

Learning from
best performers
in education

Guidebook for schools





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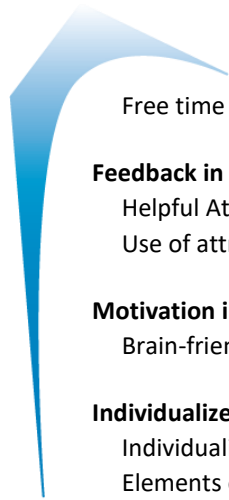
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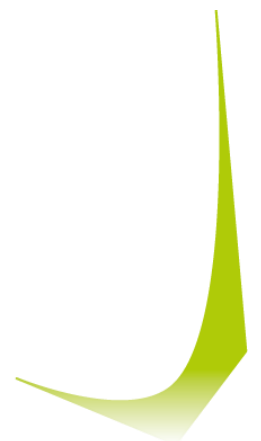
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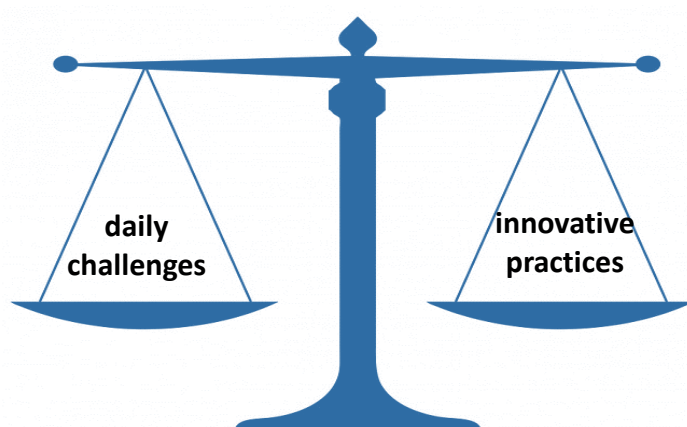


The Project Learning from best performers in education

Schools today face many challenges, including growing digitization, dealing with the half-life of knowledge and dynamic changes in society, family and work. Additionally, they must deal with the increasing linguistic, social and ethnic diversity of students as well as increasing psychosocial problems and radicalization among them. Further pedagogic and didactic challenges are evident in the fact that learning and teaching settings should become more contemporary, more democratic and more suitable for students while considering changed learning contents and competences.

However, we all know there is scope for action between school legislation, compulsory training and school autonomy which we should be aware of and use.

On a daily basis, teachers and principals work with innovative yet simple methods to meet these challenges or even use them as opportunities.



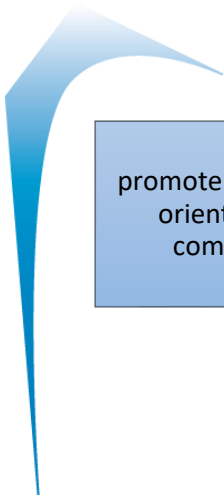
We visited these teachers and principals to learn from them, and to make their approaches and methods available to other educators.

INTERVIEW



We conducted numerous interviews with teachers and principals in Italy, Portugal and Austria and collected best practices that





promote performance orientation and commitment

promote a responsible handling of diversity

promote a conscious relation with oneself and others

promote creativity

have a positive influence on mental and physical health

promote social skills

promote personal growth

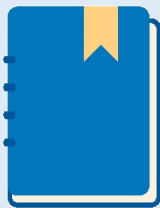
Products of our project

Based on the information we gained in the interviews with teachers and principals, we developed the following products for you:



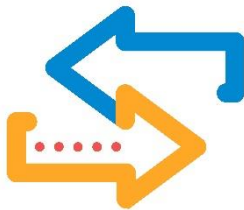
method database

with practical examples at school organisational and educational level



handbook for schools

successful practice for school development



self-evaluation form for teachers

Answer this questionnaire and find out which methods from the database and our handbook can improve your daily work life.



training records

training curriculum based on the compiled practical examples



online community

Network online with other teachers and share methods.



