

THE NEW ROLE OF THE TEACHER
Ten Recommendations from The Learning Teacher Network
Presented at the Ljubljana Conference May 2006



To
- Teachers and leaders in the educational community
- Policy- and decision makers on national, regional and local levels
- The European Commission

**TEN RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY
ON THE NEW ROLE OF THE TEACHER**

The Learning Teacher Network is a Comenius 3 European Educational Network working in the thematic area of the new role of the teacher. The network has been selected by - and is supported by - the European Commission.

The Learning Teacher Network acts as a European platform for the thematic development and debate on learning and on the new role of the teacher. During the last three years the network has arranged three international conferences, published three books, organised two Comenius contact seminars, actively supported the creation of new European projects, promoted trans-national contact shaping activities, communication and exchanges, and much more. Furthermore, the network has developed a conceptual framework of the new role of the teacher.

Originating from the network discussions and findings, hereby the network delivers and presents ten recommendations to the educational community on the new role of the teacher. Six of the recommendations concern all educationalists and practitioners in Europe. Four recommendations are solid proposals for immediate action by European policy and decision-makers.

These ten recommendations represent core elements which we propose to be permeating education; necessary for the future teaching and learning, essential for ensuring professional behaviours, and vital as key aspects to carry educational change. Consequently, we trust that the network recommendations will be included in educational approaches and actions.

On behalf of The Learning Teacher Network

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A. Recommendations to teachers and leaders in the educational community

1. "School is a small part of life – education is forever"

Commit to lifelong learning not as an additional but as an integral part of education

Pedagogical skills/competence: The ability to see and demonstrate learning as a process; holistic and throughout life.

Teachers and leaders must carry the responsibility to comprehensively adjust education and its expressions to interdisciplinary movements for learning for life, in order to ensure a holistic view of the world and the process of individual growth for school learners.

2. "Growth from a beginner to a master"

Assure professional competence and CPD¹

Pedagogical skills/competence: The ability to involve oneself in continuous and research-based development and learning.

In the concept of personalised learning, teachers and leaders must carry the responsibility and desire for the allocation of time for personal learning and self development, upskilling of skills and knowledge, and the sharing and communication of experiences, knowledge and findings, in order to be constantly up-to-date, identifying strategies for learning, and to change behaviour and approaches.

3. "Competence is built from good relations"

Build, maintain and sustain trustful relationships

Pedagogical skills/competence: The ability to develop, maintain, and sustain learning through building trustful relationships, which is the foundation for professional competence.

Teachers and leaders must include personal, civic, interpersonal, research, networking and learning competences, which all originate from good relations and sharing, in the face to face interaction and collaboration between individuals; and intrinsically related to the respect of and interest in others.

4. "Transporting or moving learners?"

Understand, bring into play and communicate the learning processes

Pedagogical skills/competence: The ability to fully address and carry out the cycle of conceptualising > understanding > transferring > advancing > mentoring learning.

Teachers and leaders must be experts in learning processes, equivalent to professionals in other highly advanced professions. Through this capability fixed teaching 'transportation' patterns are replaced by the mentored respect for each individual's learning and knowledge-building, where knowledge and skills also are transferable for use in other contexts. Furthermore, they are required to verbalise their professional knowledge and skills to users and the public, and feed research and new pedagogical findings back into education.

¹ CPD = Continuing Professional Development



A. Recommendations to teachers and leaders in the educational community

5. *“It takes a village to raise a child”*

Create professional learning communities

Pedagogical skills/competence: The ability to contribute to a joint school staff action for the establishment of a complete and sustainable learning environment based on a contextual approach and shared vision.

Teachers and leaders must realise and comprehend the notion that future schools will be transformed into 24-hour, all age learning and community centres with the full range of pedagogical skills (competences) available; that formal education will no longer be a place for information and obtaining factual knowledge but a meeting point with the following four main characteristics and tasks:

- a) helping the students to understand, filter and make structure of the flow of information in the modern society,
- b) providing a venue for socialisation and interaction in learning with others,
- c) challenging beliefs and biases, and
- d) ensuring a learning platform for ALL, with full inclusion and with respect to special needs.

Note: A learning community has, as a concept, a fundamentally different meaning than “a learning organisation”.

6. *“We form the future”*

Ensure the values, form the vision and respond to the mission

Pedagogical skills/competence: The ability to include – with consciousness and awareness - in all educational activities

- a moral purpose
- a respect for the intrinsic value of others
- a shared vivid mental image of a desired future condition, and
- articulated, professional undertakings to meet objectives.

Teachers and leaders must embrace and ensure the democratic and ethical values of society, in order to protect, discuss and transmit fundamental principles of solidarity, freedom and human rights. Additionally, they must respond to and acknowledge that the mission represents the articulated, professional undertakings to meet objectives and expectations, and on this path recognise change, understanding and sharing. Last but not the least, the professionals themselves must form and express a shared vision, without which there is no clear and united direction for action, change and desired improvement.



B. Recommendations for European initiatives

7. Create a holistic view on education

European, national and local policy-makers must immediately initiate the necessary reforms in curricula and policies to accomplish:

- "*an interdisciplinary revolution*"; get away from the tradition from medieval monasteries of dividing the world up in subjects; instead, ensure a holistic view on all matters and the surrounding world;
- "*cross-phase perspectives*"; ensure unbroken and comparable learning and assessment over school years, based on the true acceptance of a pupil's long-term, individual development, knowledge and social growth (based on each one's learning styles, time needed, and abilities):
- "*a merging reform*"; in a true sense and as to organisation, in reality to interweave theory, teacher training, daily practice and CPD.

8. Assure professional competence and CPD

Supported by European initiatives, all national, regional and local authorities must initiate a system of annual programmes for continuous professional development of educationalists and practitioners, within which each and every professional should be trained for regular capacity building and continuous learning within a professional culture and knowledge base.

Within such a programme, primarily the *understanding of learning processes* and *school-based research competence* must be provided for all teachers and leaders, being a compulsory ingredient in all training and CPD.

9. Undertake European research on teachers', leaders' and learners' self-esteem

European research needs to be undertaken, surveying teachers', leaders' and learners' self-esteem/self confidence, addressing the crucial objective of performance: 'Have you ever worked in a winning team?'

10. Develop scenarios which embrace new learning venues

As a consequence of the change of society, in ten years educational institutions will no longer be what they have been; school as a traditional institution will be an outdated concept. Instead, the concept of school as a 24-hour learning and community resource centre, and these centres performing as professional learning communities, will need to come into reality.

A European expert group must be formed to develop scenarios which embrace new learning venues.