he is supposed to lead during the conversation. He takes away his fear that his social problems or school deficits can lead to a rejection. In a preliminary discussion he has already discussed this with the company and submitted the possible help offers. During a potential internship meetings take place regularly and they discuss whether companies and young people can envisage a vocational training.

After the training contract has been signed by the young person and the training company, the *vocational training phase* begins. Throughout the entire training period, the mentor of vocational training will continue to
be available to both. He helps the trainee in school difficulties through an offer of support and tutorial teaching and is available if there are private problems or difficulties in education. Together with the social pedagogue strategies are developed and implemented. The mentor advises the training company in the event of conflicts with the trainee and shows promotion opportunities if the training is endangered. His task is to stabilize the training relationship, counteract a drop-out and lead the trainee successfully through the examination.

The training contract between company and trainee concludes the basic working conditions as well as the rights and duties of both contract partners. Cooperation with the mentor for vocational training is defined by certain agreements with both company and trainee. It includes regular visits to the company, where the level of education is reflected. In case of vocational school-based deficits, it is possible to agree on support programs during or outside the working hours. This can be useful already with the beginning of the training. For this purpose, the mentor seeks contact with the vocational school in order to exchange ideas with local teachers and to develop strategies for solving problems.

During the first phase, the trainee has already established a trust relationship with the young person. He can go on to turn to him with his crises and problems, and he can help with difficulties. The mentor follows the principle of “help for self-help” and promotes the development of the competences of the trainee.

If a drop-out occurs during the training, the mentor supports the young person in the search for a new training place, encourages him/her to continue vocational school and to attend teaching classes at the institute. The reason for the cancellation is analyzed and the young people motivated. It is particularly important in such a situation to maintain the constant contact with the trainee and to tell him that he is still in training. Assisted by the responsible chamber, companies are researched and contacted. At a resumption of training, the new company is also offered support and a cooperation agreement is concluded.

The role of the mentor for vocational training

Previously offered vocational training in educational institutes, the caring staff covered three areas of responsibility:

A trainer taught the practical skills in a training workshop. The trainees were given real practical insight during phases in a company. He was also
responsible for the processing of theoretical knowledge in the field of profession.

*Teachers* took up the school deficit by working on a lack of basic knowledge and rehearsing the curriculum.

A *social pedagogue* aided the young people with private and social problems and developed a support plan with them to facilitate their learning and to stabilize their motivation.

In the case of assisted training, the *mentor of vocational training* is an important reference person for the participant. From the search for a suitable training position through the support during the entire training period up to the mediation of an insurable employment, he stands by the trainee's side. He provides him with assistance in his current situation: remedial instruction for dealing with his school deficits, application training in case of deficient self-marketing, social counseling at the social pedagogue, if private problems hinder the application behavior or the training itself. He ensures that the applicant participates in the individually required support. He is always in contact with teachers and social pedagogues, with the vocational school and the supervisor of the agency for work or job center. During training, he regularly looks for the training company and provides an overview of the learning progress as well as the social behavior at the workplace.

A high trust relationship between the participant and the mentor is necessary so they can work together effectively and purposefully. The mentor puts on agreements with the participant and so makes him responsible for himself. The trust also makes it easier for the participant to turn to him early in case of private problems.

The mentor is also the contact person for the trainers of a company. In the acquisition of possible internships, training and work places, he makes the first contact, explains the assisted vocational training and offers the placement of potential trainees. He receives from them the desired profile of applicants, in order to be able to select the most suitable candidates for the positions offered.

In case of problems and difficulties during the internship or training, the trainer can contact and talk to him. Together with the trainee, both can work out the problem and try to find a solution.

In addition, he supports enterprises which have not yet carried out a vocational training with organizing and, where appropriate, in applying a training qualification.

It is clear that the mentor of vocational training has to work with many involved partners and therefore must show a high degree of flexibility.
When dealing with the young people, he must be very sensitive, because the assigned participants often have very inaccurate and also incorrect ideas about their desired occupation. These are first identified and clarified. In occupational area, professions are researched which correspond to the abilities and the school qualification. He must be aware at all times that the motivation of the participant should not decrease because there is a high risk of disappointment. Cancellations by training companies must also be absorbed, because the young person has already experienced them many times and their frustration tolerance is quite low.

Companies must raise awareness of the problems of the trainees that they are not considered as too great a hindrance to training. The mentor provides them with the great support he can offer in case of problems. Normally, the vocational school instructor turns to the training company if performance or social behavior is negative. In this case, however, the mentor assumes the responsibility, organizes support or social-educational interventions.

**Summary**

Assisted vocational training as a support of the Labour Agency for disadvantaged young people provides professional services for trainees as well as for training companies by an education institute. This increases the chances of so far unsuccessful young people to pursue and complete realistic training on the labour market. A mentor supports the entire path of vocational training: the young person’s search for a job respectively the company’s search for an applicant up to the final examination. Both the processing of school deficits and problems in the training process between instructors and trainees as well as the support in crisis situations are taken up competently and professionally in order to counteract a drop-out. The basic conditions of the training correspond to the real working world and are supplemented by individual and needs-oriented support from the mentor and the offers of the educational institute.
Reflections on Education for Newly Arrived Pupils

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In this paper I intend to discuss the situation and challenges for young migrants between the ages of 16 to 20 as well as their schooling. This discussion takes its departure points in my professional career as headmaster in mainstream upper secondary education followed by several years as headmaster in an introductory programme for newly arrived pupils.

Upper secondary schooling in Sweden

In this day and age a 16 year old is unlikely to find employment, hence 98% of our youngsters will continue in some sort of higher education. Our mainstream upper secondary school offers a three-year education with a choice of 23 different programmes. Some of them will lead to university studies like the Natural Science programme or the Social Science programme. Others will lead directly to employment like the Hairdresser’s programme, the Construction programme or the Restaurant and Food programme. Most programmes will be given in most parts of the country although some, like Sami Industries or Maritime Knowledge, will be tied to specific areas. Despite the wide range of national programmes they are not for everyone. To be accepted in the national programmes in upper secondary school, the pupil has to meet the requirements for entry, meaning to pass in the subjects studied in the 9-year compulsory school. Therefore there are also a number of individual programmes, designed for those students who have not passed in school year 1–9 and need individual schooling for

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various reasons. One group that belongs in this category are young people arriving from abroad without qualifications from basic school education.

At the beginning of 2011, I was given responsibility for a programme for young pupils arriving from abroad. The programme is called Sprint (short for Språkintroduktion, which means language introduction). At that time there were approximately 100 students in the programme. Those pupils were at the age where they should enter a national programme at upper secondary level, but with no background of a Swedish basic education they did not meet the requirements for entry to a national programme, and therefore they were directed to the Sprint programme. The programme is classed as an individual programme, which means that there is a lot more freedom when it comes to deciding what the pupils need to learn.

In the past, the main objective has been for the newly arrived students to learn Swedish, become acquainted with Swedish society and receive some basic knowledge of the different subjects in Swedish schools. Shortly before I was appointed headmaster, a new law was implemented. From then on, it was clearly outlined that the ultimate goal was to get the pupils ready to enter upper secondary school at the same level as the Swedish pupils, which meant passing in either 8 subjects for the vocational programmes or 12 subjects for pre-university programmes. In effect it meant that these pupils would, depending on their previous schooling, in 2–3 years, reach the same level, as a Swedish born pupil would do after 9 years, and in a foreign language. Quite a challenge for all of us, staff and pupils alike!

From mainstream education to the individual programme

For a number of years I have worked with young people, first as a teacher of English and Swedish and, for the last 15 years, as a headmaster with responsibility for the national programmes at an upper secondary school.

It was quite a revelation to suddenly find myself responsible for a programme, with completely new challenges and demands. That which had applied to the national programmes was no longer relevant. It can be described as, instead of going from A to B in a fairly straight line I found myself still going from A to B but via Z and C. I was confronted with an unknown entity of students and new colleagues who in many ways had different roles to the ones in the national programmes.

When I started working with this programme there were a couple of issues that had to be clear in my mind and had to form some sort of base for any decisions that I made.
1. How do we organise this number of individuals, with completely different backgrounds and languages to fit into a system based on groups, whilst allowing them to pursue individual syllabuses?

2. How do we best help the young people to become an important and useful part of Swedish society, not just good pupils at our school?

A grounded educational philosophy in Sweden is that we base the education on each individual’s capabilities and needs. This is also reflected in the regulations that state that each individual should have their own individual study plan. I must admit to feeling rather daunted by the whole concept of having an individual plan for each student, something, which in turn, clashes with the school concept of classes, levels, time tables and even the concept of the school year with its spring and autumn terms. Each spring you plan for the next school year, number of classes, number of pupils in each class, which teacher is going to teach what and so on. With Sprint there is a continuous intake. Each term you have to start new groups and during term time new pupils arrive. Nothing is constant so a continuous revision is important, which also means that continuous assessments have to be made. I’ll come back to that when discussing pedagogical aspects.

When we work with the students’ plans we have to look both at a larger, wider level and at a more detailed one. Our career adviser works with informing the students of what to expect from living in a Swedish society and discuss with each pupil where he or she would fit in during most of their first year.

The students have the same syllabus to start with, including subjects like music and art, which allows them to express themselves in other ways than speaking. There is a lot of language training in Swedish of course. You can be a beginner in the Swedish language but at the same time be quite advanced in mathematics, which makes for quite a complicated timetable.

In the second year the students usually have a more informed idea of what they want to do and can start thinking about the actual subjects in more detail and decide what they are interested in and what works for them, as well as what is needed for their particular aim in life.

Pedagogical aspects

Many of our students, whilst working very hard, did not always have a very realistic idea of how much they had actually learnt. Each year there were many disappointed students who had expected to be moved up a level, but had not managed it. At the end of each term there were arduous tests, which were used to place the students at the right level. The students were
very nervous for weeks before the gruelling tests and, between us, the Sprint colleges tried to find a way of changing this, preferably by removing the tests altogether. In Sweden we prefer to do continual assessment with feedback as we go along. Our teachers have a very close relationship with their students; they become more like friends, or extra parents, and know a lot of the students’ private life. At the same time they have to make a fair assessment of the capabilities of the students. More often than not, it is a different kind of teacher from the ones they are used to meeting in their home countries. We do not crave respect in the same way, but want our students to keep their self-confidence and not to lose heart, but keep trying. Unfortunately, our well-meaning attempts to explain and boost the students’ efforts were not easily understood. On the contrary, the students seemed to think that this opened up for negotiations concerning their results and they threatened to move to other schools. In the end we were faced with a merry-go-round amongst the colleges and had to set up new rules for when a pupil could change to a different one.

Eventually it became clear to me and my team that we should look more closely at our own role in explaining, instead of blaming the students for not understanding. Perhaps the fault was in our vagueness, not in their understanding? I started looking at the CEFR-scale (Common European Framework for Languages; Learning, Teaching, Assessment), which is an elaborate system of standardising levels of language abilities. It has got six different levels and is used to show the pupil what he knows and make it clearer. It is also used to show what is possible at the next level and support the pupils by helping them to set reasonable goals and helping them prioritise. It is a way of describing to the pupil what he has achieved and what is still left to do. The largest difference lies in the shift of responsibility. The student is the one responsible for the assessment, he or she can see what has been done and what still needs to be achieved, rather than the teacher, approaching him from a great height, giving the right answer. We also used this language scale with texts that were adapted to different areas in history, social science etc. so the pupils were given a basic knowledge of the courses they were later to study at a higher level. Instead of removing the tests altogether, which was the original idea, we started testing the pupils every six weeks so they could clearly see what they needed to learn for each six-week period and where they were in relation to what was needed. This shift was rather controversial, as there seems to be an intrinsic belief among teachers in Sweden that testing can be discouraging, especially for the weaker pupils. But it proved to be quite successful. We have better results all over now when we are continually prodding them, there are
very few disappointed students and they seem to be working through the courses at a faster rate, on the whole. This year we expect at least 75% of our students to reach basic school proficiency – to be compared to the country average of 25%.

Restrictions put upon us, have unfortunately made it more difficult for us to reach a satisfying result. We have been forced to increase the size of the classes to 18 pupils instead of 11. Due to lack of funds we have not managed to provide the pupils with the mother tongue language tuition support they have the right to. We have not managed to integrate our students with other students in our college. We have seen an increasing number of students who have a very poor school background and who will need extra tuition, something we cannot give them in the present organisation and available resources. These are certainly important issues for the future.

I found that bureaucratic decisions sometimes could, rather frustratingly, make life unnecessarily complicated. There are two things I would like to highlight. Many of our students cannot swim when they come here. In order to pass your basic schooling you have to prove that you can swim 200 meters, and in the past we have been able to use swimming instructors that were employed by the swimming baths. A technicality suddenly made that impossible and it is painful to think of how many pupils were not able to enter upper secondary school because of this. Another example is the students who are studying to become assistant nurses. They were very competent in nursing, but unemployable in home care because they couldn't cycle, and hence were not able to get from one house to the next. Thinking further afield could have helped these students into their next step with considerable ease.

The teachers and other members of staff

Reflecting back on my years as principal, I can easily say that working with the Sprint programme has been the most rewarding period of my career. We have been a small, tightly knit team, who have pulled together towards a common goal. Compared to working in a national programme, we have been able to discuss pros and cons as we have gone along and made changes we have been able to implement at short notice.

During the autumn term of 2014, the teachers put in a tremendous lot of hard work to adapt the language teaching into the CEFR-scale and to include other subjects in the texts that had to be read. They also spent hours doing tests, and hours going through the results with each pupil. It is a difficult balance between being someone who cares and someone who demands results, but if you get it right it is unbeatable. Our students are
used too much more authoritarian teaching, but with us the relationship between teacher and pupil is more implicit. A Swedish born student has learnt to de-code the relationship but for someone with a different background it can be difficult to understand. In many ways the teacher is taking on the role of their absent parents at the same time as a distance needs to be kept. The needs are inexhaustible, but I do think we have to remember that we are a place of education. Even though life is difficult, everyone needs areas in life, which are predictable and even a little bit boring. If you have fairly strong structures around you, it prevents you from wobbling too far.

There are other vitally important professions around the students. The student careers advisor is a person you go to, not only to discuss your future but also your dreams. The student counsellor is the person who knows many of your darkest secrets as, of course, is the nurse. All of us meet up with the mentor (the teacher who is responsible for the individual student) every few weeks to discuss individual pupils. We try to form a strong bond around each individual student whilst at the same time cooperating with other people around him/her.

The pupils

Our pupils show a massive diversity of backgrounds. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard once said that "in order to teach somebody I must first understand that which he understands. If I can't do that it is of no help that my knowledge is greater". There are, of course some similarities between the students. Most of our students are young men, only about 10% are girls. He/she is between 16 and 20 years old. Most of them have come to Sweden on their own, without their families. They come from countries like Afghanistan, Syria, The Palestine, Somalia, Uganda, Bangladesh, Thailand, Kurdistan, Iraq, Iran, Eritrea and Ethiopia.

These young people often suffer from difficult traumas from the past. They often live in limbo here in Sweden for quite some time waiting for an answer to their asylum application. Their school background is varied between not having gone to school at all with no reading and writing abilities whatsoever, to several years of school in their home countries. Almost invariably they want to get through school quickly and become teachers, lawyers or doctors.

