



strengths and learning needs they have. Teaching in the spirit of human rights (“through”) encourages teachers to give learners the space and time to learn according to their needs. We may then become aware of our profiles as learners as part of our identities.

Viewed from the perspective of democratic leadership, the teacher should not keep the learning objectives at the back of his or her mind but share them with the pupils, which in itself turns lesson planning into an exercise in democratic decision making.

Finally, this form of meta-learning in children’s rights classes gives a model of how to teach pupils

to organise their own processes of learning. In modern societies, processes of change - for example, technology, economy, globalisation or the environment - are becoming more dynamic and complex. This poses new challenges for future generations: in order to succeed in their jobs and to participate in decision making, they will engage in a lifelong process of learning, having to tackle problems no one in school can anticipate today. Our pupils therefore need to become experts in co-operative learning, project work, process assessment and problem solving. In this manual, we have suggested some small steps for children at the beginning of their lives as learners.

6. Task-based learning: accompanying learning

The units are conceived as small projects in which the pupils are confronted with problems that are typical in project work - relating to the subject matter, organisation of work, communication, time keeping, etc. By finding ways of how to identify and solve these problems, the pupils develop a wide range of competences (task-based learning).

In Unit 1, the children are given the task of creating a flower which carries their name and a photograph of themselves. It is left up to them, for example, how they will design their flower, where they will obtain the materials, how they will find a photo, how they will plan their time. This way, the children will learn a lot “on the job”, but the teacher needs to think carefully about the framing of the task, deciding questions like the following. How much time will the children have? Which materials must I provide? Should I supply some parts for the flowers ready-made? (See variations for the project laid out in Unit 1.)

This example shows that at a very early age, the children are encouraged to take responsibility for their work in class, in effect sharing responsibility with the teacher. This kind of learning experience is important if the pupils are to plan their work more independently at a more advanced stage.

In children’s rights education, as a branch of EDC, the teacher will act within a wider spectrum of roles and activities. Teaching “about” children’s rights corresponds to the classic function of instruction and information - by means of a lecture, a reading task, a video clip, etc. Teaching “through” and “for” children’s rights, on the other hand, requires the

teacher to reflect his or her behaviour and his or her personality as a role model. Children will perceive an adult’s message as credible if his or her behaviour supports it, for example, by the tone of voice and level of understanding, tolerance, fairness or encouragement. As all units in this book show, the methods of teaching and learning correspond closely with the subject matter. The approach of task-based learning requires careful planning and preparation by the teacher, who may then seem more inactive in class. However, while the pupils are working, the teacher should watch them closely, as he or she will identify and respond effectively to their competences and learning needs in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills training, and values.

