

Erasmus + KA2 strategic partnership 2014-1-BE02-KA201-000432


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### Word from the coordinator:

#### Vzw Nascholing in het katholiek onderwijs Flanders – Belgium (Rik Vanderhauwaert)



The Erasmus+ strategic partnership Linpilcare aims realise more evidence based teaching and learning. The project supports practitioners in realizing (1) practitioner inquiry, (2) professional learning communities and (3) easy access to results of academic research.

At this moment the consortium partners develop tools to support practitioners in realizing evidence based teaching and learning. We provide professional learning on the three pillars. Here below you can read about the latest activities of the consortium partners.

### Discussion on the conceptual frame of reference (of the Linpilcare project)

#### University of Tartu – Estonia (Anita Kärner - Aet Sarv)

At the end of September, learning communities of Estonian schools associated with the Linpilcare project had an informational/learning meeting at Tartu University education innovation centre, to discuss issues of practitioner inquiry in the professional learning community. Along with teachers, as well as school principals and headmasters, some teacher educators and a representative from the Ministry of Education and Research took part in the meeting.

First, we highlighted some important points from the conceptual framework of reference of Linpilcare. The participants found the following topics most interesting:

- Who can be a critical friend in the PLC?
- What are the main differences between teacher (action) research and applied or scientific research?
- From teacher wondering to the research question.
- Protocols helping to carry out discussion in the PLCs.

We then divided our participants in groups of 4, mixed groups from different schools, asked them to discuss their problems and compare their initial inquiry questions. Teachers eagerly took the opportunity to share

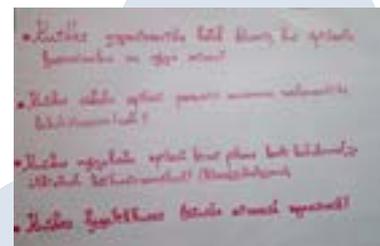
their ideas and they actively did so. We used the 'onion peeling' protocol for that and it seemed to work well. For most people it was the first time to use a protocol in organizing a discussion. We gathered feedback on post-its in the form of answers to the questions: "What did I learn?" and "What do I want to know more?" The feedback was the basis for materials we share with the members of the PLCs in the Moodle environment. The next learning afternoon for PLC will take place at the end of January. We are planning to make an introduction into the research plans of the schools. The main topic will be introduction of tools, suitable to use in the research planned by teachers.



Working in the groups



Feedback



Group work

## Local IST Courses

### AlmadaForma – Portugal (Ana Paula Rocha)

The Portuguese course is expected to take place in the first semester of 2016. It is a credited course, in order to fulfil the teachers' need to obtain credits in their teaching competences, recognised and approved for its quality by the Scientific and Pedagogical Council for In Service Training – a board of academic specialists of the Portuguese Ministry of Education. Their general overview are the following:

Modules	PI	PLC	AR	Tools
<b>Pre Module</b>	Presentation of the Linpilcare Project, Pillars, trainers and forthcoming sessions.			Prezi presentation; North, South, East, and West: Compass Points; Article: Practitioner-inquirer: contributions to the professional development: <a href="http://issuu.com/ramada/docs/artigo_practioner-inquirer">http://issuu.com/ramada/docs/artigo_practioner-inquirer</a>

Modules	PI	PLC	AR	Tools
<b>Module 1</b>		What are protocols? What is a professional learning community? Using two protocols to solve dilemmas and problems collaboratively. Creating a PLC	Autonomous work: Research and sharing on AR about PLC's	Text: Linpilcare Pillar 2 Video: Girl's first ski jump Video: What is a PLC Two of Gene's protocols for dilemmas and problems
<b>Module 2</b>	Who is the practitioner inquirer? What are the benefits of practitioner inquiring? How can the practitioner inquirer build one research question?		Autonomous work: Research and sharing on AR about PI	Text: Linpilcare Pillar 1 Text: Nancy Dana, The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom research, chapter 1 Videos: Nancy Dana <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHbskt2Mtj0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHbskt2Mtj0</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ldi_qInTik">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ldi_qInTik</a>
<b>Modules 3 - 4</b>	Reflecting Sharing Evidence Based Interpreting data	Reflecting Sharing with Gene's protocols	Autonomous work: Research and sharing on AR about collecting data from own practice	Atlas Protocol
<b>Módulos 5 - 6</b>	Refining own practitioner inquiry Feedback on the results	Feedback on how to improve a PLC	Autonomous work: Research and sharing on AR about how to maintain collaboration in a PLC Feedback on the benefits of AR for own PI and PLC	Text: Pillar 3

More information (only in Portuguese) available on [www.almadaforma.org](http://www.almadaforma.org)

## More results from our pre survey

### Fontys – The Netherlands (Rutger van de Sande)

As indicated in the last newsletter, we developed and administered a pre survey in order to gain understanding of the ways in which teachers reflect on their professional practices. More specifically, we asked how often they were involved in activities that are considered fundamental aspects of (1) conducting practitioner inquiry and (2) functioning in a professional learning community. Furthermore, we asked in what ways and how often the teachers made use of (the results of) academic publications.