Coming to Sweden is quite a clash in more ways than one. They often come from a society where you live together as a collective as opposed to finding yourself alone in this country. In a way they still live with their
families via Internet and they are expected to look after their elders. We try to tell them to think of themselves, to work for themselves and then, maybe after five or ten years they can help their families, once they have a job. But it is understandable that many prefer to find a job now, to earn money immediately, and by that be able to fulfil the obligation to help their families, something that is expected from home.

At the beginning, when you talk to the pupils most of them set out to become doctors or lawyers, irrespective of background. We have young men like Mohammad who has been to the best schools in Baghdad and we also have Ali from Afghanistan who has been a stone mason since the age of seven and never learnt to read or write, both with the same dreams. What we found is that it would probably take Ali twice as long to reach the same proficiency in Swedish as it would Mohammed. We therefore decided on a fast track and a slow track for each level. Generally, the fast track pupils were more likely to manage the 12 subjects needed for a theoretical programme and they would also help each other pull along the same direction. The slower track would, as a rule, decide to settle for the 8 subjects for a practical programme and also have to look at other options.

They have many different demands put upon them. Although not expressed in so many words the students know that a national programme preferably the Natural Sciences one (which is regarded as the most difficult one), is the one to aim for. This has to be achieved before the age of 20 if you are to fit into the system. In the last couple of years we have also received an ever increasing number of students with very poor schooling who will have little chance of entering an upper secondary school before 20.

Unfortunately it is very easy to be stuck within the confines of the school world, thinking that you have all the answers and that all you need to do is study hard. For 2 years we had a pupil called Werner from Ghana with us. He had been in Sweden for four years altogether. He did not progress at all in his studies, in the end he was, although continually nice and polite, completely apathetic when it came to school work. We told him he must practice reading more, that was the only thing that would help, we gave him extra reading tuition and when we looked at old reports from previous schools we saw the same results and the same advice. In the end I sent him to a psychologist who did extensive tests and found that he had a language impairment. He could have tried reading more until doomsday and would still only ever have seen half words. The psychologist told me it was difficult to speak to school people because we wanted to keep the pupils and solve it within the school. In this instance I eventually found a
place in a vocational college where he learned to repair cars, his dream as it turned out. It made me realize how easy it can be to think we have all the answers within the school, we have to look beyond that to try and find individual solutions for the whole person. My mother-in-law used to say “a place for everything and everything in its place”. I think there is a place for everyone, it is just a matter of keeping an open mind about it.

Helping the students to reach their goals could very well seem to be an impossible task and I must admit to feeling quite daunted by the diversity of the students, the demands put on them and the task of making it all come together. It has not turned out perfectly in every sense. However, the success stories we have experienced are largely due to the students’ own efforts and drive. Although it would be easy to think of them as helpless victims because, in a manner of speaking, they are victims – of terrible wars – it would be a mistake to belittle them. They are in no way helpless. These youngsters are the survivors, who have come a long way, and who, despite everything, have an unbeatable will to live, learn, grow and make a life for themselves.

The future

How does the future look for the three young people I mentioned earlier? Werner finished his training and I think he has got a job. Ali finishes school now with no work. He is hoping that adult education can give a formal competence in masonry. The education that was part of a national programme at an upper secondary school has been discontinued because of political decisions. This summer his great ambition is to get a driving licence. Muhammed spent weeks and months worrying about his parents and his little sister. When they eventually arrived in Sweden he spent most of his time helping them and eventually discontinued his education altogether.

The Swedish National Agency for Education has decided that from January 2016 we must assess the students’ knowledge in greater detail. This is so that they can start building on existing knowledge immediately. The intention is good, but for young asylum seekers who come on their own it is not enough. On a national level only 25% of the youngsters that arrive in their teens qualify for college. We seriously have to ask ourselves – how do we best use their existing knowledge? Is it always good to prolong a teenage existence? Is it economically viable not to be able to choose? Do we allow

1 See the chapter: Assessing newly arrived pupils’ knowledge and skills.
failure by seeing 75% as not capable of getting into college instead of using their competence in other ways? Uppsala is a university town, is that why we have limited the choices of learning a skill in vocational training? An increasing number of our new arrivals come here with very scarce reading and writing abilities. It is all very well to assess their school background, but in the ever increasing cases, where it is non-existent what do we do with it then?

These youngsters are a tremendous asset. They don't have the same background as Swedish born pupils but they have a lot of other valuable experience. It is up to us to make good use of it and not squander it by neglecting to recognize their competence in other areas.
The Relevance of Social-cultural Codes for Social, Linguistic and Cultural Inclusion – in a Swedish School Context

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Introduction
Terms such as integration, inclusion and social-cultural codes are frequently used in academic and popular-academic publications even in newspapers and journals, in TV programs and digital media, especially in the discussions about how refugees should be integrated or included in society.

The aim of this article is to show the relevance of social-cultural codes for the inclusion of newly arrived young people in a Swedish school context and also to describe good practices for working with social-cultural codes.

This article also presents the results of semi-structured interviews with newly arrived students and a teacher from the Language Introduction Program at Celsiusskolan.

During these interviews I tried to find out what the students understood by the social-cultural codes and by social, linguistic and cultural inclusion and whether or not they thought about these in and out of school. I also wanted to explore the importance of social, linguistic and cultural codes for students’ habitus in school. In addition it gave the students the chance to express their own views and thoughts on how they could be better included, not just in school but also outside through a better understanding of the social-cultural codes.

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The interviews also indicated how teachers work with social, linguistic and cultural inclusion at school, what tools they use to help students become aware of social-cultural codes and how they can use this recognition and experience outside the school environment.

The results of evaluating the interviews, as well as the description of the methods, refer only to the Celsiusskolan and can therefore not be valid in general terms.

The composition of the article is as follows:

- **Brief theoretical review** on terms and concepts of social, linguistic and cultural inclusion and the social-cultural codes in a school context
- **Reflections by students and a teacher** about social-cultural codes and their relevance for a better social, linguistic and cultural inclusion of newly arrived students
- **Innovative methods** showing how educational professionals can work with social-cultural codes to improve social, linguistic and cultural inclusion

**Brief theoretical review**

This part contains a brief overview of terms and concepts of the social, linguistic and cultural inclusion and social-cultural codes in relation to the school context.

School has a special place in the lives of children and young people and bears a special responsibility for the development of all the students, no matter who they are or where they come from.

The Swedish school system also has, apart from its educational mission, the obligation to educate and provide the students with respect for human rights and other fundamental democratic values that the Swedish society is based on. They will be given help so that they can develop to the utmost of their ability. There will be lasting efforts to compensate for the differences in their conditions when incorporating them in their education. Education, in co-operation with their homes, also aims to encourage the students' personal development to enable them to become active, creative, competent and responsible individuals and citizens. (Skolverket, 2010)

In today's schools we meet students of different nationalities, cultures and religions who come from all over the world. These newly arrived students represent a very heterogenic group with different economic, cultural or social resources. When they go to a Swedish school they not only have
to learn all the school subjects, but also how to behave and how to react in different situations.

One of the most important tasks in Swedish schools today is to integrate and educate newly arrived students. Schools have taken up the challenge to include these students socially, linguistically and culturally, to create conditions, which will give them the chance to develop as individuals and as citizens within society. (Skolverket, 2010)

**Inclusion – Integration**

The terms integration and inclusion are interpreted in many different ways and it is quite difficult to find just one definition for them which contains all the aspects of these terms. They are used in different social, linguistic, cultural and economic contexts and in different theoretical concepts.

Inclusion is a term that is often likened equal to integration. In today’s research programs, integration and inclusion are understood to be two different social political concepts, which also stand for different ways of looking at society. (Nilholm & Göransson, 2014)

Human development involves expanding individual capabilities. Yet individuals are also bound together with others. Thus, how individuals relate to each other is important in building cohesive and enduring societies. An integrated society relies on effective social institutions that enable people to act collectively, enhancing trust and solidarity between groups. These institutions include formal non-governmental organizations, informal associations and co-operatives, as well as norms and rules of behaviour. (UNDP, 2013)

Social, linguistic and cultural inclusion is understood as a process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background, so that they can achieve their full potential in life. It is a multi-dimensional process aimed at creating conditions for full and active participation by every member of society in all aspects of life, including civic, social, economic, and political activities, as well as their participation in decision-making processes. (UN, 2009)

Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve Education For All (EFA). As an overall principle, it should guide all educational policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society. (UNESCO, 2009)
A working definition of inclusive education was given by Sebba and Ain- scow (1996) in the following words:

An inclusion school works from the principle that all students in the community should learn together. Inclusion is a process and not a state. Inclusion describes the process by which a school attempts to respond to all pupils as individuals while reconsidering its curricular organisation and provision.

In an inclusive education system all students are taught together right from the beginning. Sweden is one of the countries which, in 2006, signed the UNESCO Salamanca Declaration. In one of the Declaration’s articles it is stated that a school must give every child a place, irrespective of any lack of physical, intellectual, social, cultural, emotional or oral skills and these can only be used in exceptional circumstances to separate a child from its normal class. (Svenska Unescorådet, 2/2006)

To the question, why is inclusion important in schools, Kerstin Göransson, Professor of Special Education at Karlstad University, Sweden, replies that schools should be a strong democratic community where everyone can live and work together, where all the students can be different in an environment where every student can develop. (Nilholm & Göransson, 2014)

The social, linguistic and cultural inclusion of everyone is of basic importance for Swedish society. Current field research highlights especially the inclusion of newly arrived students as an important condition. Many schools strive towards working with the challenge of both integration and inclusion.

Social-cultural codes

What are social-cultural codes and why are they so important for the social, linguistic and cultural inclusion of the newly arrived students?

The term social-cultural code has been defined in various ways. Some of these are described as follows:

Social-cultural codes are the basic classification system of reality and is basically symbolic, which means that human thinking takes place within associations and with compressed meanings. People put the environment in order, classifying it, not individually but collectively. Everything we see, hear, taste, smell and feel, in short, everything we experience, we put into prefabricated categories. These categories are culturally determined – not naturally present. (Roehl, 2012)

Basically people possess an apparently unlimited number of behavioural possibilities in every situation, every day and throughout life. But when
someone decides to act in a certain way, he is, at the same time, deciding against something else. A code always means a reduction in possible choices. Behavioural choices are artificially reduced by the social-cultural codes, valid in the social areas in accordance with the social-cultural context. (Jäggi, 2009)

Every social-cultural code is sanctioned by behaviour but it also rewards those who conform to the code. Social-cultural codes exist in all social-cultural contexts. In the interaction between people, these codes are constantly being reproduced and this creates a sense of belonging. Knowing about social-cultural codes and being aware of them in a different social context is important for a successful social life. Social-cultural codes express how democratic rules and norms create more individual space for development as well as space forstrengthening and consolidating power structures, both visible and invisible. The scope of a social-cultural code can vary greatly. It can work for a small group, like a family, or for many people, like a big organisation. (Jäggi, 2009)

To recognise and understand the social-cultural codes is enormously important for the newly arrived students who, at the beginning, have only a partial or indeed no knowledge of them at all. Understanding social-cultural codes is strongly connected with the development of democracy in schools. If newly arrived children are truly included early, they have a better chance of becoming democratic citizens, not only in school, but in all areas of society. When they understand the social-cultural codes and choose to act according to them, they gain greater freedom. This increases the space and position in which they can interact and increases their opportunities for inclusion in various other situations outside school. If newly arrived students are introduced early to the social-cultural codes in their new social context, their possibilities for inclusion, participation and acceptance will increase. Gaining access to areas of Swedish society greatly depends on how the students are able to enter various social-cultural rooms in school. If they are recognised, accepted and respected in school right from the beginning, their self-esteem will improve. They will also take part in the process of creating new social-cultural codes in and outside school since they are dynamic and are always changing.
Reflections by students and a teacher

The following reflections on social-cultural codes and their relevance for the social, cultural, linguistic and cultural inclusion of newly arrived students in school are a summary of complete interviews. The students involved had been in Sweden for between ten months and three and a half years. Among them were four girls and six boys. These young people came from Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Egypt, the Sudan, Turkey and Somalia. As previously mentioned in the introduction, the results make no claim to be generally valid, but could serve as an inspiration for a more concentrated and intense survey of the importance of social, linguistic and cultural inclusion of newly arrived students.

Newly arrived students’ reflections on social-cultural codes

The following questions were discussed during interviews with the students:

- What do you understand by the terms social-cultural codes and social, linguistic and cultural inclusion? Have you previously thought about them or discussed them?
- Which social-cultural codes have you recognised? Which can you find in and outside school? How important is it for you to understand these codes and try to fit into them?
- What experiences regarding social-cultural codes have you had since you came to Sweden?
- What could be done better to improve the work on social, cultural and linguistic inclusion in school?
- Do you feel included in school and who has helped you with this?

Most of the students had not heard of the term social-cultural codes and had not consciously thought about it. But one student said that social-cultural codes had something to do with people’s behaviour in different cultures. One girl could not explain the term social-cultural code but her example showed that she understood the meaning of the term. For example, she realised that people stood in queues and waited their turn, whether at school dinner, in the supermarket or at the bank. She found this strange, but good. She compared it with her own experience from the country where she had grown up, where the strongest always came first. The example helped the students understand what was meant by the term social-cultural code. Other students, who had been in Sweden longer, could contribute more
concrete examples like “…not making a lot of noise eating in the dining hall, putting up your hand in class if you want to say something, looking people in the eye when you talk to them.”

Many of these codes, which they had deciphered since their arrival, they could accept and saw no problem carrying them out. But there were other social-cultural codes in Sweden, which they had problems to understand because they found them rather disconcerting. However, they tried to keep to them because going against them only drew angry glances or remarks. Among these were examples that they should not simply just address people on a bus or in any public transport, that they should tell someone in advance if they planned to visit them and that they should not go around in groups because that could be felt by others as disturbing.

The students tended to generalise about the things they had recognised and then experienced. Most of them had little or no contact with the local Swedish people, so they had not had much personal experience. The social spaces, which are mainly outside school, are difficult for them to reach in spite of their interest and their wish to get around and learn about their new home. One student said:

I have tried to find friends other than those in a similar situation as mine. But it didn’t come off. That made me sad and I felt as though I was someone from another planet. I had had such great hopes for Sweden and especially at school. I was disappointed.

All the students emphasised that it was very important to understand the social-cultural codes and to act accordingly, but above all they stressed the importance of the language, which they depended on to understand the social-cultural codes and to be able to adapt to them. The language is regarded as the key to gain entrance to Swedish society, only then can you communicate, get to know the culture and how daily life works.

The language must be the first thing you learn. You have no chance without being able to speak the language. Later, when I learned Swedish, then I made contact with other people. Before that I had not trusted myself and I was afraid of being laughed at or being insulted.
Newly arrived students’ reflections on inclusion

When they were asked how they would define the term inclusion, the students answered, among other things:

By inclusion we mean that everyone’s the same and nobody is better than the other. Everyone can take part in everything. Anyone can reach their aims and you help each other. Everyone has the same right to get on.