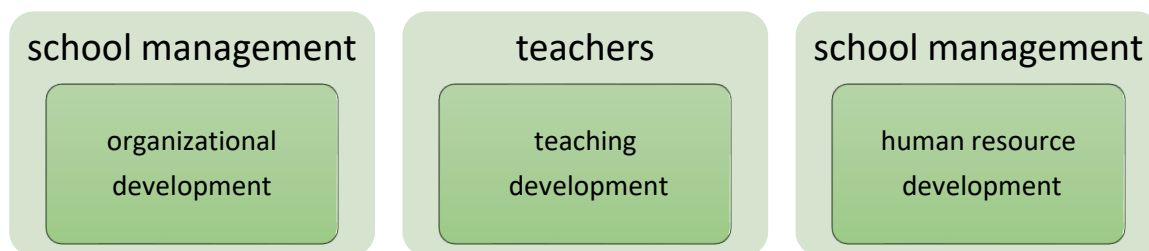
How to work with this handbook

This handbook is dedicated to school development. Through numerous interviews with teachers and principals we gained insight into how successful school development can work in practice.

Many principals now use modern management tools to successfully promote school development for their institution. These include methods and procedures used in project management.

School development can only be successful when as many relevant actors as possible work together towards the same goal. Information channels need to be quick and direct. In terms of knowledge management, both teachers and students can play an active part in the development and shaping of their school.

This handbook consists of three major chapters that traditionally form the base for school development:



We have assigned the methods and approaches we discovered through the interviews to each of these chapters.

The first and last chapters are mainly aimed at school principals, while the topic of teaching development is intended mainly for teachers. However, as all subject areas are strongly linked and dependent on each other, we recommend school principals take an interest in the subjects for teachers and vice versa. Therefore, this handbook is intended as a short practical guide for both target groups.

Of course, not all subtopics of the main chapters can be exhaustively presented – a separate book could be written about each of the chapters. The methods and approaches described here stem from interviews at schools that have decided to break new ground, thereby proving that a lot of innovation is taking place in the school system itself. Like most schools today, these institutions were confronted with special challenges, which they met with great commitment and innovative methods. These schools prove that it is rewarding for teachers as well as student to adapt new approaches and, above all, that innovation is feasible!

In the handbook you will often notice references to



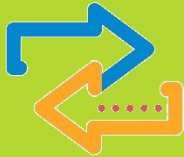
our method database
Discover corresponding methods for the respective chapter!





this handbook:

These links will lead you to related chapters in the handbook!



our self-evaluation form for teachers:

This tool helps you to check your level of knowledge and identify possible learning fields!



the project website



a key skill for education and job

Discover more suitable methods for this subject area!

The individual chapters of this handbook do not build on each other. Therefore, there are two ways to read this handbook:

the traditional way: from
the first to the last page

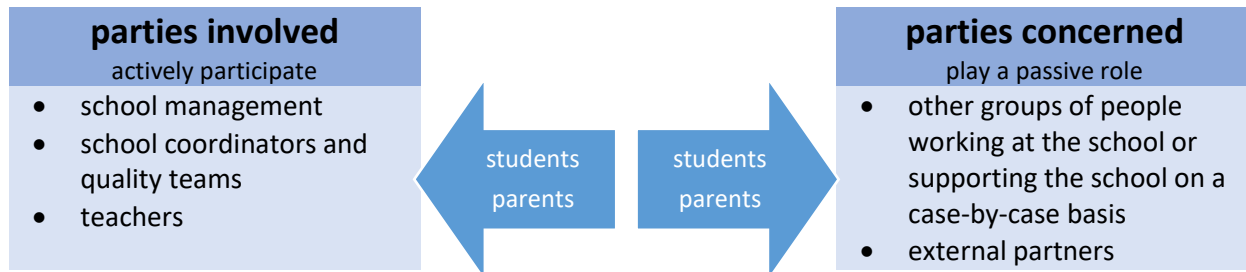
start with a subject that
interests you in particular,
the references will guide
you to more information
and other chapters

We hope you enjoy reading and, moreover, trying out these methods, which have proved effective in practice.



