

Unit 2

Toolbox for students

1. Introduction

Teachers who teach EDC/HRE classes can be perfect in their planning and lesson preparation. But despite the best preparation a lesson can go wrong if they forget to consider the students' skills in certain techniques. This can happen to the best and most experienced teachers. A lesson can only work well if the students have a certain repertoire of methods and know how to use them.

From the experience gained in the various programmes for teachers of EDC/HRE all over Europe we decided to include this toolbox in this volume. This set of instructions, worksheets, instruments and checklists can act as something like a database to which students have access when they are not familiar with a certain method or technique.

It is the teacher's task to explain when and how to use which tool. And it will also be the teacher's task to decide when to present which tool to the students, whether the toolbox is a fixed instrument displayed in the classroom, easily accessible at all times, or whether the toolbox can also be used for homework.

The following set of tools can help the students with a number of different things, such as:

- how to gather and search for information;
- how to sort your information;
- how to produce creative work;
- how to present your work;
- how to work with other students.

Each tool starts on a separate page. It can be read individually by the students or – if the teacher so decides – together in pairs or small groups.

Toolbox for students

Tool 1: Worksheet for students to plan their learning schedules

- I will set myself the following objective – for the next chapter/unit/today, etc: ...
- I will tackle the following tasks today: ...
- I am particularly interested in: ...
- I have particular difficulties with: ...
- I have set up the following plan: ... (What will I do first? What will I do after that? Where will I learn? When will I have a break? When will I finish my work?)
- I will talk my plan over with: ...
- I will be satisfied with my learning if I succeed in the following: ...
- I will provide for the following learning materials: ...
- To ensure that I can work undisturbed, I will take the following measures: ...
- To improve my learning, I will ask the following children for support: ...
- When I am tired, I will pick up new energy by ...
- If I don't enjoy learning any more I will ...

Toolbox for students

Tool 2: Worksheet for students to reflect on their learning

- What were my first learning activities?
- What were my next learning steps?
- When did I allow myself to have a break?
- How long did I learn by myself?
- How long did I learn together with another child?
- When did I learn in a group?
- Did I learn well in the group?
- Did I carry out my learning activities according to my plan?
- Could I concentrate on my work without being disturbed? Was I distracted at any time? Must my concentration improve?
- Did I ensure that I learnt well?
- Did I feel bored while I was learning?
- Did I learn happily?
- When did I enjoy learning?
- Did I feel sure while learning that I would be successful? (Learning with self-confidence)
- How did I take an interest in the subject-matter and come to enjoy learning?
- Which learning strategies and techniques did I apply?
- Did I learn well? What did I do well, what did I do badly?
- What was difficult for me? How did I overcome these difficulties?
- Should I work faster or more slowly?
- Is there anything I ought to change?
- How can I improve my life?
- This is what I will try to achieve in my next learning task: ...

Toolbox for students

Tool 3: Worksheet for students to reflect on their achievement

- What have I learned?
- Have I actually made progress?
- Have I really understood what I have learned?
- Am I able to apply my newly acquired abilities in different situations?
- Where and when can I make use of what I have learned?
- Am I personally satisfied with what I have succeeded in?
- Would I like to understand or be able to apply anything even better?
- Have I achieved my learning objective?
- What must I still learn?
- Will I set myself new objectives for future learning?

Toolbox for students

Tool 4: Researching in libraries

In libraries you can find lots of information that you need when researching a topic. In order to be able to use this information you need to be able to pick out the most relevant bits. The following checklist can help you to find information (research).

1. What is my goal?

- What am I creating? What should the final product look like? Should it be a presentation? A report? A poster?
- You will need to look for different types of information depending on what the goal of your work is. To make a poster, you have to find pictures you can cut out; for a report you need to find exact information about a topic.

2. What information do I need?

- Write down everything that you know about the topic (a mind map can help you with this).
- Write down everything that you'd like to know about the topic (highlight points on your mind map). Define precisely what aspect of the topic you would like to learn about. Depending on what your final product will be, you may need to define a lot of aspects or only a few.