It was a real worry for all the students that they had to wait several months before they could start school. During this period they hardly had any contact with other Swedish people and lost valuable time when they could have been learning Swedish. They often just socialise with their peers or with other refugees who speak the same language. “I felt very restless, for how was I to learn Swedish if I only spent my time with people from my native country?” All the students shared this feeling.

In spite of the fact that the students regarded themselves as part of the Swedish society, they did not really feel they belonged: “When I came to school, I thought I would be included directly in everything.” They said that they met the other students in the corridors at school, in the dining hall and in the library but not in the classroom, the gym or at school events. They found it was just not possible to make personal contact. Only a few students knew anyone in their own school. They thought that was because they only had short breaks and there was no time to make friends but also because there were no joint activities during or after school.

One of the girls mentioned a discussion that had taken place at school to bring the newly arrived students together with the others. Her conclusion after the meeting was that the other students all felt the same: that they would like to get to know the students from the Language Introduction Program, that they had no trouble getting to know people, but that there were no real opportunities at school. She thought something should be done to bring the two groups together. They all agreed that the school should do something about it. They also emphasised that meeting Swedish students was important for their progress in learning Swedish and that, in this way, they would learn the linguistic and cultural codes.

When asked how they thought the school could improve their work with inclusion, the students emphasised the responsibility which the school’s Headmaster had for that. They wanted to be taught together with the other students and said they felt they should be included in the daily activities at school. They also felt that everyone should be involved and accept the responsibility and that it was important to be included in all the
school spaces from the first day at school. “That was all new to me. I could neither speak nor understand and I wished I had a friend sitting beside me.”

They also stressed the importance of the help they got from the Language Introduction Program teachers. They were regarded as very important role models. One of the boys said that his mentor was like a life line to him by bringing an understanding of the language into the classroom and also many cultural things pertaining to their daily lives. The majority of the students found that the Language Introduction Program teachers were really interested in making them feel safe at school and no longer lonely. The students appreciated being treated equally and that the teachers made no comparison between the students. The majority of the students remembered, how, in the countries where they came from, teachers compared students’ performance in school in front of the whole class and if a student had bad results, then he/she was made to feel bad and ashamed.

Two students thought the teachers might give more feedback about their progress and more individual help.

All students wanted to continue to study after they had finished school and they had explicit ideas about what they wanted to do in the future (e.g. socio-economist, policeman, teacher, systems technician, computer specialist, warden). They all thought that it would not be possible without their own hard work and support from others.

To sum up, newly arrived students value their place in school very highly. They feel well cared for in the school’s environment, especially in the Language Instruction Program, but would like to be better included in the school and in Swedish society as a whole. They had concrete and realistic ideas on how that could be attained and realised that it would not be possible without good language skills. The students understood social, linguistic and cultural inclusion as something concerning them all and that knowledge about the social-cultural codes was important to make living together easier and to avoid friction between them and other people in and outside school. The students would also like to see more discussions about inclusion and social-cultural codes where they could put forward their views and experiences.

Reflections by a teacher on social, linguistic and cultural inclusion and on social-cultural codes

The interview with the teacher Babiker El-Obeid was focused on his work with newly arrived students. B. El-Obeid has been working with the Language Introduction Program at Celsiusskolan for many years both as an as-
sistant and a teacher, helping the newly arrived students with their school work. He comes from the Sudan and has lived in Sweden for nearly 30 years.

In his work he is inspired by his conviction that all students can be successful and that the school's most important mission is to support the students in their visions for the future. He wants to make clear to the students that taking part in the Language Introduction Program is the first step towards their dreams. He stresses that, particularly at the beginning, he has to explain to the students what the Swedish school is going to be like, what rights and duties each student has. Recognising, learning and adapting to the social-cultural codes are some of the duties. B. El-Obeid has had experience of the friction and conflicts that can occur when newly arrived students do not recognise or embrace these codes or even choose to ignore them.

B. El-Obeid believes it is crucial for the students to be included right from the beginning but he also sees the challenges. One such challenge is that the school is not functioning as one unit. It is divided into two different parts, which differ widely from one another. There is no connection between the Language Instruction Program and the other programs in the school. During the discussion B. El-Obeid made some concrete suggestions about how educational professionals can work to support the inclusion of newly arrived students.

He suggested that:

- the school staff must meet students regularly to talk together. It is important for the school staff to hear everyone's voice and to ensure that every single student feels included in all areas of the school. The professionals should acquire competences which are necessary for constructing and maintaining an inclusive school.
- the Headmasters for the different programs have to discuss and plan concrete steps as to how all students can be included and how these plans can be a part of everyday life. It is not enough to bring students together every now and then to talk about inclusion. Inclusion should be a systematic process, which includes well planned work with social-cultural codes based on considered decisions.
- school materials such as books, films, pictures or digital platforms should contain information about social, linguistic and cultural inclusion and social-cultural codes. Teachers also need to address and discuss these subjects in their classrooms. Students learn through various channels and they need guidance from teachers or other students.
to understand how to act in different contexts and to adapt to the environment of the school.

- as soon as a newly arrived student can study a subject on a level sufficient for a national program, he/she should be included in their own school. There is no reason why a student should stay longer than necessary in a special program. Some of the school subjects such as music, art, handcraft and sport could be taught in joint groups from the start.
- to include the student’s family or legal guardian in school matters is a very important issue. Their help, guidance and expectations will contribute to develop the intellectual capacities of the students and their ambitions to continue with studies and to work.
- above all, inclusion means being in school and no longer being alone.

B. El-Obeid regards communication as particularly important to achieve this. The newly arrived students need someone they can talk to: they need the Swedish language. He also pointed out some important conditions, which the students have to fulfil in order to reach the educational aims and to strengthen their inclusion in school and in Swedish society. These conditions are:

- coming to school on time
- using the time well in school
- using materials with care and respect
- developing a routine which ensures a well-ordered day
- doing the homework
- in their free time, doing things with other people, especially taking part in group activities
- being curious and asking questions
- learning their rights and duties and living by them
- learning how to behave in conflicts and how to solve them

As a teacher it is especially important to support the students during their school days and to help them when it is needed but he also tries to ensure that they, being independent, are able to accept responsibility.

The commitment by the educational professionals to work with the Language Instruction Program is an important basis for succeeding in including the newly arrived young people. The students often have no role model, no example to follow, nobody who they can socialise with in their free time. They often only have their own company or the company of other young people who are in the same situation as they are. The social, linguistic and cultural inclusion has to be a matter for society as a whole. A place where
newly arrived students can grow, a place where they can be seen, understood and supported. If society doesn’t invest in the inclusion of the newly arrived young people soon after their arrival in Sweden, it may have grave consequences for their development. B. El-Obeid has experienced how the students have had difficulties passing the school exams and finding work which increases the risk of them getting into trouble in society and sometimes with the law.

The educational professionals need to co-operate with professionals outside school in the educational, cultural and social sectors to promote the inclusion of newly arrived young people in society and prevent these students from dropping out of school and risking becoming NEETs in the future.

Summary

The summary of the interviews indicates that the students and the teachers hold quite similar views. They believe that everybody should be responsible for the social, linguistic and cultural inclusion but a special role should fall on the school organisation and the educational professionals. The school has to construct a social cultural framework that is open and flexible for everybody. They also stress that inclusion requires active participation of all students in developing the school culture as well as the school areas. The students need to work hard to understand the various social-cultural codes and to adapt to them.

Knowledge of languages is crucial. “Without being able to speak Swedish you have no future”, one of the students said. All the other students who were interviewed, as well as the teacher, agreed with this statement. To learn the language these students need to find possibilities to communicate in Swedish every day, in and outside school. It is therefore of particular importance that they find people to talk to and make friends with.

The reflections by the students and the teacher show that inclusion is not a matter of ‘fitting in.’ It is an important condition for developing and strengthening everyone in society. With common efforts from different sectors in society, the newly arrived students will find it easier to be included in the community and to build and expand their own personal capital that they need for the future. The school is a hub for this process.
Innovative method

Social, linguistic and cultural inclusion through knowing and understanding social-cultural codes in a school context is an important issue and a complex task for every educational professional. To make their work successful the staff of the school have to work continuously and systematically with these questions and they need to be aware of how much help newly arrived students need to understand their new culture and to have good conditions for their educational and personal development.

In the following text B. El-Obeid describes how he works on the subject of inclusion:

Through my experience as a teacher, I find that understanding the social-cultural codes is important for inclusion and for motivation for the newly arrived students between the ages of 16 and 20. When the students understand the social-cultural codes and act within them, it increases their understanding of the society they now live in. One of the problems for newly arrived students, from my experience, is the lack of understanding of the Swedish social-cultural codes. By observing and understanding the codes newly arrived students could be included easier and the friction and even the conflicts that arise between the newly arrived students and other people could be minimised.

In my teaching career I have identified various situations in different social rooms, where understanding the social-cultural codes is both necessary and important, where newly arrived students have to be observant and understand how to act as quickly as possible. Maybe it looks simple and should not take too much time. But newly arrived students come with their own social-cultural codes that they have learned consciously or unconsciously and naturally it takes time for them to change their social-cultural behaviour and to adapt to their new environment.

As a teacher I am responsible for helping all the students and especially those who are new and need extra help and support. But not only should the teachers be responsible, all the staff and even the other students have to be observant and have to be involved in this work. To make it successful, you need common strategies and structures of work and organisation.

The significance of introducing newly arrived students to social-cultural codes in school is not only important for their time in school, it also prepares them for dealing with the world outside the school boundaries.
I will give you some examples of where social-cultural codes are important in school, how to learn to react to other cultural behaviour and what students can learn about these issues and their use in other social-cultural contexts in society.

**Dining Hall**

There are certain codes that apply in the dining hall. *Queueing* for example: it is important to stand in line and wait your turn. If you wait for your turn in a queue at school, it gives you an understanding of the importance of this behaviour in all aspects of Swedish public life, such as, at the supermarket, bank or wherever you go.

Another issue is *wasting food* when students take more than they can eat and then throw most of it away. If you take only as much as you really need, then it helps you to understand that everybody has to care about the environment and our limited resources.

*Clearing up* after yourself is important too, such as taking your plate back once you have finished eating. Also making sure the place where you were sitting is left clean so that other students can enjoy their meal. Students need to be taught how to observe and learn and as a result not to leave others to do the work they should be doing.

**Classroom**

You need an atmosphere of *respect* for both the teacher as well as students to have a successful learning environment. This can be achieved in a number of ways such as raising your hand when you want to speak rather than blurting out what you want to say. And looking at the teacher or the other students when you speak to them or answer a question. Being punctual for lessons is very important since arriving late interrupts the lesson for students and the teacher. Respecting other students is very important and one should not make fun of a classmate if he/she gets an answer wrong or is unable to read properly.

You have discipline in the classroom through understanding the social-cultural codes when it comes to raising your hand, listening and answering the teacher and also talking without interrupting the teacher or other students. This is beneficial when dealing with people in other situations such as in a public lecture or attending a meeting. And also in everyday life, like crossing the road – when the lights are red, you stop and wait for your turn, and when they turn to green, you may cross.
**Corridors**

There is always a lot of movement and a steady flow of students at all times in the school corridors. It is essential to understand the importance and respect shown for personal space. This means that it is not allowed to take pictures of fellow students without their permission. It is also not allowed to catcall, harass or bother other students.

Everything that you learn in the corridors actually applies to the social codes of the street: such as not shouting or taking pictures of people without asking their permission. It is important to respect the *integrity* of others in public places. The most important thing in the Swedish social-cultural codes is that violence is never acceptable in any circumstance. In this case, the police have to be summoned.

I would like to summarise my activities for the inclusion of newly arrived students as follows:

I regard school as a micro-society in which, just as in a macro-society (and just as in all areas of society), there are social-cultural codes, which will decipher it.

Only by acknowledging and understanding the codes and their consequences when they come up against the social-cultural codes, can the new students learn how to behave properly in different social areas of society and in different social contexts. How students succeed in making their way in life successfully depends essentially upon how much help they get in the beginning, how they take up the correct position in different social spheres and how much knowledge and experience they acquire to master the different challenges, wherever they may be.

Inclusion, which is achieved by working through the social-cultural codes should:

- not be just one single project but a fact of daily life
- happen on the spot: that means the place where social-cultural codes exist and where it is important to know them and keep their use in mind, for example, how to get in contact with other, as yet, unknown people. It may not happen on the street but perhaps in the sports centre or in the choir…
- make all educational professionals at school partners for the new students when they have questions or queries
- enable the students to understand and become familiar with their school and to establish routines which help them to find their place in class and in the whole school.
• develop various methods and use them, for example, by walking round the school and using this opportunity to make the students aware of the school’s social-cultural spaces, to give pupils the chance to think about their own experiences of the social-cultural codes and to talk about them.
• create opportunities for the new students to be able to talk to other students and adults in the class, or outside the school, about social-cultural codes and how they affect the culture in different places such as football clubs, choirs or indeed, everywhere where students spend their free time.

Working with newly arrived students is a demanding and really important task. As an educational professional I am convinced that all students can be successful in school and in life but, first of all, society needs to give them a chance and create conditions for them to be socially, linguistically and culturally included in all areas of society. When newly arrived students feel that they are welcome and accepted, in their new country, their self-esteem will grow and, with that, the motivation to participate in the development of their new society.
References


Language Development Approaches in Education for Newly Arrived Students in Swedish Schools

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Introduction (background and aims)

Just as in other western countries, the number of multilingual students has increased in Swedish schools during the last decade and about 150 languages are spoken in Sweden today (Institut för språk och folkminnen, 2016). However, there is not any up to date statistics regarding multilingual students in all school forms, their backgrounds and what languages they speak. The closest indicator of how many multilingual students there are in Swedish primary and secondary schools is found in the latest statistics of students who are entitled to mother tongue education, which is about 24 per cent of all students in Swedish primary and secondary schools (Skolverket, 2016a). Additionally, when it comes to upper secondary school the number of students who are born abroad and students born in Sweden but with both parents born abroad was also 24 per cent of the total number of students in Swedish upper secondary schools during 2014/2015 (Skolverket, 2016b).

In the current debate about inclusive education in Sweden the schooling of newly arrived children and young people is presented as a strong educational challenge. Even though there are international knowledge and experience regarding the importance of multilingualism for integration and learning, the educational situation for multilingual students has just recently been acknowledged, partly due to the growing number of migrant

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1 Swedish National Agency for Education.
children and young people arriving in Sweden. Newly arrived students in Swedish primary and secondary schools have increased with almost 64 per cent during the last seven years. In 2015 the number of newly arrived students registered in Swedish primary and secondary schools was 49 500, which constitutes about five per cent of the student population registered in the Swedish school system (Skolverket, 2016c).

Within these discussions, the question of how education for newly arrived students is to be organised as well as their school results are put forward as factors which suggest the need of developing higher levels of equity in education for this group. Not least, teaching competence to meet newly arrived students’ preconditions for educational success is considered to be a central area of development. In this context, the necessity to adopt language development approaches in education for newly arrived students is often expressed as a prioritised area within the school community. Within this current educational discourse, as a result of the challenges brought on by the increasing arrival of refugees who need to be schooled in the mainstream Swedish system, subject specialist teachers’ language didactic skills are considered to be of crucial importance.

