

Assessment of students, teachers and schools

Work file 10: Co-operative teaching and peer feedback

Without a doubt, co-operative planning of EDC/HRE lessons together with a fellow teacher can be a useful tool for mutual information and co-ordination as well as for the development of class including the evaluation of effectiveness of such processes.³⁸ Co-operative planning can be restricted only to mere preparation of a lesson (as it is done in the majority of countries) or can lead to joint teaching of the lesson (together through team teaching). Initiating co-operative measures for planning and teaching lessons still has a minor priority in teacher training institutions in a lot of European countries. The culture of leaving each other's doors open is a process that takes a long time to develop.

It remains an interesting phenomenon that a lot of teachers are hesitant about working closely together with another colleague.³⁹ Is this the case because good practice models are missing? Is this the case because teachers fear they would have to spend even more time in school? Is this the case because teachers are afraid of being evaluated by colleagues?

As one form of co-operative planning and teaching, collegial group sit-ins in EDC/HRE lessons could be one solution to saving precious time. The following suggestion could act as a guideline:⁴⁰

Group size:	Three teachers visit each other twice every half year (everybody receives two visits and makes four visits – they always go in twos).
Organisation:	The three teachers plan the visits together according to the actual timetable in a decentralised way.
Subject relevance:	Teachers observe each other's EDC/HRE lessons. What their core subjects are (or the subjects they used to teach) is not relevant.
Compilation of group:	Coming together into a group can happen because of sympathy. This secures a minimum amount of trust.
Task of principal:	The principal's role is to keep track of the minimum amount of visits between them. The principal should not get involved in content questions about teaching issues.
Thematic focus:	The questions that can be the focus points of these peer sit-ins can arise out of different interests or relations: a) a teacher wishes to receive feedback to a certain question, b) a new method/activity has been decided or introduced and should be evaluated now or c) pedagogical principles (for example, formulated in the school's programme or profile) should be evaluated.

There are several reasons for adding the element of peer feedback and joint lesson observation and analysis to co-operative planning of teaching. Observing colleagues teach EDC/HRE will add positively to gain more insight into one's own teaching of this subject. Not only does it act as a tool for diagnosis, but also as a tool for improving one's own styles and methods.

38. Helmke A. (2003), "Unterrichtsevaluation: Verfahren und Instrumente", *Schulmanagement*, 1, 8-11.

39. Ibid.

40. Klippert H. (2000), *Pädagogische Schulentwicklung. Planungs- und Arbeitshilfen zur Förderung einer neuen Lernkultur*, Beltz, Weinheim.

These are the reasons for this:⁴¹

- Learning how to teach is more effective in a real-life class than in joint reflection or a hypothetical, real but not experienced class.
- There are many details which cannot be easily explained when talking about a lesson such as action routines, body language, mimics, behaviour of communication, etc.
- Changing the perspective and taking a more distanced view on a lesson allows viewing of one's own teaching.
- Observing a lesson unburdens oneself from taking action. It is possible to perceive more details and to receive more space for reflection.
- It is possible to take a number of suggestions out of every lesson viewed for one's own teaching. The variety of personalities and teaching styles can be an interesting source for impulses which a teacher does not receive on the job after pre-service teaching was completed.
- Observing class and all elements of planning and reflection involve the discussion of didactical and methodical questions and are part of school development which has its starting point at the level of the teacher.

41. Leuders T. (2001), *Qualität im Mathematikunterricht der Sekundarstufe I und II*, Cornelsen, Berlin.