3. How do I find information and how do I organise it?

- Look through the books, magazines, films, etc., that you have found in the library and decide if they can answer the questions you asked. Looking through the index or the tables of contents can help.
- On a separate sheet of paper, note down the title of the book and the page number where you found the information. You can also mark the page with a bookmark or Post-it note.
- It can often be useful to photocopy the page. However, don't forget to note down the title of the book on the copy.
- Look at the pictures from magazines. Photocopy them or mark the page with a bookmark.
- If using a film, watch the film and stop it each time something interesting is described.
- Gather the materials and put them all together in a plastic folder.
- Highlight the most important information.
- In your own words, write down the most important information about a topic on a sheet of paper.

4. How do I present the information?

You can, for example:

- make a poster;
- hold an exhibition;
- give a speech;
- create a transparency;
- write a newspaper article;
- show video clips.

5. How do I evaluate my research?

- Did you learn anything new?
- Did you find enough useful information?
- Which steps in your research went well? What was difficult?
- What would you do differently next time?

Toolbox for students

Tool 5: Researching on the Internet

You can find information about every imaginable subject on the Internet. You have to consider how you want to go about finding the most essential and accurate information about your topic.

Finding information

Jot down keywords about your given or chosen topic on a piece of paper. Try to think what exactly you want to know about this topic.

Examples:

- EDC/HRE;
- Council of Europe;
- minorities;
- democracy.

Combine search terms, for example “medieval town markets”, using quotation marks.

- Which word combinations help you to find the most relevant information about your topic? Note down these criteria on a piece of paper.

Checking your information

Because anybody can access the Internet and create information, it's important to double-check the information you find before you actually use it.

Try to clarify the following problems:

- Can you find this information on other pages on the Web?
- Who made the information publicly accessible?
- What interest could this person or organisation have in making this information publicly accessible?
- Is the person or organisation reliable?

Compare the information from the Internet with information from other sources:

- Can you find the same information in a book, through an interview or through your own experiences?
- Is the information on the Internet up-to-date, comprehensible, more comprehensive than what you can find in a book, interview or through your own observation?
- Which information suits your purpose best?

Saving the information

Once you've found a good Internet site that you want to go back to later or that you want to use as a source for your work, make your own personal list of websites:

- Open a separate document.
- Highlight the URL (address).
- Copy the URL by pressing CTRL (control) and C at the same time.
- Paste the URL into the document by pressing CTRL (control) and V at the same time.
- Save your document under “weblis_t_topic” – for example, “weblis_t_democracy”.

Toolbox for students

Tool 6: Carrying out interviews and surveys

You can gather information about a topic when you question people about their knowledge of the subject or when you ask them for their opinion.

You can ask:

- specialists – if you want to find something specific about a subject;

or

- people who don't have any special expertise in the subject but you are interested in knowing what they think about your topic.

Interviews or surveys are best done together in a small group. That way you can help one another with the questions and with recording the answers.

Go through the following points on the checklist:

- Write down a short answer to every question.
- Mark the questions to which you don't have an answer.
- Discuss any open questions with your class.

Steps to take

1. The goal

- What is our topic? What do we want to know?
- What should the final product look like?

2. Preparation

- Who should be interviewed? How many people? Does age or gender play a role?
- How do we choose the right people?
- When should the interview/survey take place?
- How should it take place?
- Who has to be informed or who do we have to get permission from?
- How will the answers be recorded (recorded on tape, notes, questionnaires)?

3. The questions

- What questions shall we ask?
- How many questions can we ask? How much time do we have?
- Put the questions together to form a survey.

4. Conducting the survey/interview

- How do we begin with the questions?
- Who plays what role in the group (asking questions, noting down answers, starting and stopping the tape recorder)?
- How do we end the interview?

5. Evaluation

- If you interviewed a specialist, think about the most important things he or she said and highlight them.
- If you asked several people about the same topic and would like to know how many people gave similar answers, then sort the answers accordingly.

6. The presentation

Decide whether the presentation will be for:

- sharing in class; or
- writing a newspaper article; or
- creating a poster; or
- something else.

Toolbox for students

Tool 7: Interpreting images

Just like texts, pictures contain a lot of information. The following tips will help you to interpret and understand pictures.