School development

The term school development comprises all coordinated efforts of an institution to initiate and support positive developments at a school. In the context of evaluation and quality development, all parties – both those affected and those involved – have to be considered, either because they can contribute important perspectives or because they should support the measures.

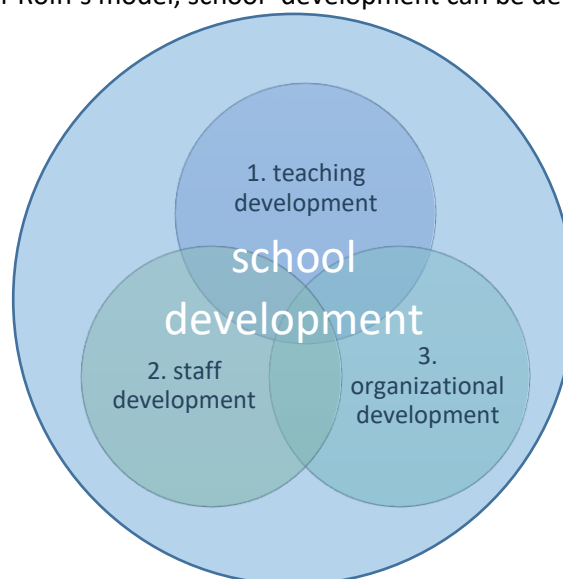


Reflection

- Think about what it would mean to assign students and parents/guardians to the category "concerned parties". It would completely change the perception of how teaching content is developed! A chapter in this handbook is devoted to the involvement of parents in their child's education.

3 dimensions of school development

According to Hans-Günter Rolff's model, school¹ development can be defined as an interplay of 3 dimensions:



¹ cf. Rolff, H.G. (2016): *Schulentwicklung kompakt - Ein Lehrbuch*.

Though all three dimensions address different aspects of school development, they are inextricably linked. Therefore, they should all be considered in an integrated way: Developments in the classroom often require preparatory or accompanying measures of human resource development (e.g. training, team exchanges) or measures of organizational development (e.g. forming of school teams). This interdependence of the three dimensions must also be considered for development plans, in which objectives and measures for teaching and organizational development are presented and linked with measures for staff development and further training.