In recent years, the Centre for Professional Development and Internationalisation in Schools (from now on FBA) has increasingly developed professional training activities related to newly arrived students’ teaching and learning, e.g. by organising didactical and research seminars as well as courses for mother tongue teachers and study counsellors. As a consequence of this emerging educational field, FBA has defined the concept of language development approaches as a priority knowledge area within the framework of the Erasmus+ project Education for Equity.

Today Swedish authorities and schools are providing extra resources to create conditions for developing language integrated approaches in all school subjects, e.g. in the so called preparatory classes and the introductory programme for newly arrived students at all school levels. This is frequently done through different forms of in-service training courses for specialist subject teachers, mother tongue teachers, student counsellors as well as other school staff involved in education for newly arrival students. In addition, the increasing interest in education for newly arrived students also creates an urgent need for specific studies that generate new knowledge of the complexity and diversity of the educational processes of this student profile, not least a scientifically founded and critical approach to language development in the field.
In close connection to the project Education for Equity’s fundamental objectives, this chapter aims to contribute to:

- mapping out and analysing good practices in social, linguistic and cultural inclusion, with special attention given to immigrant children and young people not in employment, education or training,
- transferring existing knowledge in social, linguistic and cultural inclusion to new educational contexts.

This article summarises the results of a systematic review conducted in 2016 within the context of the EFE-project. The aim of the study was to gain further understanding of the underpinning principles and growth of the phenomenon language development approaches in relation to education for newly arrived students in the Swedish context. The analysis focused on identifying and describing teaching methods and strategies that are constituted in current educational literature.

In the study the following research questions were in focus:

- What theories are put forward as supporting the phenomenon of the language development approaches?
- What empirical evidence and what proven experience regarding improved school results can be connected to the implementation of language development approaches in education for newly arrived students in Sweden?

**Method**

In order to gain further understanding of the underpinning principles and growth of the phenomenon language development approaches, a systematic review of research and other academic publications within the field of education for newly arrived students in Sweden was carried out.

Since the schooling of newly arrived students and their learning have received increased interest in Sweden the last couple of years, we estimated previous research in this area to be scarce. With the aim of maximising the number of matches in relevant publications within the field the keywords *newly arrived students* and *language development approach* were completed

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2 The concept of language development approaches should be placed in the Swedish educational context, where the Swedish construction *språkutvecklande arbetssätt* has been developed in order to describe didactical approaches in teaching and learning for newly arrived students.
with a number of subject specific concepts related to the discourse investigated in this study. These subject concepts were identified through the following procedures:

- test searches of terminology used in titles and abstracts via Google Scholar aiming at searching through the terminology that is used in titles and abstracts
- searching concepts used in publications and films produced by the Swedish National Agency for Education under the headlines language development approaches and newly arrived students

The study was limited to publications of Swedish research and proven experience regarding the use of language development approaches in education for newly arrived students from primary to upper secondary schools. The literature search was conducted by using the Swedish databases Swepub och Diva. With the aim of including publications that address proven experience, the search was complemented by a manual search in the database of the Swedish National Agency of Education. Accordingly, the choice of databases was restricted to the Swedish educational context. A number of researchers at Uppsala University also contributed by suggesting relevant publications.

**Summary of results**

In the reviewed literature, the phenomenon language development approaches is mainly connected to two theoretical starting points:

- The socio cultural theory of learning (Vygotsky, 1978, Säljö, 2000)
- The systemic functional linguistics based on Halliday’s works on functional grammar (e.g. 1994).

In addition, sociological research about linguistic codes and interaction patterns are also mentioned, but to a lesser extent. These theoretical starting points, besides the fact that newly arrived students need to develop subject specific knowledge through a second language, function as a basis for proposing the use of language development approaches for enhancing newly arrived students’ learning. It becomes clear that there is a general agreement regarding theory and practice in this educational field, since these theoretical starting points are frequently represented in the following genres:
• Anthologies geared towards teachers and teacher students
• Reports written by School authorities, knowledge overviews and recommendations
• A limited number of qualitative studies on the role of language for multilingual students’ learning, where newly arrived students are a part of the population

A recurrent problem in the investigated texts included in the review is the weak definition of the concept language development approaches. The term is used with great freedom. In many cases it is put forward as a concept that does not need to be defined indicating innovative methods for teaching newly arrived students. However, a concrete definition in relation to what it implies within pedagogical practices is often missing. From the identified descriptions of teaching methods in the reviewed literature the following pedagogical practices can be classified as language development approaches:

• The teaching-learning cycle: a practical application of genre pedagogical principles that has become the most advocated model for teaching newly arrived students in Sweden. This method is described as a didactical tool that contributes to a higher level of content and language integrated teaching and learning.
• Code-switching between L1 and L2: an approach based on the perspective of students’ multilingualism as a resource in the classroom. Particular emphasis is given to use the students’ available linguistic resources in order to facilitate their understanding of subject specific contents.
• Bilingual writing (identity texts): a teaching method also characterised by the use of code-switching in the classroom, but in written production. Emphasis is here given to linguistic and cultural inclusion.
• Scaffolding structures to support teaching and learning through L1, mostly by study guidance in the students’ mother tongue.

Genre pedagogy and the teaching-learning cycle
In the investigated literature, genre pedagogy emerges as the most advocated didactical method for implementing language development approaches in education for newly arrived students.

Australian researchers and teachers developed genre pedagogy in the 1980s with the aim of creating a model for teaching second language learners and students from vulnerable socio-economic environments (Skovnerket, 2012). The concept genre is used in order to identify and categorise text
types that are representative of teaching materials and writing assignments in different school subjects. Two main theoretical starting points underpin genre pedagogy – Halliday’s systemic functional linguistics and the sociocultural theory of development as mentioned above. Another important theoretical starting point is the sociological research on linguistic codes and interaction patterns in educational settings focusing on the interaction between teachers and learners in the classroom (Kuyumcu in Hyltenstam & Lindberg et al. 2013). The practical application of genre pedagogy is based on the so-called teaching-learning cycle, which is a systematic text-based didactical sequence with the aim of developing students’ ability to produce texts in different school genres.

**Code-switching between L1 and L2**

Switching between different languages in school contexts in which education is mainly organised around a monolingual norm has traditionally been viewed as a negative phenomenon. This view stems from a behaviouristic perspective of language and learning, in which code-switching is regarded as an undesirable behaviour that can lead to the development of bad language use habits in the majority language. From this perspective, there has been a tendency to connect multilingual students’ switching to their mother tongue to a lack of knowledge in the language of instruction. Code-switching in a wider perspective is defined as the switch that bi—or multilingual speakers do “between languages in the same context” (Park in Hyltenstam & Lindberg et al. 2013: 281). The switch between different languages in educational contexts can fulfil different functions that necessarily don’t need to be compensatory for lacking knowledge in the language of instruction. Code-switching among multilingual students can e.g. fulfil a social function, which is explained in terms of identity, ethnicity and group belonging. Another function can be defined in terms of cognitive strategies, where switching to the mother tongue can enhance students’ meaning making. Karlsson et al. (2016) emphasise e.g. the importance of the cognitive function of code-switching. In particular, they stress the referential function, which means that code-switching can be used in order to give and receive information about the world. This relates to Halliday’s concept of **ideational meta-function**, which means: “how we choose to represent the world and our experiences of it” (Karlsson et al., 2016: 35). In this perspective, code-switching between the language of instruction and the student’s mother tongue is regarded as a resource since the primary function of code-switching is to create meaning.
The discussion of bilingual writing (identity texts) departs from the concept of identity in order to analyse multilingual students’ development of language and subject specific knowledge.

Wedin (2017, forthcoming) uses identity in relation to language development processes as theoretical starting point in a study of multilingual students’ learning. In a review of present day knowledge about the topic she highlights international proven experiences of teaching practice, in particular bilingual writing (so-called identity texts) as a method that lead to integration of the students’ multilingual resources, strengthen their identity and increase their engagement, aspects which in turn are coupled with positive effects in learning development.

Scaffolding structures to support teaching and learning through L1

In Sweden, students with another first language than Swedish have had access to mother tongue teaching within different forms of education since the late 1960s. However, these forms of supportive teaching have varied in its purpose, role and scope depending on educational policy visions and the varied conditions of municipalities and schools to realise the task of mother tongue teaching (Kästen-Ebeling 2014).3

A basic principle for understanding the current Swedish model for mother tongue teaching is found in the Education Act4. Article 7 states: “a student who has a guardian with another native language than Swedish should be offered mother tongue teaching if

1. the language is used for everyday interaction in the home, and
2. the student has basic language skills” (Swedish Code of Statutes 2010: 800).

Furthermore, besides mother tongue teaching, multilingual students are offered study guidance in the mother tongue. According to the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2015), study guidance is a method that “can support pupils’ learning in different subjects and help students to develop as far as possible towards the goals of education.”

According to Axelsson (in Bunar et al. 2015), knowledge of and support in the mother tongue is important for successful schooling even in a second

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3 See Kästen-Ebeling & Otterup (et al. 2014) for an historical review of the role of the subject mother tongue in the Swedish school system.
4 Skollagen.
language, something which has received extensive empirical support in previous research.

These studies are mainly based on studies carried out in Anglo-Saxon educational contexts which show that multilingual students (minority students in Axelsson’s study) who are offered extensive subject teaching in their “mother tongue” in parallel with teaching in the majority language (English) learn more (language and knowledge) than students who are offered teaching in one language only (2015: 85).

Similar conclusions can be identified in European studies of school results where multilingual students’ have been offered education in a genuine bilingual education model, for example, in Wales and autonomous regions in Spain where the minority language is official alongside the majority language (Norberg Brorsson & Laino, 2015).

Conclusions

Despite the amount of literature dealing with newly arrived students’ learning, we have not identified any studies in which the primary student population consists of newly arrived students. In the few reported investigations, newly arrived students are included in a larger population in the classroom consisting of different profiles of multilingual students or students who have another first language than Swedish. Accordingly, it is difficult to extract any results that concern newly arrived students per se because the preconditions of this group of learners differ strongly from other multilingual groups. If we take the factor proficiency in language of instruction as an example, it could be argued that newly arrived students share need to develop their Swedish language competence from a beginner level, while other multilingual student groups may show great variation in their levels of proficiency.

Another problematic aspect is that the discourse tends to describe the student's linguistic reality in a simplistic and dichotomised way, in terms of first and second language (L1 and L2). Many of the texts lack a clear description of multilingual student profiles and also lack elaborations and explanations of the concepts of L1 and L2 in context. A recurrent pattern identified in the texts concerns the fact that multilingual students, even if they are born in Sweden, are classified as second language learners. It can be argued that this is a wrong categorisation that can have severe consequences for the students' schooling. Such a categorisation does not build on these students' Swedish language competence but on the idea that the students' first language is the everyday language spoken at home. However,
for these students, the language they speak at home does not necessarily need to be more developed than the majority language. From a sociolinguistic perspective, it is possible to argue that multilingual students' first language is the language that fulfils a social function in their everyday life, in this case this would be Swedish, which is also the language of instruction in school.

In line with international existing research of bilingual education models (Thomas & Collier 1997, 2002, Norberg Brorsson & Lainio 2015) it is possible to draw the conclusion that Swedish efforts regarding mother tongue-based bilingual education (mother tongue teaching and study guidance), despite limitations in the mainstream school system and a very low status, have led to positive effects on students' development of language and subject specific knowledge.

Except for the importance of the use of mother tongue for multilingual students' success in school, which is confirmed by international experience and to some extent by Swedish school results, there is not any empirical evidence regarding improved school results as a result of implementing language development approaches with newly arrived students in the Swedish education context. However, there are international studies that show evidence of improved learning through structured text-talks, but this teaching method is not present in the investigated literature. The limited number of studies and proven experiences concerning newly arrived students suggest that genre pedagogy and code-switching led to increased student motivation, increased conversational space and interaction and improved writing skills in school related text genres. However, if these approaches lead to improved general school results is an issue that needs to be further investigated, e.g. through longitudinal studies in which newly arrived students are in focus and teaching methods are analysed and compared in relation to what extent this student group attains school goals, grades and qualifications.

One conclusion to be drawn from this study is that further studies in which the primary study object is implemented language development approaches with newly arrived students, as well as longitudinal investigations that evaluate school results, are needed. Despite the lack of empirical evidence, language development approaches as a didactical perspective have obtained a great impact in Swedish education for newly arrived pupils. This becomes clear since the same theoretical approaches and legitimisations are used to argue for language development approaches in the discourse of school authorities as well as in references to the subject in anthologies geared towards teachers and teacher students. This evident breakthrough
and the fact that there is a lack of critical voices regarding the phenomenon of language development approaches, speaks for some kind of homogenisation process of a growing field of knowledge in the Swedish educational context. Whether this process will contribute with an increasing social, linguistic and cultural inclusion for newly arrived students in Sweden is a question that needs further discussion.

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Health Issues Among Young Migrants and the Relation to Schooling and Learning

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The huge influx of immigrants, escaping war zones, miserable living conditions, oppression and other difficulties in their home countries gives rise to many challenges to Swedish society in general, and more specifically to the Swedish school system. What is in focus in this text is the relation between the newly arrived pupils’ health and their ability to learn.

Health and learning
Research in different aspects of health care is enormous in volume and status and has tremendous economical implications. The same goes for research in educational sciences, although it may not have the same status and economical implications. The interest in the *relation* between health and school success or school failure is not as prominent in research, authority reports and societal discourse, as one would imagine (Eriksson 2012). The general aim for this investigation is to highlight and discuss the current knowledge and discourses, which also means finding the lack of knowledge in this field. The focus is on the *relation* between newly arrived pupils’ health status and their chances of succeeding as students in school (and maybe also the other way round. That is; if and how time and effort in studies influence their health status).

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The material in this study comes from reports from authorities, literature in the field, articles in journals and daily newspapers, many informal talks and meetings with educational professionals and from personal experiences in counselling young asylum seekers. This material enables us to:

- Form an overview of the present situation
- Present some individual cases
- Put forward, and discuss strategies and methods that could improve the situation for newly arrived pupils, as well as for schools.

**Health care in Sweden**

Sweden is supposed to provide advanced and reliable health care to all citizens. Statistics of life length, child mortality, mortality in different diseases, access to general and specialized health care, show that Sweden is ranked high compared to other countries. But there are also reports about an increasing number of psychological disorders such as depression and fatigue in different life situations, more significantly high among girls and young women.

Swedish public health care has long since been financed by taxes and is politically governed, together with a strong influence from the professional groups. According to Swedish law health care shall be available to every citizen and the most in need shall be given priority. This principle has been altered by an increasing stock of private health insurances, which means that an elite is given a fast track to the best hospitals and advanced health care. There is an on going discussion about inequalities in the health care system in Sweden (State committee on Equality in Health, 2015:55), grounded in evidence of significant regional differences between the big cities and rural areas and between different hospitals. Research also points to inequalities between sexes, with a disadvantage in diagnosing and treatment for women. There are so many different discussions about policy-making in the health care sector that it is often hard to have a voice in the noise. One report that was on the news headlines, for a few days anyway, showed that the life span of the Stockholm citizens differed by many years when plotted along an underground line. This showed a brutal truth of the inequalities between people in the deprived and underprivileged part of the city compared to the more affluent parts.
Health care in school

In the Swedish Education Act it is stated that schools shall provide, what is termed, “pupil health care” including medical, psychological, psychosocial and special needs support. It is also regulated in law that this implies availability of such expertise as doctors, nurses, psychologists and counsellors. In addition it is stated that the school health care is to work proactively to promote health and support the pupils’ development towards the goals in the Swedish curriculum.

