

## Minutes of the Virtual Meeting On Module 2 "Communication"

Meeting held on 30 November 2012 at 15:00 CET

The video of the meeting is available on this Internet address:

<http://flashmeeting.e2bn.net/fm/9dd151-158289>

### Attendees

Paola Bertini, CIPAT (IT), Marco Manzuoli, Datini (IT), Federico Fragasso, Pixel (IT), Lucia Nicolai (Cipat) Italy, Christine Cloes, INFOREF (BE), Julien Keutgen, INFOREF (BE), Martine Prignon, AEDE-EL (BE), Francis Mulder, School Mediation Service (BE), Andreea Cleminte, Fundatia EuroEd (RO), Elza Gheorghiu, Vasile Alecsandri HighSchool (RO), Lucia Petrescu, EuroEd School (RO), Charo Lopez, Florida Secundaria (ES), Enric Ortega, Florida Secundaria (ES), Sara Nally, IIS "E. De Amicis" (IT), Camilla Tamiozzo, USR Veneto (IT)

### Minutes

#### Technical Matters

Federico (Pixel, IT) opens the meeting and makes sure that all the partners do not have any technical issues. All the partners have been invited to test their connections, to make sure that they can be heard during the virtual meeting.

#### Welcome of Participants and Introduction of the Meeting Agenda

Paola Bertini (CIPAT, Italy), as moderator of the meeting, welcomes all the participants for joining in the second transnational virtual meeting.

#### Session of questions and feedback from the partners

Paola together with Marco (Datini Italy) welcome all the partners. Paola explains what has been discussed in the meeting at Datini. Teachers were particularly interested in some of the topics which were analyzed and debated in this period, even in the posts of the forum.

Particularly they discussed about communication among teacher-student-family. It is very difficult to achieve this triangular communication. They highlighted how this should be based on a basic empathy and mutual understanding between student and teacher which can enhance the student's self-esteem. She says it will be important to find "tools" for the student to discover the "emotional side of their teacher, which makes the two of them: student and teacher, closer to each other. The creation of this link between them is considered particularly important especially for students at risks.

She raises a question to the partners about how important is the creation of an empathic communication between students, and students at risk in particular, and teachers.

Elza (Euroed Romania) answers that the relationships between them are very important especially when students are engaged intellectually and emotionally.

Paola thanks her for her answer underlying a clear connection between an intellectual and emotional involvement.





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Marinica has to write because her microphone doesn't work. She thinks that it is important for teachers to know families at risk so they can build a programme for those children.

Paola asks if there are some more intervention about this first topic.

She adds that she particularly appreciated a post on the forum by a Spanish teacher who said: "Welcome them with a smile!" Which means try to create a really friendly atmosphere in class.

And she asks for an opinion regarding it

Charo Lopez, Florida Secundaria (ES) agrees with them referring that in their group they judged as very important welcoming the student with a smile, in order to show them that life is much better than what they perceive outside. And they feel that being at school is better than what they experience when outside.

Marinica writes that smiles create relax in the class and they feel confident to speak with smiling teachers.

Paola invites Sara Nally, IIS "E. De Amicis" (IT) to discuss about a second topic that is to find adequate spaces for family talks.

Sara reports that in Italy, talks between teachers and parents take place during the morning and not at the presence of pupils. She believes this method has two negative aspects. Students probably see two different behaviors school and home, and because we are talking about them. The group from Veneto thinks conversations should be at the presence of students except for exceptional cases. Sara would like to know the other partners' opinion. The question is addressed to the Spanish partner.

Charo Lopez, Florida Secundaria (ES) explains that in his school, meetings happen in the afternoon but it's not the same everywhere. For all of his group it is important they have to be at the presence of pupils.

Paola suggests a new topic that is how to handle time and space when we have to communicate with students and with families, underlying how difficult it is to meet parents in the afternoon because of the strict schedule, we have in Italy.