Discover information about the picture

- What are the most important colours in the picture?
- Where are noticeable shapes, patterns, lines?
- What is larger or smaller than normal?
- How big is the thing/person in the picture in reality?
- What time period (the past, the present) and what time of the year or day are presented in the picture?
- From what perspective do you see the subject of the picture: through the eyes of a frog, a bird or a person?
- What can you recognise in the picture?
- What type of picture is it (a picture, a poster, a painting, a wood engraving, a graphic, a collage, a portrait, a landscape, a caricature, etc.)?
- What is exaggerated or emphasised in the picture (light/dark, proportions, foreground/background, colourfulness, movement/stillness, gestures, facial expressions)?

Take in the picture

- What is particularly noteworthy about the picture?
- What do you like about it?
- What is characteristic of the picture?
- How do you feel when you look at the picture?
- Which part of the picture is the most beautiful?
- Which words come to mind when you look at the picture?

Discuss the picture

- Describe the picture in your own words.
- Tell one another what is meaningful, striking or important in the picture.
- Ask one another questions about the picture.
- Give short commands to one another, such as search for, find, show, explain ...
- Discuss such questions as: Why were these pictures chosen? Which pictures complement the text that belongs to the pictures? Which pictures clash with what is written in the text?

Work with the pictures

- Choose a picture and act out the scene you see there.
- Introduce the person that you see in the picture.
- Alter the pictures and comment on them.
- Compare historical pictures with the pictures you have.

- Explain what would have been difficult to understand in the text if you hadn't had the pictures to help you.
- Add suitable pictures that complement the text.
- Compare the pictures and appraise them. Do you like them? If not, why not?
- Write a description of the picture.
- Think about what happened just before the picture was taken or painted/drawn.
- Think about what would happen if the picture were to come alive.
- Add some speech bubbles with text to the picture.
- Describe the smells and sounds that the picture makes you think of.
- Collect pictures of similar subjects.

Interpret the picture

- What title would you give the picture?
- Where was the picture taken or painted/drawn?
- What did the photographer/artist want to say with this picture?
- Why was this picture taken or painted/drawn?

Toolbox for students

Tool 8: Mind maps

A mind map helps you to organise your thoughts. This is what the term literally means. Mind maps can be useful in many different situations when you have to think about a specific topic: gathering ideas, preparing for a presentation, planning a project, etc.

Look at the mind map below:

- What are the main categories? What are the subcategories?
- Would you have added more terms? If so, which ones?

Instructions for creating a mind map

- Write the name of your topic in the middle of your piece of paper and draw a circle around it. Be sure to use paper that is large enough.
- Draw a few thick lines radiating out from the circle. On each line, write the name of one sub-topic related to the main topic in the middle.
- From the thick lines, you can draw additional, thinner lines that represent subcategories or questions related to the sub-topic written on the thick line.
- Try to find as many different terms as you can and place them in the correct categories. You can use different font sizes, symbols and colours.

Compare your mind map with those of your classmates

- What do you notice?
- In what ways are your mind maps similar?
- In what ways are they different?
- What are the most important terms?
- Does the organisation of the subcategories make sense?
- Is anything important missing?
- What would you do differently next time?

Toolbox for students

Tool 9: Creating posters

A poster allows you to record your work and present it to your classmates. It is important that a poster is organised in a way that makes people pay attention. It should make the observers curious to find out more.

In a small group, examine the important features of a successful poster and think about what elements you can integrate into your own poster.

If you have already prepared your poster, you can use these features as a checklist to evaluate another poster.

Checklist

Title: should be short and interesting; visible from a distance.

Writing: should be large enough and legible. If you use the computer, don't use too many different fonts. Write short sentences that are visible from a distance.

Pictures, photographs, graphics: these should support what you have to say and make the poster interesting. Limit yourself to a few impressive ones.

Presentation: where should the title, headings, bullets, symbols, boxes, photographs or pictures go? Sketch out your poster before you begin.

Put it together carefully: the poster should fill the chosen format but shouldn't be cramped.

Toolbox for students

Tool 10: Holding exhibitions

An exhibition helps groups of students to present their work so that others (the class or invited guests) can get an idea of what the groups did. The following checklist can help you plan and hold an exhibition.