The pre survey showed us that teachers are, on average, at least sometimes involved in each of the practitioner inquiry-like activities. This would mean that practitioner inquiry activities are perhaps not as alien to teachers as is sometimes suggested. A closer look at the data however revealed that only seven percent of all respondents are engaged with all these activities on a regular basis, as we would expect from a teacher conducting practitioner inquiry.

In this newsletter, we would like to report some findings on the questions that were concerned with the degree to which teachers use academic research findings to guide their teaching and the problems they encounter when trying to access academic publications.

We can conclude from the survey that the ways in which teachers access academic publications fall into three categories: school-based access (through colleagues, school management, books available in the school (library), and the school intranet), as part of professionalization activities (reading professional journals and in teacher courses and conferences), and some other, less common ways (through dedicated websites, having a subscription to the library of the local university, and through friends and family).

Furthermore we categorized the problems teachers mentioned in accessing academic publications. We found several categories of answers. Firstly, teachers mention that they don't have enough knowledge (their knowledge on how to find these publications is limited and it takes a long time to find relevant publications). Secondly, they experience practical problems in accessing publications, for instance because the school has limited internet connections, or interesting publications are behind a pay wall. A third problem in accessing academic research publications is that teachers think that they are not always relevant because they are too narrow. Teachers indicate a gap between the academic world and school practice. Lastly, teachers have some miscellaneous problems. Some answered that relevant publications are not pointed out to them or that they are not really focused on accessing academic research.

In a following newsletter we will go into the results from the survey that are concerned with the questions on professional learning communities.

## Learning with the jigsaw protocol

### Vzw Nascholing in het katholiek onderwijs Flanders – Belgium (Rik Vanderhauwaert)

Before the Linpilcare project I had already given a lot of presentations on the principles of effective professional learning. But it was not very often that I was happy with the outcomes of my presentation. Participants told me that my presentation was very interesting, but it didn't influence their daily practice. They didn't do much with the content in their practice...

In Linpilcare I discovered the jigsaw protocol which enables teachers to learn by themselves and from each other. It will be an amazing discovery to hear the participants explaining to their colleagues the content of

your presentation.

How it works:

- Ensure that you have 4 equivalent texts on different topics of the same subject (in my case it was about effective professional learning).
- Divide your class in 4 groups and give each participant a number 1, 2, 3 or 4.
- Say to the participants that they have to read a text and that they will have to explain the content of the text to their colleagues. So all the number 1 read the first piece of text, all the number 2 read the second piece of text...
- After some time, you put all the number 1, all the number 2... together and let them explain what they learned from the text. Working in this way ensures that all number 1, 2,... have the same understanding of the text.
- Later on, you put a number 1, 2, 3 & 4 together and let them explain to each other what they learned.

Please try this: the learning outcomes of your session will increase in an amazing way.

### Using protocols in professional learning communities (PLC) Vzw Nascholing in het katholiek onderwijs Flanders – Belgium (Wim Peeters)

In most of “my” PLC’s I have had three 2 hour sessions until now.

During the first session I used the “Passion” protocol, the “Comfort zones” protocol and the “Asking the right question” protocol which led to questions such as “How to support students (with learning disabilities or incorrect training) to end the school year in a successful way?”, “How to find the right balance between being a teacher and a human person wanting to help learners? (Limits of engagement and privacy)” or “How to help good students to dare to show their interest / motivation in a positive way?” After the “Litmus test” protocol, the questions became a lot better: examples (from another PLC): “What choices do I make and what resources do I use to implement the 1 period chemistry curriculum in the third stage of secondary in a proper manner in the limited time we often have?”, “How can I, by passionate teaching, using examples from everyday life and practical applications motivate the students of the 6th sciences class more about biotechnology?” and “What three means and methods can I use as a young teacher to motivate students from the 3rd year to show more commitment and interest for biology?”. All protocols were translated versions.



The groups are now in the stage of planning and informing themselves on their subject, using the scarce sources of academic research we have provided so far.

A small inquiry (after 3 sessions of 2 hours each) among 12 participants shows that the participants do not talk much about Linpilcare in the school, to colleagues, that they are not using the protocols in the class (yet), that in general there is good trust within the groups (10 out of 12 agree or agree fully), that they have learned a bit from colleagues, 8 of them agree with “I am confident that my inquiry will end up in a positive way”, also 8 agree fully with “The external coach knows what he is doing”, but in global they have no opinion on being satisfied with all that has happened so far. So they have not been able to see what they have learned and do not apply it yet. But they trust (or hope) that it will lead to something good in the end, although they do not really see how. Of course, the real inquiry still needs to take place, the groups are only at the beginning. We preview in total 8 sessions of 2 hours, the last with all participants together.