This description does not mean that a school has a hospital or a local medical centre available for the pupils. It is rather about providing a couple of medical check-ups during their time in school. The regulations about the mission for the school health care implies that the work carried out by the health professionals is more on a systemic level, trying to achieve a focus on health issues in the school. On the other hand, one can assume that the health professionals in schools may in many cases play an important role as the ones to spot physical and mental problems, and can help the pupil to get in contact with the public medical care.

Newly arrived pupils – a vulnerable group?

In this paper our focus is on the relation between health and schooling in general, and on children and young people that are newly arrived asylum seekers in particular. The total number of newly arrived children and young people was about 70 000 in 2015. Among those were an increasing number of unaccompanied children and young people. In 2015 the number of unaccompanied young refugees was about 35 000. The average age of the unaccompanied asylum seeker, in recent years, is 15 years, and the majority are boys. Many of the unaccompanied asylum seekers carry difficult and often traumatic experiences from their lives before and during the escape. Mental disorders are observed, as are problems to sleep, nightmares, anger and aggression etc. Some migrants may instead react with introversion and isolation (The National Board of Health and Welfare, Socialstyrelsen 2013). The situation is often made worse because of tensions while waiting for the decision about residence permit, of the authorities. The cited report points to lack of knowledge concerning methods to prevent mental disorders and emotional problems. It also discusses communication and cooperation between different health care institutions and other public bodies such as schools, social care, housing etc. A systematic review from the National
Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen 2015) states that an estimated 20–30% of migrants show psychologically disorders. The author also points out that in many cultures there is a stigma on psychological problems that may lead to individuals tending to describe their mental health problems as somatic.

It seems to be problematic to compare and correctly understand statistics concerning psychological disorders and diseases. This is accentuated when comparing other reports from the Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten), such as the large numbers of Swedish teenagers who are (self-)reporting somatic or psychological problems. The reports show that this is an increasing problem, and girls seem to be most vulnerable. The problems are related to socio-economic conditions, stress and demands from their studies and situation in school (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2015:15137, 2016:16003). The reports points to a more individualized society and the testing and grading in schools where demands for performance increase pressure to a level which is too high for many young people (Cf. Eriksson 2012).

By Swedish law the asylum seekers are entitled to an initial health screening. Results indicate that a number of children and young people have health problems from badly treated fractures, back pain, heart and circulation problems, knee problems etc. A report from Malmö shows that 85% of the young unaccompanied asylum seekers were remitted to other medical institutions for further examination or treatment (Socialstyrelsen 2013, p 21). This originates from some years back, when the number of young unaccompanied refugees was less then 10% of the number in 2015. This may indicate that at the time the organisation and resources for medical examinations and further treatment were more adjusted to the situation, unlike now, when reports show that the authorities have problems handling the situation. As well as for the mental problems there seems to be a lack of communication and cooperation between different social institutions and bodies engaged in the asylum seekers’ health problems. Some groups are reported as especially vulnerable and are sometimes paid too little attention. Those are girls and young women and lgbt persons.

Focusing on health, learning and school

A large scaled survey, (Ascher 2010) points to the fact that newly arrived children list the parents and family (often labelled “Mother”) as the most important factor for their health and wellbeing. As the second most important factor, they listed school. For the unaccompanied young asylum
seekers one would presume that school is even more important. Ascher discusses school as an institution that provides normality and belonging (see also Wernesjö 2014), and that school provides structure and a predictable every day life, which he sees as a comforting factor. The impact of going to school would then be salutogenic, meaning promoting health and well-being. But school today is also about performing, passing tests and obstacles (Eriksson 2012).

Many of the young immigrants are ambitious and have great dreams for their future. But as we know from official statistics, only about ¼ of the late arriving in Sweden (from about 15 years old) will pass the requirements for entry into the national programmes at upper secondary school. Speaking with Eriksson (2012) one is lead to question and discuss,

• if the young ones are not healthy enough to pass the demands, or/and
• if their health deteriorates due to demands from school?

A most popular, but also heavily criticised, model for human behaviour is the hierarchy of needs presented by Maslow. Although this model nowadays is seen as dubious and badly verified by empirical findings, one may find that it has an explanatory potential. Just thinking about our own everyday life; if there are physical threats, economic problems or an ongoing dispute with family or friends, then most of us would not be able to perform well and handle different kinds of problems.

In many ways school seems to be a safe place, where the pupils are recognised, and where professional adults listen to them. School provides a meaningful structure in a, sometimes, chaotic existence and can be seen as a tool and a hope for a better future. Many of the newly arrivals have great dreams about their education and a professional career, and school is of course an important part in this. But succeeding in school takes a lot of talent and effort. Despite high motivation and goal orientation many newly arrived do not reach the standards they hope for. When school failure is added to all the other problematic issues they have to master, it is likely that it will be too much for a young one. One issue, that is almost a tragedy, is the Swedish grading system that now is particularly unfavourable for this group. Unfortunately, in many cases this means that although a pupil succeeds in a school subject, he or she is not entitled to a good grading, because they have arrived late and have not fulfilled the requirements in earlier stages. One can presume, that school failure will be a fact for many young asylum seekers in the coming years, and the dashed hopes will become not only a problem for the school, but for society as whole, and of course, most of all, for the individual.
Newly arrived pupils in the casebook

It is quite remarkable that things turn out well for many of those young people arriving in a dark and cold country with its confusing traditions and ways of behaviour. In addition they usually come from war zones, miserable living conditions and other difficulties in their home countries, and have experienced a long and dangerous escape, often with horrific experiences. And, many of them feel unwell. In the following we shall meet some of these pupils in an introductory school in Sweden.¹

Ja is a boy of 15. The migration authorities have been questioning his age so he has been extremely worried about the asylum process for a long time, whether he will be allowed to stay permanently in Sweden or have to leave. Eventually he can’t cope anymore, stops eating and sleeping and is even taken into a psychiatric clinic, with symptoms of resignation. They discharge Ja after only a short time. He loses all motivation for school work, is absent a lot of the time and just cannot cope with his situation. He is frustrated and angry and is forced to move from one accommodation to another several times. Staff at school are worried and report their worry to the social authorities, thinking that he might be self medicating with various drugs. The different authorities all feel as if they have come to the end of the road. One can ask oneself if increased cooperation between authorities could have improved the situation. Had only the social services, school, and recreational sector pulled together he might have been able to stay in school. In the end he does not come to school at all.

After 1½ year his application of residence is rejected and he loses all hope. At least now he is spared the uncertainty of not knowing and is able to go back to school, a different school and higher education. He manages because he likes the teachers and no longer lives in limbo. Although the decision from the Migration Office was negative, not knowing was even more detrimental to his health and he actually finds new motivation to attend school.

Moh is a 14 year old boy. He arrives in Sweden with his mother and siblings. He is very motivated all through the school year and has many recreational activities in his spare time. When he receives his final grade, an F (=fail), he

¹ This section is collected from notes from counselling meetings with the pupils. Their names have been changed as well as other significant characteristics in order to protect their anonymity.
is extremely disappointed. He loses all motivation and will to learn, loses his self confidence and questions any positive response to his development. A different kind of marking system, to show him the progress he has made, would have suited him.

Later on the marking system is explained to him in detail and he regains some of his motivation. He is still very disappointed, however, and questions the meaning of struggling so hard when he is predestined for an F.

Sh is a 15-year old boy. He is keen on school but very dissatisfied with how the social services have dealt with his accommodation. He shows his frustration clearly by not coming to school and by not doing any school work. As time passes he loses all motivation and, finally, stops attending school altogether. Better cooperation between the school and the social services could have eased the situation.

A couple of months later his accommodation has been successfully solved by the social services and he is back at school, a model pupil with high attendance and a will to learn.

Al, a boy of 16, has been moved between different homes and types of accommodation to different parts of the country a number of times, due to different circumstances. He is very motivated for school work but different moves makes it difficult for him to connect and feel at home anywhere. Added to this Al has many tragic experiences behind him, misses his family and is extremely worried about them. He stops coming to school and is really felt to be a pupil at risk.

His fifth move turns out to be the last and he feels settled. The school is very active in organizing psychological support and it only takes a couple of weeks before he tells everyone that he feels settled and is happy with his living situation and his school.

Moj is a 15-year old boy. He has untreated traumatic experiences which make him use drugs as self medication. It is a way of trying to escape from the many horrible pictures that are lodged in his brain. He falls asleep during lessons, and eventually goes from being mentally absent to also being physically absent. After involvement from the social services he receives treatment for his drug abuse and is finally free from drugs. From then on his attendance at school is high.

Han is a 15-year old boy in a very bad state, extremely badly traumatized and with no social contacts. He has no personal contact with anyone within
the social service department and there is no plan at all for his future life. He says that he feels extremely aggressive, frustrated and that his sleep are riddled with nightmares. Also he does not eat properly. Staff at school is extremely worried and try, in vain, to interact with the social services. The situation worsens as the pupil is moved to another school, and it is felt that there is a great danger of him falling between chairs. He is definitely at risk of becoming a drop out or a victim of criminal behaviour, violence or some kind of mental disorder.

Ab, a 15-year-old boy, is landed in a difficult situation because of threats from the family he lives with. A report to the social services was not properly handled and put the child in unnecessary danger. The boy asks that no further interventions are made and says that he has solved the problem himself. The school sees a high risk of him dropping out of school and that he is prone to other dangers.

Moh, 16 years, a suicidal pupil, is taken acutely into psychiatric care. He needs to change his living conditions. The social services show no signs of deep involvement in his situation and he feels progressively more lonely and helpless. The school health team put a lot of work into supporting and motivating him and he says that the only important thing for him is school where there are people who listen to him.

Ham, 14 years, has been exposed to many difficult experiences and has also been involved in many conflicts outside of school. He is intermittently absent from school. The school contacts the social services that provide extra support for him, which helps, but as soon as the extra support is discontinued Ham is in trouble again. Fortunately he approaches the school, asking for extra support “because school is the only place where anyone listens to me”. After a meeting between the school and the social services a more permanent solution is found and he is back on track again.

What can we do? Strategies and methods

When it comes to newly arrived pupils, there seems to be one parameter that is extremely important for school motivation and success – the pupil’s relations to teachers, staff and friends in school. It seems that “being seen” is an essential factor for healthy development, which means that one of the most important assignments for teachers and staff in schools must be to support the pupils in their personal development and meet their needs of
interpersonal contact. That might sound as something very obvious, but when it comes to reality, there are so many other things that should be measured and need to be done, that the most basic need of “being seen” might just not be fulfilled. This empathy and willingness to meet, and interact with the pupils, can be regarded as a normal approach for professionals in education. But maybe we have to consider that this is even more vital than in the normal day’s work. It requires time enough and a mindset, grounded in knowledge of behaviour and psychological reactions from traumatised, or just lonely, young people.

Since many of the newly arrived pupils have gone through lots of difficulties and still suffer from pain, sorrow, and loss of family, we have to calculate with these “distractions” also when it comes to potential for learning. We all know that it can be hard to focus and concentrate when your mind is somewhere else, when your heart is full of pain and your body stressed.

Psychosocial support

For some pupils school needs to offer psychosocial support, as a tool for better school results. This needs a specialist, a counsellor, psychologist or the like. The pupils must be given the opportunity to talk to someone, to express him or herself, to let out their worries for a while. They need to build a trustful relationship with someone who has got the time to listen, to see, to support – and who is somewhat neutral to them; not a teacher, not a parent/legal guardian (for unaccompanied minors), not a friend whom you don’t want to show how sad you are. And subsequently, after letting go of the heavy thoughts, our newly arrived pupils will be more capable of concentrating on school subjects and learning strategies. When pupils have strategies to cope with their feelings they also have better ability to cope with learning strategies.

What is important to remember is that not all pupils want to sit down for a straight talk between two people, or between three people, interpreter included, about things that bothers them. Some might prefer drawing as way of expressing themselves, someone else might be helped by play material as dolls, a (small) box of sand, clay, plastic animals or other things to find their best way of communicating. The most important thing is not always to be completely correct in every detail of the story but to be able to express your inner feelings. And that may include drawing, writing, singing, playing, building etc. Therefore the role of the psychosocial supporter, or counsellor, is pretty wide. You should be a listener, a watcher, a supporter – and most important of all: you must not be afraid of what you are being told. Even the most terrible memories can fade when repeatedly
confronted out of the dark, in a safe place, if the listener is brave enough not to turn away.

Health literacy
The concept health literacy has, during the last decades, become a significant field in the discourse on health. In literature it is used as an analytical tool, when discussing national public welfare and health programmes, as well as when focusing on the capacities of the individual to understand, collaborate and act in relation to personal health and treatment.

What is striking, when discussing health, in relation to schooling and learning, is that this concept is made up by the term literacy with its connection to education and learning. In educational sciences the concept of literacy started out as an extended meaning of the ability to read and write, and has then expanded to be used for mathematical literacy (or numeracy), digital literacy, social literacy, and so on. In some ways one may propose that the concept literacy has similarities with the blurred concept of competence. Competence, in a simplified meaning, is understood as to have the proper knowledge and be able to use it in a specific situation.

When it comes to migrants from different parts of the world, there are also often cultural differences regarding what is considered appropriate medical care and roles as patient, and as health officers. In the Swedish curriculum health literacy is explicitly included in different subjects as physical education and biology.

To improve health literacy we propose:
• Teachers and other professionals in education need better/deeper knowledge of the mental and somatic health issues concerning young migrants. This, as a requisite for understanding and ability to react and act more appropriately in the school context.
• Young migrants need better knowledge about mental and somatic health issues, as well as a good orientation about the Swedish health care system.
• Young people in school, whether they are migrants or of Swedish origin, should benefit from health education, mainly because of the earlier mentioned psychosomatic problems especially affect girls and young women.

We understand that proposing increased time and resources for health education will meet reactions of different kind. First of all, many teachers in Sweden are exhausted of all the responsibilities and demands put on
them. It sometimes seems, that whatever comes up as a problem, the focus and answer is put upon school, which consequently, has to do better. The second reaction is that maybe teachers are not trained for this kind of education and that they would need support of some kind.

One interesting institutionalised activity that is in operation in some cities is what is labelled The Health Adventure. This is a fairly small institution run by health officers who have educational skills and a lot of materials of different kinds that gives insights in health issues. The professionals in The Health Adventure are trained for, and used to, talking to young people about health issues like sex and relations, diseases, eating well, mental problems, medical help and so on. One or two visits to The Health Adventure may work as a good start if a school decides to promote health, and work with this as a theme within the regular school work.

STOP – a model for eliminating chaos

When welcoming newly arrived asylum-seeking children to school, there are some things we need to be aware of. First of all it’s very important to remember that every child is an individual with his or her way of reacting and managing what he or she has been through. Therefore there is not one solution that is suitable for everyone. Secondly, we all need various amounts of time for coping with difficulties and traumatic experiences. While one person might want to start processing at once, another person might need a long time to be prepared to re-expose themselves to difficult memories. Some have no need of support whilst others need a lot.