She reminds the report of German situation as they read in module 2 about their guidelines of talks with parents that are recorded and take place in a comfortable atmosphere in proper rooms with sofas and warm lights.

She comments that in Italy they don't have anything similar and asks the partners about the situation in their countries.

Sara Nally, IIS "E. De Amicis" (IT) remarks the Italian situation underlying the need of more time for meetings not only with families but even among teachers. Since they can only meet during the 10 minutes break time.

Charo Lopez, Florida Secundaria (ES) explains they don't usually have comfortable places for their talks with parents. It should be better to have at disposal proper places where parents could feel comfortable. They would prefer to meet parents in the afternoon so that they are more relaxed and can communicate better. This is not often possible. Most of the families you need to talk to are those who don't come to talk.

Lucia (Cipat Italy) remarks what Paola said that is the fact in Italy teachers don't usually have comfortable places where to meet families. It would be better to have at disposal a proper place where they could feel comfortable. However, in her opinion the most important thing is the way of communicating. It must be friendly and this is more important than the place where it happens.

Paola introduces the third topic that the teachers of her group found most motivating among the ones suggested in the module.

Precisely it is the new function the teacher should have. In fact teachers in Italy, have many different functions in one person at the same time.

He/she should only teach his/her subject, but in most cases he has, on the contrary, other additional tasks which are mostly organizational and technical ones when he should only be given only a sort of tutoring task.

The question is what partners think about this function, precisely about the role of the teacher.



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Should he only be involved in teaching his subject or should he be given a sort of function as a tutor. And how can the functions find a sort of harmony inside the same person?

And, above all, when could he develop all these aspects?

Elza (Euroed) has a question for Paola. It is about the way students at University are prepared to become teachers as it happens in her Country where they attend training courses.

Paola explains that in Italy, there are specific courses only for primary school, the others learn by teaching.

The Spanish teacher says that in Spain there is a master of at least one year to become a teacher of secondary school, and it is the same in all Europe. If one wants to become a primary or infant teacher you have to study at university.

Paola agrees with Ortega and says she had forgotten these rules, because they are recent and there are lots of teachers in Italian schools who haven't studied at university how to teach.

Elza says that in Romania, they are teachers and tutors and head teachers at the same time and asks to the Spanish partner if their masters at university are on helping teachers with their subjects or on educational problems like those discussed in this project.

The Spanish teacher answers that in these masters there is an important part about how to become tutors or mentors.

Julien (inforef) specifies that their teachers have not a special training.

Paola introduces the next point which is the agreement that they found among teachers about the possibility of having an effective communication with the students but not so much with families.

Because families in most cases are not involved, they are absent, or don't care about their children's school performances.

She suggests the following question How could technology help teachers in creating an effective communication with parents. She mentions a post in the forum of a ICT teacher who suggests a course to teach information technology for parents

Sara declares they have an electronic register used to communicate with families and to record marks.

Paola asks if it is used only for the end of term communications or also during the year.

Julien (Inforef) says in Belgium there are more and more electronic registers and when students are absent they send text messages to families.

Sara (USRV) says they use the register constantly to communicate, during the year Elza Euroed remarks that in Romania they use the e-registers and parents can have access to them, so it is easy to get in contact with parents, in this way.

The Spanish partner says it is the same for them. They use a portal and give parents the password. The tutors ask them to follow it.

Lucia underlines a problem that is: most of this kind of families can't use a computer or they don't care about specific communication so maybe it should be better to use short messages sending text messages on their mobiles using a friendly and simple communication passing just the basic problems they have.

Paola comments that technology should be better exploited not only as a mean of control but they could be used as a real teaching resource involving parents in education activities like performing. And she adds that the problem of family involvement is one of the most difficult to solve.

Another point is the need inside the school of teamworking. Teachers are often alone in facing these problems.

Elza says they are having more teachers meetings as things are changing in his Country.