## A joint English-Flemish PLC-experience in Dene Magna Vzw Nascholing in het katholiek onderwijs Flanders – Belgium (Marleen Clissen)

Our Dene Magna partner Liane invited me to model a PLC. Liane wanted to introduce the procedure of a PLC for sharing practitioner research, using a protocol. This way, the teachers could experience the benefits by doing it. The PLC was structured with the Issaquah protocol. The plans were made after a successful experience at our training course with Mrs. Gene Thompson-Grove in Ljubljana. During one of the exercises, Liane presented a dilemma and Marleen facilitated. This worked so well, that we both decided to do this again in the “real-life” setting of Dene Magna.



So the date was set on November 26th. The PLC consisted of 6 teachers from the language department with me as facilitator. This was the first time this learning group came together as a PLC. Liane was actively present, observed and took notes. She will facilitate PLC's in the future.

After the PLC, the teachers provided feedback in writing. Everybody was enthusiastic about this way of collaborative learning, as you can read in the following statements:

*“It was good to have a structured discussion in which A. could be heard and then our discussion kept focused.”, “I found it a really good experience to focus on a particular topic and brainstorm in a structured way”.*

The presenter of the question found it a very rewarding experience: *“ ....It has encouraged me to continue with my research ....The whole process gave me good for thought and once I really did reflect - I was able to sort the wheat from the chaff - and conclude that beneath the negative lies much that should encourage me. “*

Thank you, Liane and Dene Magna language teachers for this wonderful learning experience!

A full description will soon be available in the LINPILCARE toolbox, written out in a case study.

## Training activity at National Education Institute in Slovenia

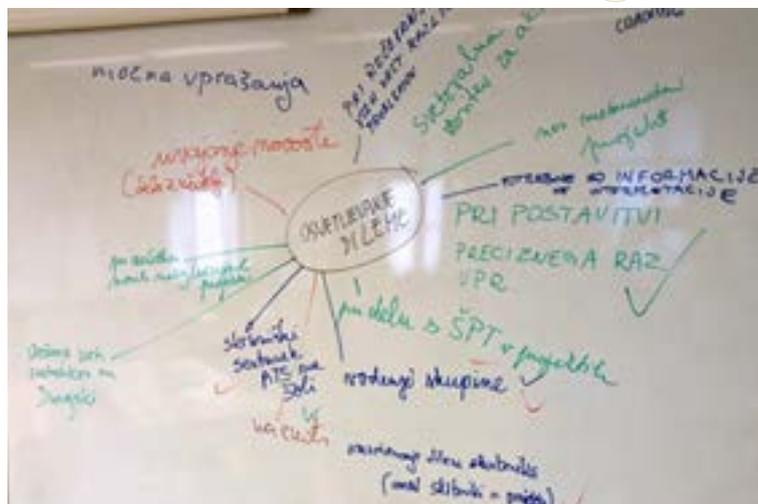
Zavod Republike Slovenije Za Šolstvo – National Education Institute - Slovenia (Tomaž Kranjc – Barbara Lesničar)

In the beginning of December 2015 we organised a two day training activity entitled *How to Facilitate Group Processes to Meet Different Needs in Education*. The main objective was to provide some input on the second Linpilcare pillar for our employees who have the role of external facilitators in Slovenian school learning communities.

The first day was about defining our common understanding of the notion of a group, the terms of its cooperation and to consider what the good group dynamics would be like. We paid special attention to the attributes of a learning community, feedback principles as well as to zones of comfort, risk and danger. Our group also spent some time thinking about the role of the external facilitator, especially in relation to the responsive facilitation. Throughout the day we experienced and learnt about different protocols e.g. *Zones of Comfort, Smart, Creating Norms, Probing Questions, and Three Levels of Text Protocol*.



Day two started with Compass Points used as the ice-breaking activity. It served as a nice start into a working day, giving the participants the opportunity to do both, think about the way one works as an individual and to connect as a group at the same time. This activity also provided the introduction to the problem solving strategies. The participants got familiar with the *Consultancy Protocol* which served as a basis when looking



for dilemmas in the *Frame of Reference*. Furthermore the Linpilcare questionnaire was used to experience the *Looking at Data protocol* which gave the participants the opportunity to study data in a new way. The training activity finished with feedback strategies and *Chalk Talk* which enabled the participants to reflect in a silent way. It gave our group a chance for thoughtful contemplation and initiated the closing discussion.

According to the participants' feedback one can claim that on one hand the contents and the activities of the training activity gave the group new knowledge and on the other hand made it experience different tools and protocols which would enable the participants to feel more competent as facilitators.

## Opportunities

If you want to learn more about Linpilcare, please visit <http://linpilcare.eu>, contact one of the partners or join us during our international events. You can attend these events for free by applying for a grant via Erasmus+. Linpilcare invites you on:

- International conference Tartu Estonia: 3th of October 2016 – 6th of October 2016
- International course Tartu Estonia: 13th of November 2016 – 19th of November 2016
- International course Tartu Estonia: 7th of May 2017 – 13th of May 2017
- International closing conference Ljubljana Slovenia: 24th of August 2017 – 27th of August 2017

If you are interested in attending one or more of those initiatives, please contact [rik.vanderhauwaert@katholiekonderwijs.vlaanderen](mailto:rik.vanderhauwaert@katholiekonderwijs.vlaanderen).