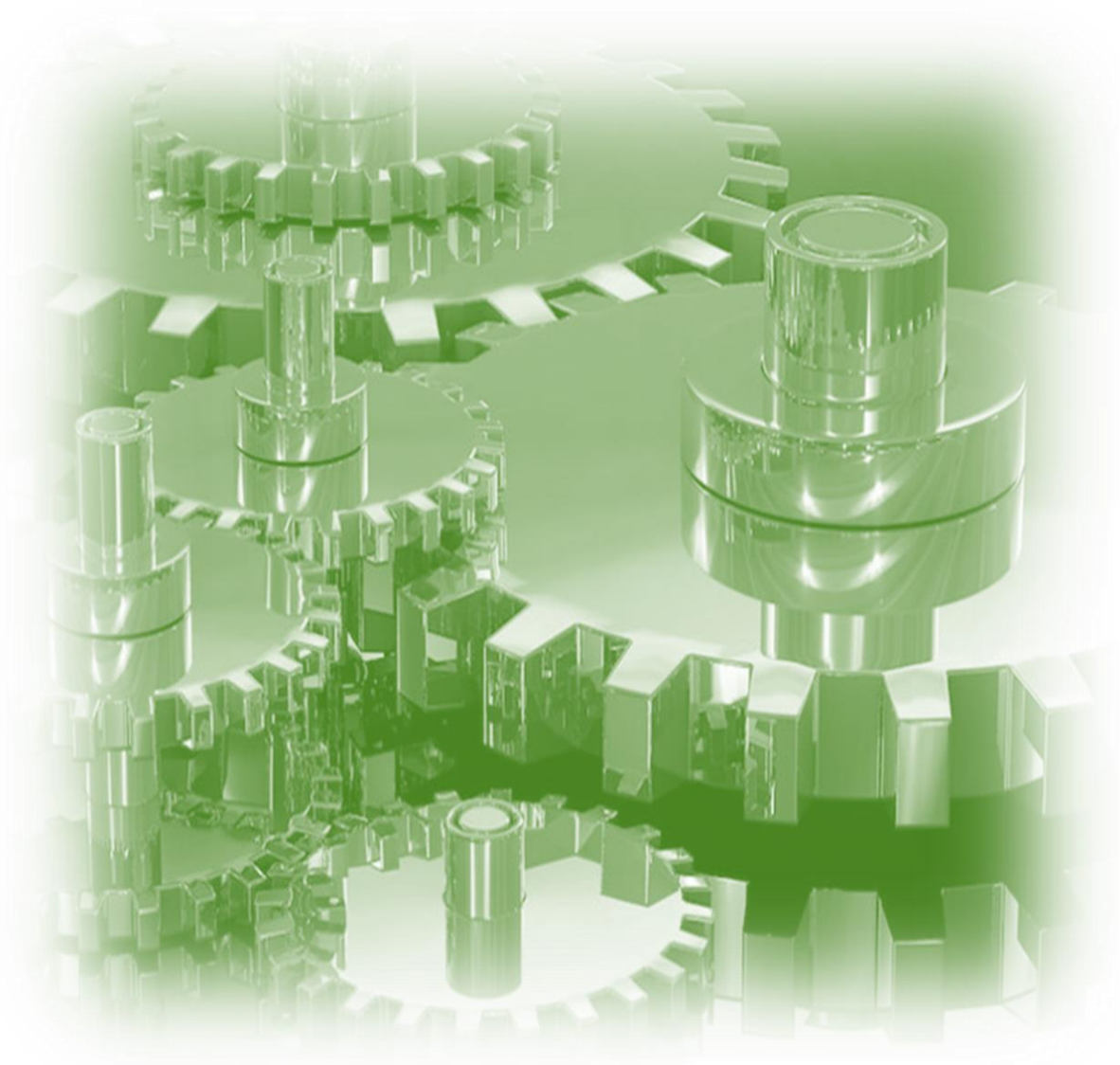
Successful schools are characterized by

- 1) common principles and values
- 2) clear objectives and mutually agreed-upon measures
- 3) quality assurance and quality development

These characteristics are summarized as a mission statement and recorded in the school program. They can have a positive impact on many other areas of school life.



Organizational development



In this chapter, we present the mission statement as a powerful tool. It can provide orientation in times of change and support you and your team in implementing measures together in a constructive and organized way.

Regarding the subject of feedback, we want to show you the learning potential of this method and how an entire school can benefit from an active feedback culture.

You will then read more on how schools can professionally initiate and shape a process of organizational development.

On the topic of health promotion, you will learn how to sustainably increase the well-being of everyone at your school with suitable projects.

The conclusion of this chapter is dedicated to the issue of parental involvement and illustrates how parents can (still) be won as educational partners for their children's school.





Organizational development

Why organizational development? Because change is necessary!

Schools are changing more than ever. New technologies, social developments as well as constantly evolving basic conditions influence the educational system on a daily basis. School management and staff have to find suitable measures to deal with the everchanging demands placed on teaching.

In phases of change, the quality of leadership culture becomes particularly evident. Great school management means involving teaching staff in change processes from the very beginning. Therefore, it is essential to make all measures as transparent as possible. The teaching staff must be informed about how, when and to what extent they will be affected by upcoming changes. You can only count on the support and cooperation of your employees if you involve them in all phases of the process.

In order to be able to react adequately to changes, everyone working at the school needs a structure that provides support and clear orientation in uncertain times. A mission statement can serve as a guiding principle and provide orientation.

The mission statement as a foundation for successful school development

Successful schools are based on a strong vision that teachers have developed together with the school management. Due to the rapid changes in modern society, these visions also need to be kept up to date. Therefore, an existing mission statement should be updated and adapted at least every ten years.

Below you will find instructions on how to develop a mission statement together.

A mission statement is basically a self-description of an organization created by its employees. As a guide for the entire school organization, it aligns the actions of all school employees with common goals. The mission statement is public and accessible for outsiders. All parties involved have to experience the outlined statements in daily school life. It reflects the school's self-image and thus promotes identification with one's own school. The general pedagogic goals of the school also need to be outlined in the mission statement as a commitment towards students, parents and subsequent institutions that are part of the educational system.