Checklist

- 1. What do we want to demonstrate?**
 - What is the main message that our exhibition is trying to get across?
 - What could the title of our exhibition be?
- 2. Who is the audience?**
 - Children and teachers from our school?
 - Parents and siblings?
 - Clients from a tourist office?
- 3. Where will the exhibition take place?**
 - In the classroom or somewhere in the school?
 - In a public place (at the town hall, for example)?
 - Will there be enough space and light?
 - Will we be able to have the infrastructure we need?
- 4. How do we hold a memorable exhibition?**
 - Allow models and objects to be touched?
 - Allow room for playing, trying things out, observing, or experimenting?
 - Play music or perform it ourselves?
 - Offer snacks?
 - Offer a guided tour of the exhibition?
 - Create a flyer as a guide to the exhibition?
 - Create a contest or a quiz?
- 5. Who has to be informed beforehand?**
 - Teachers in our school?
 - Caretakers?
 - School board members?
 - The head teacher?
 - Experts who can help us?
 - Guests?
- 6. What do we have to do?**
 - Create a personal checklist?
 - Create a list of materials?

- Create a time plan (who does what by when)?
- Know how much money is available and how much has been used?
- Create a flyer or an invitation?
- Inform the local newspapers?
- 7. How will the exhibition be evaluated?**
- What are the most important criteria?
- Who will evaluate the exhibition (teachers, classmates, guests)?

Toolbox for students

Tool 11: Planning and giving presentations

You can make a speech to your classmates, your parents or other children in your school. In any case, you've got to prepare your speech well. The following checklist will help you do this.

Planning a speech

1. Who will be listening?

- Where should you give your speech?

2. Who is making the speech?

- Are you making your speech alone or with a group?
- How has the group organised itself?

3. What is the goal of the speech?

- What should the audience learn?
- Should the audience give you feedback?

4. How much time do you have?

- Should you leave time for the audience to ask questions?
- Should you leave time for the audience to provide you with feedback?

5. What resources are available?

- Blackboard/whiteboard?
- Overhead projector?
- Computer and projector for a PowerPoint presentation?
- Posters (flipchart)?
- Stereo?

6. How can you involve your audience?

- Give time for asking questions.
- Create a puzzle or a quiz.
- Pass around objects.

7. What do you want to say?

- Think about three to six headings that are important for your topic and write them down on an individual sheet of paper.
- On each piece of paper, note down a few key words about each heading.

Giving the speech

A presentation can be divided into different parts: an introduction, the main part and a conclusion. Here you are some ideas to help you give your speech.

1. Introduction

- Start with a relevant quotation, or by showing a relevant picture or object.

- Present the main topic.
- Explain how the speech will be structured.

2. Main part

- Inform the audience about the subject of the speech.
- Put the previously prepared sheets showing the headings and information in order.
- Organise the speech according to these headings.
- Each time you begin with a new heading, make this clear using a picture or explanation.
- Present a relevant picture, object, or piece of music under each heading.
- Think about how you will show the pictures – for example, whether you will pass them around, draw them on a transparency or display them on a poster.

3. Conclusion

- Say what was new for you.
- Say what you learned.
- Show one final picture.
- Quiz your classmates.
- Allow time for questions.

Toolbox for students

Tool 12: Preparing overhead transparencies or a PowerPoint presentation

PowerPoint presentations or overhead transparencies shown on an overhead projector are often used during presentations and the same rules apply to both.

When creating a transparency/slide, pay attention that:

- the font is clear and legible;
- only one font is used;
- the print is large;
- there's enough space between the lines;
- there's not much text on each transparency/slide;
- the transparencies/slides are clean with no black toner or copy marks;
- there are enough large, visible pictures, maps and graphics;
- there are only a few different colours and symbols;
- there are not too many transparencies/slides.

Which is better: overhead transparencies or a PowerPoint presentation?

There are advantages and disadvantages to each. Here you will find a few important hints that can make it easier for you to choose between using overhead transparencies or a PowerPoint presentation.

Which form of presentation is right for your needs?

Read through the following points to help you choose.

Overhead transparencies are good if:

- you have fewer than five transparencies to show;
- you want to show or explain something in between showing the transparencies;
- you want to write on a transparency during the presentation;
- you only want to show one picture on each transparency;
- you want to cover and uncover something on the picture;
- you want to share the task in your group and assign one transparency to each group member.

PowerPoint presentations are good if:

- you have a lot of information to present;
- you have a large number of slides;
- you want to show pieces of information one after another on the same slide;
- you want to show something from the Internet during your presentation;
- you want to show a video clip, a digital image or something that has been saved onto your computer;
- you want to use the video at a later point in time or put it together in another way.