What is universal though, is the need of structure, when it comes to organising for preventing mental chaos.

S in the STOP-model stands for structure. Everyday routines build a safe environment where things are predictable. To our newly arrived asylum-seeking pupils this can be a very calming parameter which prevents emotional turbulence – especially when combined with the T which stands for time and talk or time to talk. The time that you want to talk can differ but it is important to get the opportunity to talk, if needed. It is also important to give enough time for talking or expressing yourself in other ways.

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2 The STOP model was developed during a rescue action in a refugee camp in Lebanon in the 1980ies. See: Gustafsson, Lindkvist & Böhm (1987) for further information.
O stands for organised play, or organised activities. Activities in different forms can be good for your health in many ways, both physically and psychologically. What is so special about play is that it requires some specific skills that you have to master for the play to work properly. These are the ability to reach consensus, to strive towards reciprocity and to alternate initiatives. When you master these skills the play probably will be successful and harmonic, but if there is a lack of competence in these fundamental playing skills, or basic skills for social interaction, there will be a need for practicing those through organised play. Sometimes the ability among children to develop these skills is complicated by experiences as war and conflicts, violence and unsafe environments, lack of trustful relations and secure attachments. Children that have not experienced the right circumstances to develop these fundamental skills for playing or social interaction with other children, can be helped through individually based support to practise these skills. That is one way of supporting children through organised play. As said earlier there are also many other positive effects that will come from organising play and activities, e.g. drama, sports, singing and so on.

P stands for parents or positive feedback. When possible, it can be very strengthening for all parts to cooperate closely with the parents. What happens outside the family, a lot of times, reflects what’s happening in the family. When it comes to unaccompanied young refugees there should be other adults, such as the legal guardian, family home or staff at their accommodation, that fill the role of the missing parents in some ways. Good cooperation and dialogue with all parties can provide better conditions for the child’s development. Unfortunately there are sometimes circumstances that make this kind of cooperation difficult. The P also highlights the importance of positive feedback. Fortunately there is a lot we can do by giving plenty of positive feedback to our pupils to strengthen their development. A healthy development in general, and a development towards the goal of the Swedish curriculum, both require a holistic approach and an overall perspective on children’s basic needs. There are still many things to be done in this field.

Supporting a healthy development among newly arrived young asylum seekers is unfortunately aggravated due to the effects of the new and stricter asylum laws. Lots of young people will not have the possibility to stay in Sweden and their minds will be full of worries during the long asylum process. Not knowing where to live (or if to live!) does not create the best
environment for learning. At the same time these kinds of worries are nothing abnormal. These youngsters don't really fit into the Swedish health care system. That is a reason why schools nowadays must be even better at taking care of these signs of mental disorders. We are right now adjusting the school system to improve the reception of newly arrived pupils when it comes to education. But we must not forget that there might be a strong relationship between health issues and schooling/learning – maybe stronger than we first imagine…

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Assessing Newly Arrived Pupils’ Knowledge and Skills – An Educational Tool or an Administrative Procedure?

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During the years 2014–2016 more than 100 000 children and young people from other countries have come to Sweden and become part of the Swedish school system. This quantity of newly arrived pupils roughly corresponds to an age cohort in the system.

These new pupils who are to start in Swedish schools have different backgrounds. Some are illiterate with a minimal school background, while others have experienced many years in schools with similar features as Swedish education. One thing they have in common is the lack of the Swedish language. And this is of course the most crucial deficit for them, as mastering the language is the key to education, learning and socialisation into the Swedish society.

This situation in the schools with so many newly arrived pupils is of course a significant challenge for headmasters, teachers and all kinds of staff involved in education. Although Sweden has experience from earlier reception of refugees, such as the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, the coup in Chile, the Iran-Iraq war etc. this is a challenging and problematic situation. Calls for different kinds of help, to handle this situation, have increased from schools and local authorities.

In this article we are focusing on one of many actions taken by the authorities. In 2013, the Swedish National Agency for Education was given

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an assignment to construct a material to be used for initial assessment of newly arrived pupils’ knowledge in various school subjects.

This instrument for knowledge diagnosis that 2016 was launched in Sweden is directed to the reception of newly arrived children and their introduction into Swedish schools. It is compulsory for schools to use the instrument. The content, form and implementation of this national assessment system generate questions about the use of diagnosis instruments in general, and about this instrument in particular.

**Diagnosis of knowledge – as a part of the education process**

Institutionalised education and training usually contains a plan or strategy for teaching and learning. Although this sometimes may be a kind of tacit knowledge among teachers and educators, it can be observed by asking questions about motives and doings while taking on a course or a group of students/apprentices/trainees. In literature we can find numerous models trying to catch the education process. In a very simplified model it may contain elements as presented below.

In this study we highlight the diagnosis of preexisting knowledge and competencies. If we know where we are heading, what the goals and criteria are for what we want the pupil to achieve, our choice of content, methods and sequencing, should be dependent upon what the pupil already knows or can do. To plan and carry out instruction and training with a content that is already in place would not be the best approach. The same goes, of course, for the opposite. For example good results are unlikely if one started to teach the art of doing annual business reports without making sure that the pupils know the difference between costs and payments.
We believe that this reasoning is relevant for everyone engaged in education and training, and aiming to improve strategies and methods in education programmes. With this general background we will in the following discuss this instrument for knowledge diagnosis, which is now being launched in Sweden.

New legislation due to migration

Because of the increasing number of children and young people arriving in Sweden from abroad, a government committee proposed changes and additions in the Education Act. After the usual political procedures, the law was enacted by the Swedish parliament from 1 January 2016. The new legislation included regulations about the reception of the newly arrived pupils in school. One important part in the new law was the definition of the term “newly arrived” which may have significant consequences when it comes to individual rights and the school’s responsibilities. The legal definition according to the law was stated as:

A newly arrived pupil is an individual who has resided abroad and now is residing in Sweden, or is regarded as residing in Sweden and who has started education in Sweden after the start of the autumn term that year the pupil turns 7 years. A pupil shall not be regarded as newly arrived after 4 years of schooling in Sweden.

Part of the discourse about receiving newly arrived pupils is criticism from experts and State inspection that pupils stay too long in introductory groups, which has hindered integration and acquisition of the Swedish language. In the new law it is stated that it is the headmaster’s responsibility to see to that newly arrived pupils should only temporarily be placed in an introductory class, and shall, as soon as possible, be placed in a regular group while taking into consideration the pupil’s age, knowledge and personal conditions.

For what is in focus here, the most important section in the new law, is about assessment of the newly arrived pupils’ knowledge and skills. According to the law this assessment shall be done without delay, and no later than two months after the pupil arrives in the school. The law also states that the government or government agencies are authorized to impose regulations about material (instrument) for the assessment.

The Swedish National Agency for Education created this instrument for assessment with the help from experts and universities, and it has been tested in schools. In the beginning of 2016 parts of the instrument were published, and the agency started launching activities throughout Sweden to implement this instrument.
The instrument and the procedure

According to the agency the material provides an opportunity to utilize and build on the experience and knowledge that pupils possess. The focus should not be on pupils’ possible lack of ability. It is not an ordinary test, it should rather be carried out as a diagnostic conversation between the pupil, the mapping teacher and the mother tongue teacher/interpreter. Everyday language is used to get the pupil to feel relaxed. Photos are often used as “door openers”, among which the pupils can choose, to open up the diagnostic conversation. The material is intended as a support for the school’s assessment work and is to be used for educational purposes. It is constructed for the comprehensive school, year 1–9, but can also be used for older pupils.

The assessment material has three different steps, two compulsory steps – step 1 (an introductory conversation) and step 2 (assessment of literacy and numeracy) – and one 3rd optional step (assessment of knowledge in up to 15 school subjects).

Step 1 and 2 provide a basis for headmasters for the decision on grade placement and placement in the group most suitable according to the pupil’s age, previous knowledge and personal relationships and should be carried out within two months of the pupil’s school start.

Step 1 identifies the pupil’s school background, school language, experiences, interests and expectations of Swedish school. In this introductory conversation the pupil and his/her family or legal guardian (if there is no family) also receive information on the Swedish school.

Step 2 identifies the pupil’s knowledge in two areas, literacy and numeracy. The field literacy is about the pupil’s experience of reading and writing in school and in everyday life. The field numeracy focuses the pupil’s ability to use mathematical thinking when it comes to solving problems, arguing and justifying their solutions.

In step 3 mapping can be conducted in 15 of the basic school subjects. The result from step 3 is to be used in order to plan the newly arrived pupil’s schooling concerning form and content, and should make it possible for teachers to implement teaching in each subject. According to the instructions this step is to be performed within the pupil’s first year in Sweden.

The National Agency for Education recommends that staff, with skills in Swedish as a second language, is used in step 1 and in step 2, involving the use of written language in different contexts. When mapping mathematical thinking in step 2, it is important to have mathematical subject
knowledge. At step 3 it is essential to have competence in the subject for the topic being mapped.

To receive as clear a picture as possible of the pupils’ knowledge and abilities, it is important that the class teachers and subject teachers collaborate with mother tongue teachers or teachers who provide tutoring in the newly arrived pupils’ mother tongue. Headmasters are responsible for appointing the staff most suited to undertake surveys.

To summarise the responsibilities when receiving newly arrived pupils, schools should:

- Identify the pupil’s reading and writing ability and knowledge of the mother tongue, Swedish and other languages
- Identify the pupil’s knowledge of different subjects regarding concepts, understanding and problem solving skills
- Have procedures for how and by whom the mapping will be performed
- Conduct the mapping regularly through structured conversations with the pupil.

Assessing newly arrived pupils versus Swedish traditions and legal frames

Sweden has always experienced migration. People have come from other countries as skilled craftsmen, soldiers, state bureaucrats, entrepreneurs, refugees and so on during centuries. Not to forget that in the 19th century about one fourth of the population felt they had to leave Sweden because of poverty, harassments and no real hopes for a better future. The obvious parallel to what is happening today when people are crossing seas and land to escape war zones and hard living conditions stand out.

Since then, Sweden has become a rich country, with a systematised welfare system framed by extensive legal structures, elaborated fiscal policies and a vast public sector. This evolution to a welfare country with all its legal frames and social democratic policies took after WWII shapes and features of what is labelled “social engineering”, meaning a public sector philosophy in which all societal problems could be solved in a “scientific” way. Although this position is now abandoned and considered obsolete, it is still part of the historical layers and in peoples minds, even when Sweden has become more alike other western capitalist countries. So if one prominent feature in Swedish society is the systematised approach in building a welfare and (to a certain extent) equalitarian society, the other important
tradition, which is legally protected, is the right of the individual. This is also reflected in the Education Act and the ideology in the Swedish curriculum and in different regulations. It is stated that: “Education shall be adjusted to each pupil’s needs”.

Another important feature in Swedish education is the recognition of the mother tongue language. Since the 1960s pupils with another mother tongue than Swedish, if they and their parents wish, have been entitled to tuition in their own language, for approximately one hour a week. In the 1990s this tuition was made into a school subject. This feature in Swedish education means that now more than 150 different languages are spoken and taught in schools. It also means that there are teachers (but not in every single little place) who can master these languages, which of course is a fundamental prerequisite in general when receiving pupils who don’t speak Swedish, and in particular when the school is obliged to carry out the compulsory knowledge diagnoses.

When discussing the prospects for newly arrived pupils a significant part to recognise is that Swedish education has taken on control technologies and a competitive ideology, which is common in many countries. This means an increased focus on tests, criteria for assessments, grading, exams and requirements for entry in upper secondary education. Furthermore it has become an inevitable fact, and almost like a law in Sweden, that young people have to pass in comprehensive school, and also succeed in their upper secondary education, to be able to compete on the labour market. This of course underlines the need, especially for the newly arrived pupils, for a fast and appropriate placement in school, as well as an individual plan built on a reliable knowledge diagnosis. This need is urgent, especially for those newly arrived who are in their teens. Reports say that for this group only some 25 % succeed in passing the requirements for entry into a national programme in upper secondary education, while about 90 % of the pupils born in Sweden do so.

Reflections and summing up
The National Agency for Education has, together with contracted experts, put a lot of resources into this instrument. For teachers it is an eagerly awaited tool and it is strongly advocated by experts. Initially it seems to get a warm welcome and many professionals state that it has a valid content and is well designed. The implementation of the instrument is strongly supported by the National Agency using information meetings, conferences, brochures, web based courses and so on. Though it is usually difficult to
transfer a method or an instrument like this from one educational setting to another, it is likely that the content and design can inspire and be guidance for other countries and educational operations.

But – a pronounced question is: How will it work in municipalities and schools? There are not yet any studies or reports from the field concerning the use of this instrument.

The first notion is about time and resources; estimation is that more than 100,000 children and young people have arrived during the last years.

With all preparations, the assessment procedure and the work after the assessment meetings, in which several persons must be involved, a lot of time and resources will be needed. Of course, one could argue this can be well invested time and money if the pupil really benefits from this assessment. What remains, as a problematic issue, is that the staff needed are mother tongue teachers, translators and teachers of special subjects. Most of those professionals already have much to do and there is a shortage of available professionals.

The second issue is the transformation from the analyses from the assessments steps into the use of the individual plan for each student, and the practice in the classroom. One can strongly support the idea of assessing each individual’s knowledge and capacities but it is a difficult step to make this into a relevant and individualised education. In short: The mainstream classroom, with its routines and theory in use, needs so many changes and increased flexibility to an extent that is more than challenging.

The third issue is organisational. This notion includes what is partly discussed above about the need for flexibility as the means to achieve an education that is individualised and tailor-made from the results of the analyses. This must be seen as a dream difficult to reach, when encountering the school reality with its timetables, groups and allocation of teachers, rooms etc. that has to be planned in advance and is not so easily changed all of a sudden. The organizational issue also includes the need for increased communication and teamwork between teachers and different categories in school.

It will, indeed, be very interesting to share the follow-up studies of the use of this elaborate instrument. Though we have some doubts about how it will end up in school reality, we are impressed and respectful of all the hard and proficient work done by so many people who hold an undisputable expertise in these matters. When looking into this instrument and its intrinsic theory it is not an overstatement to say it must be considered innovative and good practice.
Berlin Job Routes: An Innovative Educational Concept to Provide Vocational Guidance

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Berlin Job Routes (“Berliner Berufsrouten”) is an innovative educational, funded project implemented in April 2015 by medialepfade.de, an agency for media education, and the educational institution BildungsWerk in Kreuzberg (BWK). The aim of Berlin Job Routes is to provide a vocational guidance for young people that is directly linked to their real life and enables them to choose a suitable vocational training position so a drop-out is rather unlikely. Moreover, the project helps training companies to obtain adequate candidates for their offered training positions.

Aim and structure of the article

The purpose of this article is to present the BWK-project Berlin Job Routes in detail. In doing so guidelines are created enabling other institutions and organisations, trainers and educators – in Germany or abroad – to implement a similar project in their specific contexts. However, as Berlin Job Routes is constantly enhanced and developed further, this guideline cannot be a complete instruction but a mean's to offer ideas with the possibility to extract elements or ideas to use and adapt them depending on the context.