A mission statement is a standard tool for evaluating the performance of the school management and staff. Through the development of a mission statement, the school organization can be managed and improved in a goal-oriented way.

Principles and explanations

The guiding principles form the core of a mission statement. They refer to values, goals and success criteria, determine the relationship between all parties involved and define the specific competencies of the school. Guiding principles are simple statements of one or two sentences. The explanation section then provides further details. The guiding principles must meet certain criteria in order to define realistic and understandable visions.



Developing a mission statement together

Are the guiding principles

considerations	description
essential	Are the statements essential for the school?
universal	Are the principles general enough?
long-term	Do they have a long-term perspective?
comprehensive	Do they provide a complete picture of the school?
achievable	Are the principles feasible?
clear	Are they easily comprehensible?

When phrasing the statement, pay attention to

criteria for writing					
meaningful phrasing	short and simple sentences	honest statements	objective, accurate and future-oriented wording	direct speech	consistent style

mission statement



Key points for creating a mission statement for your school

Below are a series of questions to help you develop a mission statement.

identity and mission:

- Who are we?
- What is our chosen and/or school-specific mission?

values:

- What do we stand for?
- What values determine our actions?

clients:

- Who are our students?
- Who are our target groups and cooperation partners?

general organizational goals:

- What is our organization's purpose?
- What are our goals in general?

skills:

- What are our assets?
- What expertise do we have?
- What are our strengths?

services:

- What do we offer?
- Which special services can we provide?

ressources:

- From what do we draw our strength?
- Which special ressources are available for our work?
- What ressources can we rely on?

definition of successful learning::

- What does successful learning mean to us?



Hint:

In order to work on the above questions efficiently with a large number of school employees, we recommend the following methods from our method database:

[The Metaplan technique – the process](#)

[The Metaplan technique – the card method](#)

Feedback culture - learning from each other

If you want to implement sustainable changes in your school, an active feedback culture is indispensable. It promotes constructive cooperation and exploring new paths together in order to find innovative solutions at the school.



Many people view feedback as a more or less elegant way to criticize another person. "How can I tell my conversation partner something negative without her/him feeling offended?"

However, feedback is more than a skillful technique for politely expressing criticism. In companies and organizations, it is a constructive means of learning from one another, gaining new insights and thus making sustainable changes in daily operations possible.

People usually leave their comfort zone when giving feedback and, even more so, when receiving it. They immediately enter their learning zone, in which they can grow and make new experiences.



Hint:

You can find more information on the comfort, learning and panic zone in the chapter

[Support for change processes - The comfort zone model as a method for changes](#) on page 81



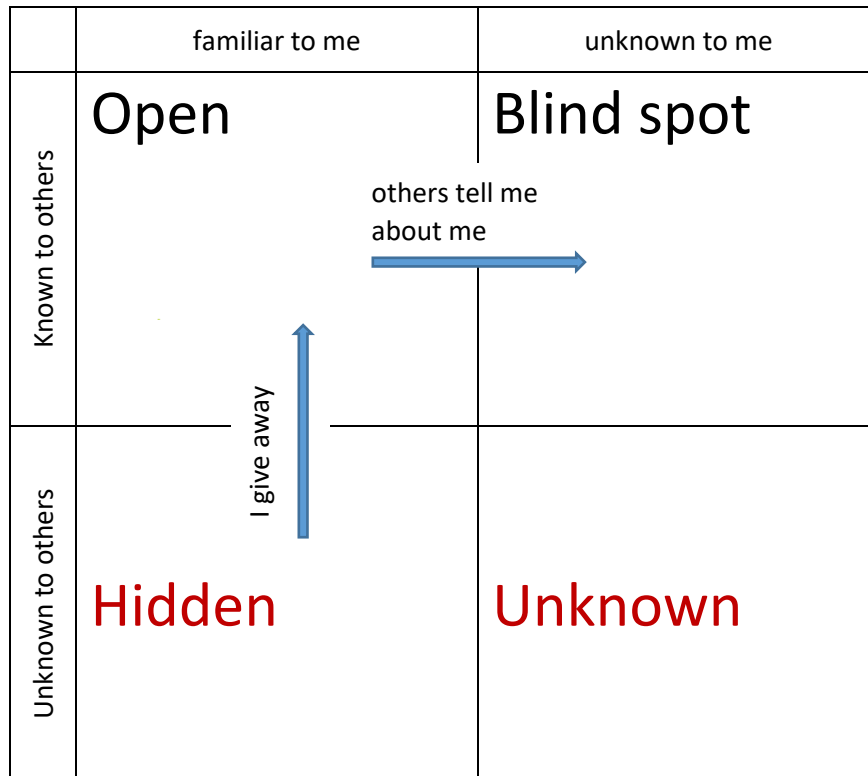
Tip!