Julien says that In Belgium, teachers have no time to meet each others and no extra money. Paola says it would be very important to work in team, to have a proper training and an extra reward.

The Spanish teacher says that many of them are following tutor courses but this is part of the job, so they don't have any extra money.

Paola wants to know if the training is made once and forever or it has to be repeated every year. Every year we should have a refreshment. In Spain they have these courses in July and September.

Marinica writes they work for 6 hours a day for 5 days that is 30 hours a week. Paola compares the



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Italian timetable to that of Romania. In Italy, they have 18 hours in front of the class but all the rest of the work that is done at home, so maybe it is the same total of time or even more.

Paola thinks there is a real obstacle to a fruitful and effective communication that is the organization of school that has too many schemes. It is a too fixed organization, we are fixed into too many schemes. Marinica clarifies she has only 3-4 hours in class a day...the rest are games.

In Belgium they work for 20 -24 hours

Elza disagrees with him, she says she likes very much the way Paola engaged all the participants into discussion that became more interactive

In this way the conversation is much more interesting, she says.

Then Elza speaks about what they discussed in her group. They all found that all the materials were very interesting and suitable and with good examples and solutions. The participants also highlighted the importance of training at university, and also of having such training regularly.

Another point is the idea of the school culture. Creating a kind of school culture within the school is very important so that people inside the school tries to find his own values, like rules. And many students feel the belonging to a place, their school.

It creates an emotional attachment to the school. The spirit of belonging to a team, to a community in empathy, ensures that positive atmosphere which motivate them creating a positive atmosphere that we all need.

They ensure the focal function of the school.

Some of the participants mentioned a contract that they sign and it is renewed every year. Rules must exist.

The partner agrees and explains they use contracts because they work. They are a sort of portal of projects.

The first portal is a contract with the students

A higher portal is a contract with the families.

Elza reports she had suggested to her teachers this way.

She adds that the participants mentioned they were recording absentees.

This should be done regularly following precise rules. And prompt measures should be taken such as talks with students and talks with parents.

Parents should be informed.

Even places where communication are held are important.

Some teachers said there are parents associations. They said that those groups are very active and families are involved in school activities. Sometimes they even organize events, proms, birthday parties and things like that which help creating this school culture.

Sara has a question for Inforef about the role of the PMPF educators.

Paola comments that she was impressed by this sense of community there is at Elza's school.

She wonders if they live in a small town.

Belgique partner answers to Sara that they have CPM centres that are the first confronting places they have.

Elza says the city where she leaves is quite big but students come from the same area.

## Session of questions and feedback from the partners

The partner reports what his team debated about.

His teachers said that the second module was very interesting because of the practical information that was included in it. And some of them said they could use the examples in teaching in classes, that it was very useful.

He wanted to express what they said about the importance of organizing the communication with parents. They highlighted the importance to know what to say them, and they found chapter 4 particularly interesting and useful. The first module was an introduction to the project, but the feelings of them were different when working in the second one, because it was full of practical information and examples.



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Paola asks if there are any other questions.

### **Session of questions and feedback from the partners**

Julien (Be) says the point they want to discuss about is that of truancy. It shouldn't be considered the problem of only one person but there are many parts that contribute to it. Sub systems, the Colleagues, the parents and grandparents. In Belgium they have many resources. there are the CPMs, there are health promotion services, youth health services and many other services.. The problem is coordinating all the services and resources. We think that only one person could coordinate them, that is the headmaster. And he raise a question to the partners:

Do you think headmaster could be a good coordinator for all the services and resources and persons? And how do you do in your countries?

Paola answers the first of the questions he asked, about the importance of absences. In Italy there is an amount of 25% of absences a year of the total amount of the school time. And if a student excesses this amount he can fail that year.

### **Conclusions**

Paola hopes the discussion has been interesting for all of the partners even if they haven't followed the fixed guide, but she thinks that most of the topics that have been discussed were really matters. The conversation has been fluent with many exchanges among the parts.



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