The detailed presentation of the project includes a contextualisation, i.e. the explanation of the background and issues Berlin Job Routes is responding to, as well as the description of the resultant goal and target group. Afterwards, the development of Berlin Job Routes, financing and the implementation is pointed out. This section includes the description of the participants involved, project organisation as well as the different elements

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and processes. The so-called Job-Challenge is a variation of Berlin Job Routes and will be presented in comparison by pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of both concepts. The media workshops and the closely linked peer2peer-aspect that is a constitutive feature of Berlin Job Routes are shown too. Besides, the description of the problems and obstacles that appeared during the implementation as well as found solutions will be given. Possible prospects, further developments and a reference to an alternative free app that can be used similar to the Berlin Job Routes app are representing the conclusion of the article.

Contextualisation and background

The in-company training – also called dual vocational training – is the most common type of training in Germany. “Dual” implies the combination of practical training in a company and school education in a vocational school. Due to the link between theory and practice this form of training is a feature of the German educational system and is internationally acknowledged. The in-house training has the important advantage that companies can assure the next generation of qualified employees.

The vocational training normally takes between two and three and a half years. Vocational training positions are offered in numerous sectors, including handicraft, the trade and industry, service sector, shipping, agriculture, free-lancing sector (e.g. doctors, pharmacists, advocates or tax consultants) and public service. There are about 340 jobs in the German system that includes dual vocational training. Surprisingly, about 90 % of all adolescents only choose 10 out of these 340 vocational training opportunities. The consequence of this is ‘fitting problems’, i.e. many young people do not find a vocational training position whereas many companies do not find enough and/or not the adequate trainees. Many training positions eventually remain vacant due to this disproportionality.

There are numerous reasons why so many adolescents only choose 10 vocational trainings even though there are 340 available options. On the one hand, interest in dual vocational training has decreased in the recent years. More and more young people are now interested in an academic education/career. Many adolescents show a lack of mobility and flexibility in general. They prefer to stay in their neighbourhood where they grew up, went to school and have their social network. Therefore, they generally do not look for training positions outside of this “comfort zone”. However, one of the main problems is the lack of or false / biased information. Many training positions remain too abstract for many adolescents, i.e. they
do not have any idea of the expectations, requirements or career opportunities available, limiting the scope of vocational training research. On the other hand, it makes future drop-outs more likely. Some vocational trainings have “image problems”. Many young people have unrealistic or a too negative idea of certain vocational trainings (e.g. cook) due to a lack of popularity or due to the influence of the media (e.g. TV cooking shows). This lack of information can result in an unawareness of the existence of many vocational trainings.

To sum up, there is a discrepancy between the reality of adolescents and the reality of the vocational training position market. Hence, this requires ways and means to bridge this gap. Berlin Job Routes, based on a playful peer2peer approach on the one hand and the use of modern, youth-oriented media on the other hand, is such a tool that makes the link to the adolescent’s real life possible. The so-called peer2peer-aspect, i.e. the participatory multi-media design of the career information “by adolescents for adolescents”, and the independent research on different vocational trainings via tablet or smartphone and GPS – mobile and on-site in the city – motivates, encourages and activates the adolescents to leave their neighbourhood and to be interested in vocational orientation.

**Objective of Berlin Job Routes**

Providing vocational guidance to young people is the primary objective of Berlin Job Routes. This includes making available relevant and realistic information relating to vocational choice as well as supporting young people when it comes to applying for a vocational training position. Berlin Job Routes help to reduce positive or negative prejudices regarding many vocational trainings that many young people still have, e.g. by informing about tangible requirements, necessary qualifications and actual career opportunities. This enables young people to have a realistic view of the different career paths available. Besides, an important aim of Berlin Job Routes is to increase the mobility of young people, i.e. to make them leave their neighbourhood, discover other areas and widen their horizon. In doing so, the above described disproportionality – that is one of the reasons why many training positions remain vacant – shall be overcome. Furthermore, the number of drop-outs shall be reduced as adolescents are enabled to make a well-informed decision.
Target group of Berlin Job Routes

Berlin Job Routes is addressing pupils of all types of schools. The main target group involves young people in the 8th–10th grade as well as grammar school pupils in 12th grade. These groups must deal with the question of what kind of professional career they will follow after graduation from school.

A special focus lies on the secondary level of grammar schools. Since many jobs are very complex and thus demand a lot from the trainees, many companies require A levels for some vocational training even if there are no actual requirements for a school-leaving qualification to begin a vocational training (only the obligatory school time has to be completed). This means that Berlin Job Routes is responding to the so-called academisation that currently takes place. At the same time, it is an image cultivation for many vocational training positions. Berlin Job Routes help to reduce prejudices against vocational training by showing that numerous training positions are quite demanding and challenging.

Initiation and financing of the project

The idea for the development of the media educational concept of Berlin Job Routes arose from proposals released in the end of 2014 by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Berlin: Educational institutions were requested to submit project ideas relating to how to support small and medium-sized companies to find and train young adolescents to cover the present and future need for qualified employees. Above all, the Chamber of Industry and Commerce was interested in exemplary innovative concepts of practical vocational orientation. In March 2015, eight outstanding and promising concepts were chosen out of 250 project ideas. Berlin Job Routes won the call for proposals and as flagship project that presents sustainable solutions for vocational orientation received a funding amount of 650,000€. Berlin Job Routes was launched in April 2015.

The funding amount was approved for a period of five years and is paid monthly. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Berlin initially approved 16 vocational trainings, e.g. salesman, banker, mechatronics engineer and baker/confectioner. After the first two years, performance monitoring of the concept takes place. The decision about the extension of the funding and the approval of more routes and jobs for the next three years is based on the performance monitoring.
The amount funded is mainly used to pay the following principal costs: labour costs, further development of the app, hardware (e.g. tablets) and SIM cards, the first year of the project and associated media workshops. This was necessary because during these media workshops the first material was produced the Berlin Job Routes app started to work with. During the second year the Berlin Job Routes app went online and the first pilot runs with pupils began.

A big advantage of the Berlin Job Routes project is its sustainability and cost effectiveness. At the end of the whole funding period the project can finance itself as all components are developed and ready for use. Participating companies that would like to utilise the Berlin Job Routes app would only have to pay 50€ per year for on going server costs.

Important participants and project organisation
Apart from BWK and medialepfade.de, companies that offer training positions and schools are important participants who are involved in the Berlin Job Routes project. All in all, 40 companies and 40 jobs that require vocational training are represented in the Berlin Job Routes app. However, an important aspect of Berlin Job Routes is that the focus is not on the companies but on the types of vocational trainings they offer.

During the acquisition of companies the first step is establishment of contact and presentation of the project. Companies receive the offer from Berlin Job Routes so they can promote the marketing for their vocational training without incurring any additional costs. Berlin Job Routes and the newer, slightly modified version Job-Challenge serve as free platforms for the self-presentation of companies. Another advantage for companies is the low expenditure of time that the participation in the Berlin Job Routes project requires. Companies only have to provide a vocational trainer and/or a trainee for two or three hours for an interview. The produced (film) material is made available to the companies, e.g. for the use on their homepages.

The overall concept of Berlin Job Routes not only includes the mobile app but also a stringent procedure as well as various “matching event formats”. They guarantee that young people and companies are brought together to intensify exchange of information and personal contact. The aim is to match candidates and vocational training positions. This overall concept and the different steps of the procedure are specified in the following paragraph.
Organisation, procedure and associated events

The core organisational team of Berlin Job Routes consists of two people with one person responsible for the events. The series of events that accompany the app are “Job Talk”, “Job Safari” and “Job Match”. The other team member is mostly responsible for the acquisition of schools and pupils. This includes presenting Berlin Job Routes and Job-Challenge in schools, arranging and coordinating appointments as well as conducting the Job Routes tour with groups of pupils.

When presenting the Berlin Job Routes and Job-Challenge concepts to the school management, the strengths and weaknesses of both are pointed out. The table on the following page gives an overview of Berlin Job Routes and Job-Challenge and contrasts the advantages and (potential) disadvantages of both concepts.

After the presentation of both concepts, the school management decides which concept they would like to use in school. Berlin Job Routes as well as Job-Challenge can be realised as excursions. Alternatively, they can be integrated in everyday school life whereas the integration of Job-Challenge is easier.

The next step is the presentation of Berlin Job Routes/Job-Challenge in the class that is going to conduct one of the concepts. The presentation takes about 45 minutes. Transparency is very important in this phase, i.e. pupils have to be aware that the main focus of the activity is placed on vocational orientation.

In general, a typical scenario of Berlin Job Routes is the following:

Equipped with tablets or smartphones, the groups of adolescents are moving through the city. The group size varies between four and eight persons, with six or seven being the ideal size in order to maintain a good group dynamic. The Job Routes app is installed on the mobile devices. The groups are led by GPS along the so-called Job Routes that guide them to a selection of different companies. After arriving in front of a company the Job Routes app displays various pieces of information about the vocational training offered by this specific company. The young people work independently through the information presented in text, photo and audio format. This information enables them to complete the station by answering several questions about the vocational training before moving on to the next station. The next station only shows up when the previous questions were answered. After completing all stations the young people are guided
Job Routes, i.e. making young people move about in the city and obtain information about vocational training on-site, serve as an “ice-breaker”. It shows a certain degree of awareness within themselves and that they are then aware of the following events: Job Talk, Job Safari, Job Match. The first event is Job Talk where companies are invited to the schools. The

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Berlin Job Routes</th>
<th>Job-Challenge</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• linear, i.e. participants strictly follow a given route and the next station is only displayed when the previous station was completed successfully</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• routes and stations are linked to a geographical location, i.e. the locations where the companies are</td>
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<tr>
<td>• only job stations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• team play</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• no competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>• asymmetrical, i.e. participants can choose the course of the route, it is not predetermined</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• stations are “constructed”, i.e. they are not actual companies but objects that can be associated with a job (e.g. library, bus stop, office building)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• job station and “gaming stations”</td>
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<tr>
<td>• team play</td>
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<tr>
<td>• competition, i.e. teams are supposed to collect point</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Advantages</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>• available to everybody (e.g. schools, associations, institutions etc.) and at any time: <a href="http://berliner-berufsrouten.de/">http://berliner-berufsrouten.de/</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• 100% focus on jobs and clear relation to vocational trainings due to specific companies as stations</td>
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<tr>
<td>• high mobility of pupils is demanded and stimulated at the same time as Berlin as a whole is discovered (“variety of the city”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• “gaming element” is central, i.e. within a given time of 2-4 hours each team must collect points to win the competition</td>
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<td>• team spirit is encouraged as some of the tasks can only be solved in a team</td>
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<tr>
<td>• possible to integrate more jobs as they are not linked to concrete companies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• more calculable due to predetermined time frame</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Disadvantages</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• less playful than Job-Challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• limited in the presentation of jobs as there is a maximum of 10 jobs per route (specified by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Berlin)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• less calculable and more need of time as there is theoretically no predetermined time frame (up to 4h)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• not freely available, centrally managed, need of “game master”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• jobs and vocational orientation might be more in the background because of “gaming stations” (solution: job stations score more points; clear explanation of the goal “vocational orientation”)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• less mobility as only a limited area of the city is presented</td>
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back to the starting point where the “gaming master” is waiting to give them feedback about their performance.
companies give short 5-minute presentations in order to showcase themselves as well as the vocational training they offer. Afterwards, pupil can ask any questions that may arise from the presentation. This way, pupils get an even better understanding of the job they are interested in. After receiving detailed information about a specific vocational training opportunity and a better understanding of the company, pupils are then more likely to be interested in working for the organisation.

Job Safari entails pupils making appointments to visit a company. Thanks to Job Talk, the pupils can focus more easily on the company or companies they chose to make an appointment with as they now have a clearer idea about what jobs and vocational training they are interested in. This prevents young people visiting companies they have no real interest in. The guided company tours are made by actual trainees. The similar ages of the trainees and the pupils create a more relaxed atmosphere as the trainees can share their own experiences during their vocational training at first hand.

Job Match is the last step of the journey the young person takes after the company visit. HR managers are invited to the school and the pupil and company have another three minutes to make a presentation. The pupil has another opportunity to ask questions and can hand over his or her application if they want to.

Peer2Peer aspect: media workshops

As mentioned, an essential feature of Berlin Job Routes is the so-called peer2peer aspect, i.e. the vocational training positions presented in Job Routes are presented from the perspective of young people. This corresponds to the principle “from young people for young people”. In the context of media workshops vocational information is produced by young people – on-site in companies and with support of experienced media educators. This information is then used in the app.

The concept for Berlin Job Routes is scheduling four media workshops per year, i.e. one every three month. During each media workshop, one class is divided in four groups and each group is working on the presentation of one job. Each group is coached by a media educator. Thus, there are four media educators and each one is responsible for one of the following areas: filming, taking pictures, text research, audio recording. The media educators accompany the groups to the companies and provide technical support and instructions if necessary. However, they do not intervene in
content-related questions. Thus, the content development is completely up to the young people.

**Structure and procedure of media workshops**

At the start of the class attendees are divided into four groups and each group is appointed a job and company. When forming the groups, it is important a good group dynamic is created and consideration is given to gender representation. A media workshop takes three days, generally taking place from Monday to Wednesday. These three days workshops along with the hiring of four rooms is the only “expenditure” the participating school has.

Each media educator is based in one of the four rooms. The first day of the media workshop is used for the theoretical “groundwork”, i.e. the pupils learn how to improve their media skills and knowledge. They familiarise themselves with the equipment, learn how to shoot short films, take photos and record with tablets. They also obtain different research skills when learning how to develop questions and researching for background information. On the second day, a short summary of the first day contents is given and the equipment is checked. Afterwards, each group, accompanied by one media educator, goes to their assigned company to complete the interviews, on-site filming, photographing and recording. Finally, the third day is for the finalising and editing of the material, i.e. cutting, assembling, text production and compiling a slide show. During these activities, the young people are coached by a media educator who provides support and advice. At the end of the third day the young people present their work to the other groups and classes of the school.

**Obstacles, problems and solutions**

During the development and implementation, Berlin Job Routes had to address different challenges, obstacles and problems.

One problem being that some companies regarded Berlin Job Routes as their personal marketing tool for vocational training and recruitment. This was despite the focus clearly supposed to be on jobs and vocational training. Some companies try to use Berlin Job Routes as a vehicle to promote their own organisation. This can be resolved by clear communication during company acquisition. There is a need to explain explicitly that Berlin Job Routes is a guide for young people to become aware of different jobs
and not companies. However, material produced can also be used by the company.

The sheer size of Berlin made it quite challenging to design linear routes for the app. For example, it must be taken into consideration that young people can quickly get bored when a train ride takes longer than 15 minutes which could result in them losing interest in the activity. Besides, long train rides or walks result in “dead time” where young people are not actively engaging with the app. Due to limited funding the Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Berlin only approved 16 jobs that require vocational training making the exploration of the city even more difficult, meaning that not all jobs are guaranteed to be within walking distance. This after all is one of the reasons why Job-Challenge was created. The solution Job-Challenge offers is that instead of focusing on individual companies with only one facility, the focus is put on big companies with several branches that can be found all over the city. This allows a greater flexibility.