Toolbox for students

Tool 13: Writing newspaper articles

In order to inform others about your topic, you can try playing the role of a reporter and write an article for a newspaper. In EDC/HRE, writing an article is also a way of making topics public. This can help to change things that are bad in society.

A newspaper article is divided into different sections:

- headline: should be short and clear;
- lead paragraph: an introduction to the topic in very few and rather short sentences;
- authors: who wrote the article?
- running text: the article itself;
- headings: to help the reader to see “chapters”;
- picture: a meaningful picture relevant to the text with a short explanation underneath.

Checklist

- Compare a newspaper article from today’s newspaper with the example you see above. Can you find the different sections?
- Highlight the sections using different colours.
- Pay attention to the font styles (bold, normal, italics).
- Compare your newspaper article with those of your classmates.
- Use these sections in your own newspaper article.

Toolbox for students

Tool 14: Putting on performances

Acting out stories is a good way of reflecting human life. You can also create scenes using a picture, a piece of music or an object. When you act, you take on a role. This means that you try to take on the feelings of a specific person and act these out. After the performance, everybody will be able to think about which parts of the performance appeared “real” and which parts were imagined.

“Free” performing

- Write down key words that represent the performance.
- Decide who will play which role and what is important to remember in each role.
- Gather all the necessary materials.
- Rehearse the performance.
- Get the stage ready.
- Enjoy the show.

Afterwards, discuss the following questions:

- What could you see?
- Did everybody understand everything?
- What was particularly good?
- Was something missing in your opinion?
- What was a bit too exaggerated?
- What questions do we have about the content?

Creating a performance from a text

Read the story together and create scenes:

- Who was involved? Where did it take place?
- How did the people deal with the situation? What did they say?
- How did others react?
- How did the story end?
- Decide upon the number of acts in the performance.
- Who will play which role? What costumes will be necessary?
- Rehearse your performance.
- Evaluate your performance together with your classmates.

Creating a performance from an image

- Look for a picture that could be used as the basis for a play.
- Imagine yourself in the picture.
- Gather ideas: how did/do the people you see in the picture live? What are they happy about? What are they unhappy about?
- Create a performance using this picture and note down key words for each scene.

- Decide upon the number of acts in the performance.
- Decide who will play which role and what is important in this role.
- Rehearse the performance and find props.
- Get the stage ready and invite the guests.
- Evaluate your performance together with your classmates.

Toolbox for students

Tool 15: Holding debates

A debate can help to make us aware of various opinions about a topic and to understand the advantages and disadvantages of controversial issues. In order to hold a debate, there needs to be a controversial question that can be answered with a yes or a no. In a democracy, there is always more than one solution or one opinion.

Two opinions – a debate

Here's how it works:

- Divide your class into two groups. One group is “for” (in favour of) the issue, the other group is “against” the issue.
- Each group finds possible arguments⁴⁸ to support their opinion. They should also put together arguments that go against the opinion of the other group.
- Note down your argument using key words.
- Each group designates two speakers.
- The debate is organised in three parts: the opening round, an open debate, and the closing round:
 - the opening round: each speaker briefly explains his or her argument. The “pros” group and the “cons”⁴⁹ group take turns presenting;
 - the debate: the speakers present their arguments and try to counter the opposing side's arguments;
 - the closing round: this round has the same procedure as the opening round. Each person has the possibility to summarise his or her opinion.

The timekeeper

Choose someone from your class who is responsible for keeping the time during the debate.

- The opening round should last no more than eight minutes (each person can speak for two minutes).
- The debate should last no more than six minutes.
- The closing round should last no more than four minutes (one minute per person).
- If somebody goes over the allotted time, a bell is rung.

Observers

Students who are not speakers during the debate observe what happens. After the debate, they say what they noticed using the following points as a basis:

- Which arguments were presented?
- Who will implement what and how?
- Was each speaker allowed to speak or were they interrupted?
- How did different speakers try to get their message across?
- Which arguments were convincing?
- What examples of good arguments were presented?
- Which words were used frequently?
- How did the speakers speak (using body language, were they loud enough, with inflection)?

48. Argument: a statement that is formulated to support a claim.

49. Pros and cons: this means “for” and “against”.