During the media workshops, it became apparent that some groups did not produce sufficient material of the highest quality. One reason for this was that the groups were formed on the spot without any monitoring. Many pupils were distracted by the fun factor (e.g. taking selfies with a tablet) rather than focusing on the vocational training. As a consequence of this the other young people conducting the Job Routes with the material produced were not able to work productively. To improve the quality of the material produced, a screening application procedure was introduced: Only the top 30 are allowed to participate in the media workshop. As a result of this the groups are more strictly monitored and greater consideration is placed on the group dynamic.

The application procedure changes resulted in further benefits also for the purposes of data privacy, before the media workshops begin the pupils have to hand in a declaration of consent signed by their parents. Normally, some pupils forget to hand this document in making it illegal for them to participate in the media workshop. Due to the application procedure changes, the declaration of consent form must be handed in with all other application documents at the start of the course.

The points system in the Job-Challenge needed to be modified. Job stations (where questions about a vocational training must be answered) as well as game stations (e.g. group selfie) had the same points value. It had not been envisaged that the young people would place an equal importance to the game station tasks. The solution was to give more points for young people who solved the Job stations questions rather than the game stations.
The final challenge was the refusal of access to the apprenticeship market. The Chamber of Industry and Commerce of Berlin denied the access due to data protection. The original idea was to complete Berlin Job Routes by showing open vocational training positions on the map that young people see while conducting Job Routes. Unfortunately, it was not possible to integrate this information. Therefore, the app only includes the link to the website where young people can research for open positions. Further development of Job-Challenge may offer a solution to this.

Prospects

It was possible to find solutions for most of the described problems enabling 600 pupils to complete Berlin Job Routes in the first year and 1000 pupils in the second and third year. Feedback from the schools, companies and young people is totally positive. Currently, there are four active routes and one playing field. There will be 16 routes and 10-12 playing fields in place until the end of the project. The aim is to expand the network, i.e. more schools and companies joining the project. Job-Challenge is a promising addition to the Job Routes concept as it is more focused on the playful element. This provides a wider range of use.

Furthermore, the concept of Job Routes shows a potential for further development and application for other uses. For instance, a route for refugees could be designed showing all administrative, consultant and practical points of contact in Berlin for when they first arrive in the city. Translations or subtitles could be added as well as information about places where refugees can get help regarding vocational counselling. The Berlin Job Routes concept is also suitable for team-building measures for teachers or trainee teachers whilst helping to engage young people at the same time.

An interesting alternative app that is also available outside of Germany is “Actionbound”. This app works similarly to the Berlin Job Routes app. It is free of charge and can be used on mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones.

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Developing Employer Engagement to Benefit Learners

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The chapter will focus on strategies that successfully reduce the number of learners not in education, employment or training (NEET) by working closely with employers to provide a transitional phase before progression into a positive outcome.

Employer engagement is an integral part of the success of the programmes in the UK that aim to engage learners in education, employment or training. One example of this is the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme model that brings together groups of employers, training providers and learners. The Liverpool Region Contractors Group was created by a number of prime construction contractors who worked together with the City Council and Neighbourhood Services Company to provide on-site experience to complement off-site training. The real work environment prepares the young person for employment by helping to equip them with the necessary skills and experience to then move into sustainable employment with one of the host placement companies either during or at the end of the placement.

A joined up approach with links to employers provides an incentive to learners to join the scheme as it provides an entry route into the industry as well as the opportunity to achieve relevant qualifications in a chosen sector. The support provided by the training provider in the partnership is fundamental in terms of liaising with the employer and addressing any employability issues such as punctuality and attendance whilst the learner develops the skills to become a valuable member of the team.

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Case study A

John was referred onto the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme by the Local Authority Employment Team and he was interested in obtaining an apprenticeship in the construction industry. John had obtained a number of GCSEs at secondary school including grade C in both English and Maths but since then, he had struggled to find direction and was currently not engaged in employment, education or training. He had been unsuccessful at interview on numerous occasions and he was disheartened with his current position. He felt he just needed a chance however he had no experience and could not secure a job to gain the experience that he needed. The organisation in charge of recruitment onto the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme however could see the potential he had and offered him a place. The next stage was to enrol John at college onto the relevant apprenticeship framework so that he could work towards the qualifications needed to complete his level 2 apprenticeship in General Construction. The first hurdle was actually ensuring that John attended the college to enrol as due to a variety of personal issues and financial problems, he struggled to motivate himself to get there and did not have the money available to pay for the journey. The college selected therefore was a small independent college that provided transport from home to the training centre together with small class sizes and a designated personal tutor to provide pastoral support.

The next stage was to identify a suitable employer to place John with and as the scheme linked to a number of main contractors, this created the opportunity for a suitable placement. Part of the role of the training provider is to liaise with the employers to identify the pipeline opportunities in current contracts that are operating within a set radius and then once selected, prepare and accompany the young person to the interview with the employer. The placements are full time and paid for by the employer, who also pays a weekly management fee to the training provider to fund the support they offer. The benefit of this is that it provides the employer with an opportunity to increase and develop their workforce and train the next generation of employees as well as meet the needs of the main contract. It can also be a short term arrangement of a minimum of twelve weeks and it is therefore a short term commitment for the employer. The young person is entitled to leave the scheme at any point and accept a full time opportunity with the employer and continue attending college on a day release basis in order to complete their trade qualification and become fully qualified. Due to the number of employers involved in the scheme, the requirement to provide placements is shared amongst a number of or-
ganisations and the young person gets the opportunity to gain experience with a variety of employers. This also maximises their chances of being offered a permanent position and creates a wider range of assessment opportunities linked to the qualifications they are working towards.

For John, there were a number of trials and tribulations during his journey and the benefit of the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme was that the mentor/supervisor assigned to him from the training provider was able to work through the issues with him and keep him in work and attending college. Without this support, one or other would have suffered and then the apprenticeship opportunity would have been in jeopardy. In terms of practical advice to educational professionals working with learners embarking on a programme such as the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme, then it is a case of keeping all the ‘plates spinning’ and dealing with each challenge as it presents itself. John benefitted from budget planning support so that he could manage his money better, pay off his debts and enable him to eat more healthily so that he had the energy to work in a physically demanding job within the construction industry. There were times when he would prefer to go to work rather than attend college and vice versa and again that is when the mentor/supervisor would intervene to keep him on track and remind him of the progress he had made and support him to raise his aspirations.

Communication between all those involved is integral to the success of the Shared Apprenticeship Model which provides a way for learners to access employment and training opportunities in their chosen sector. Clear, consistent and honest channels of communication are vital to enable the young person to make the most of the opportunity. A tripartite arrangement between the training provider, employer and young person serves to enhance the employability of the individual and address any individual barriers to employment, education or training so they can move towards a positive outcome.

Case study B
Milly was at somewhat of a crossroads in terms of what she should do next and she was consequently not engaged in education, employment or training. Milly therefore benefitted from a placement on the scheme as she felt her confidence levels were incredibly low and she was unsure of what direction to take and how to gain the experience necessary to obtain employment. The success of Milly’s placement was based on the support and guidance from the mentor/supervisor on the scheme combined with that
of the manager from the placement and this two pronged approach meant that Milly was able to develop her skills and confidence in a supportive environment and she was able to prove to the employer over a period of time what an asset she could be to the organisation. The scheme incorporates a system of regular reviews against a personal development plan that is set at the beginning of the placement and it provides the opportunity for constructive feedback that can be acted upon and used to develop expertise in a particular area of work. At the end of the placement, the employer knew that Milly had the knowledge, skills and attributes to be an effective and productive member of staff and she was offered and accepted a full time position with the placement company.

**Areas to consider when developing an employer engagement strategy**

Any effective employer engagement strategy must include an evaluation of the skills and attributes of the staff within the team. Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships with both existing and new partners are crucial attributes that contribute to the success of any employer engagement strategy. Productive relationships with employers ensure that there is the best chance of a positive outcome for all those involved. The ability to respond to challenges as they present themselves is also a vital component as well as an understanding of the reasons why the employer is getting involved and that it may not always be for the same altruistic reasons as your own. The knowledge of that is not necessarily destructive but it does serve to help the training provider or education establishment to understand where the employer is coming from and appreciate that they may have different drivers to your own. At certain times there will be financial considerations or contract compliance issues that will mean the time the employer has available to support a young person may not be ideal. In those circumstances it rests with the training provider to ensure the learner is getting access to the experience they need and negotiate with the employer if necessary. Unreasonable expectations on the employer however will mean that they will be less likely to work together to either provide a placement opportunity in the first place or provide additional placement opportunities in the future. That said, the training provider must always be the champion of the young person and support and mentor them throughout the placement journey to get the very best out of them and encourage them to make the most of the opportunity and achieve their full potential.
Ways forward

- Develop a consistent approach across the organisation to employer engagement and if relevant create a bespoke employer engagement strategy for your individual organisation.
- Recruit or develop the skills of the team to be able to identify and sustain employer links and establish new placement opportunities as well as mentor the learners who access the service.
- Provide clear and concise information to employers with regard to what is expected of them, what is their role and what are their responsibilities, clarify issues over payments if relevant and ensure they are kept informed of any issues as they arise.
- Be prepared to deal with any pastoral issues and provide a support network for the young person and be open minded when any incidents occur within the placement.
- Consider the health and safety implications of the placement and ensure that the young person is being treated fairly and appropriately and given the opportunity to develop their skills and gain experience.
- Be prepared to regularly review the performance and progress of the young person at the placement and address any attendance or punctuality issues promptly.
- Obtain feedback from the employer as part of the review process and act as mediator if necessary to keep the placement on track.
- Use appropriate opportunities to highlight the benefits of participation to the employer and remind them of the benefits of workforce development and community engagement for example.

Employer engagement is not without its pitfalls but it also provides tremendous opportunity to cultivate new relationships with business and enterprise and potentially create new employment opportunities. An employer may not necessarily be looking to recruit someone however if a young person shows ability, interest and initiative, then it can open up new opportunities that did not necessarily exist before. So many learners just need a chance or an opportunity to show what they can do and given the necessary time and support and by working closely with employers to provide a transitional phase before progression this can result in a positive outcome.
The Education for Equity project generated an exploration of high impact success stories which demonstrate how young people can be supported to achieve their potential despite significant contextual challenges and barriers to learning. Too many school students in the EU fail to make a successful transfer to the world of work, further education or training and the three partners all shared a commitment to addressing this challenging situation.

**To commence**

The project made a very slow start as the three partners focused upon examining the detail surrounding ‘drop out’ problems. Too much time was given to discussing semantic issues to define our target group of young people, analysing fluid data sets and understanding differentiated legislation, systems and Educational contexts. We were focusing upon our cultural differences instead of seeking unifying conceptual themes. This was probably an inevitable part of the process in which partners from three nationalities come together and feel the need to have a full understanding of each other’s settings before devising responses to common challenges.

**To continue**

Once we had explored our differing cultural contexts we entered into the most energising and rewarding phase of the project whereby each partner

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researched and shared examples of good practice in order to identify strategies and themes that enhance young peoples’ experiences in Educational environments and lead to a reduction in the numbers of Early school/College leavers and NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training).

The process of interrogating and assessing a range of pedagogical structures produced common themes which accentuated our similarities as opposed to differences.

The three recurring themes were:

- Motivation
- Inclusive Pedagogy
- Effective Partnerships

These themes provided a unifying thread upon which we could pin exemplar good practice which could be shared and disseminated through a wide range of stakeholders.

A series of Professional Development opportunities, seminars and workshops were organised and these cascaded our findings and raised awareness amongst hundreds of fellow Educationalists and stimulated interest in adopting new strategies to achieve improved outcomes for young people.

Soundbites from participant evaluations of the five day Professional Development course in Liverpool, November 2016, provide a flavour of the impact of the Education for Equity project:

- Lots of practical ideas and strategies generated which we can take back to our schools. Exchange of ideas with other professionals.
- Young People’s involvement and hearing about what they wanted really influenced my thinking.
- Positive engagement of participants with a vibrant atmosphere and unity of purpose.
- Meeting with an international group from Sweden, Germany, South Africa and also London based educationalists who all have similar issues with disengagement and varied cultural barriers to cross.
- The incredibly dynamic and interesting mix of people who participated, various categories of educational professionals, social workers, librarians, students, community champions and others… (not least the group from South Africa + the London students added extra value) We learned so much from each other and realised that sometimes you can adopt simple changes and these can result in improved outcomes.
- It felt like being part of a positive force I found the idea of the ‘Forum Theatre’ very interesting and inspiring. It was a great start to the
course to see these young people ‘in action’ (and their teachers too of course) This kind of introduction is a great idea to reflect on good and bad practice and how to improve/change bad practice.

- Meeting so many new people from a range of backgrounds and hearing their experiences and examples was very interesting and inspiring. It was useful and I had the impression to learn a lot by listening to them.

- In one workshop, we discussed cultural inclusion and how we could become more inclusive and more integrated through better understanding and respecting each other’s cultures. The example given by staff running workshop from Uppsala University of mother tongue language lessons for refugees and immigrants was particularly inspiring.

- The South African delegate, Bruce, brought it home to me how difficult it is for those in the most deprived and oppressed regions in the world to motivate and engage young (and old) in the education process. There is no ‘one size fits all’ answer and each separate culture and issues need to be addressed in a strategic manner. The answer must come from understanding the culture and involve those within it, from the grass roots not simply applied from ‘above’ by Governments or ‘experts’.

- The course week and the participants again reminded me of the importance of personal commitment, engagement and love – which can change people’s lives and change the world.

- I think I will try to forge links for our learners with other people from different backgrounds to help them understand more that they don’t live in isolation but are connected to others even if they don’t know it.

- Feel better educated and aware of the issues discussed and therefore better prepared to contribute to such issues if and when they arise in my work.

- Breaking disengaged young people in sub groups, with focus and extra attention to each individual’s needs, is something I will include in my future practice.

- We all work hard with difficult issues. These issues which should be taken seriously by all fellow people and politicians. We all know this is not so. However, we find strength from within and from one another to go on and it become our life mission.

- It was inspirational to see that everyone was determined to go away and improve their practice for the benefit of young people.
To conclude

The Education for Equity Project resulted in positive outcomes for all three partner organisations, the key impact being evidenced by the following:

- Synergy
- Affirmation
- Sustainability

Each partner identified synergy as a key indicator of the success of the project. The spirit of cooperation, trust and cross fertilisation of ideas enriched all. Everyone learned from one another and this broadened horizons and enlightened members. We took ideas from fellow partners and re-calibrated processes to suit our individual contexts. In turn this enriched partners, their associated organisations, stakeholders and young people.

Curiously an unintended consequence of the project was to provide affirmation to all participants and allowed invaluable reflection time to remind ourselves that Educational Professionals can and do make a difference to young people’s lives. At times Educationalists can feel as though they are sailing into a headwind as their pedagogy is compromised by system pressures and the audit culture but phenomenal results are being achieved despite the economic, political and social constraints.

The project created an appetite for sustainability, as after an intense three year partnership there was a momentum in place and a desire not to lose the effective partnerships and powerful networks that had been established. It has been a privilege to work with a plethora of ‘like minded’ Professionals who strive to make a difference to the lives of our young people.

*Change comes from small initiatives which work. We cannot wait for great visions from great people, for they are in short supply at the end of history.*

*It is up to us to light our own small fires in the darkness.*