- Your school should become/stay a learning organization. You can actively contribute to this goal by making it a point to give and ask for feedback during every
 - conference
 - project
 - celebration
 - etc.

School administrators like to use the following instrument to illustrate the potential of an active feedback culture at their school:



The Johari window - How individuals and whole schools can benefit from feedback:
 The Johari window² is a proven technique to improve group dynamics. It consists of 4 quadrants:



Below, the individual quadrants of the Johari window are described in more detail.

Open

Everything a person reveals to others, in other words: the aspects of one's personality that are made visible to the outside world and are perceived by others. These include

- external characteristics such as appearance, manners or physical reactions,
- as well as personal qualities such as ambition or anxiety, as far as they can be perceived by others and
- points of view and attitudes such as religious, moral and ethical beliefs.

This part of the "window" is usually rather small compared to the other parts as mainly unconscious factors determine interactions between people.

Hidden

This quadrant contains everything that the person knows - in other words, what they are aware of, but either unknowingly do not show to others or hide consciously from them.

Blind spot

This part includes everything that the subject is unaware of although it is perceived by others. They recognize behaviors and characteristics in the person that she or he does not notice. Through feedback from other people, information can be transported from the "blind spot" to the "open" quadrant.

² Vgl. Luft, F. / Ingham, H. (1955): The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness. In: Proceedings of the western training laboratory in group development, Los Angeles: UCLA.



Unknown

This aspect refers to everything that is not perceived by the subject or others.

Joseph Luft, one of the developers of the Johari window, states one goal of learning in group dynamics is to increase the common scope of action and make it more transparent. Consequently, the upper left field in the Johari window should expand, while the other three quadrants shrink.

revealing oneself

- When sharing and communicating motives, experiences and thoughts, we reduce the necessary effort of concealing things from others.
- This gives us more freedom and scope for action in the public.

communicating observations

- When communicating our observations on blind spots directly to others (feedback), they immediately gain knowledge about themselves!
- This gives them the opportunity to become more aware of and use their private and public scope for action.

Both strategies complement each other and help us make the unconscious conscious and therefore manageable.



Tip!

- Reacting immediately to any feedback sends an important message to your staff. This promotes engagement and the willingness to question, criticize and search for solutions!

Feedback as a steering instrument for working groups, teams and groups

As with individuals, feedback can also be used in organizations to

- clarify ambiguities
- render processes transparent or conscious,
- counteract certain tendencies, discuss fears and anxieties
- uncover old myths about the school, which have become established over time and stand in the way of change.

In short: Whenever we are working towards reducing the blind spot of an organization and thus increasing the scope for action of all parties.



The prerequisite is always that the feedback is constructive and can be accepted by all parties concerned.



Tip!

- In order to work effectively with contributions of participants at large-scale events e.g. conferences, it may be useful to establish feedback loops with small groups. This will support participants in reflecting their opinions and expressing them in a short and clear manner before presenting them to the whole audience. These feedback loops facilitate the work of the large group by clarifying issues already beforehand.



Hint:

In our method database you can find the following feedback method, which students can use at group events to reflect their own points of view on a topic through targeted feedback:

[Reflecting in Triads](#)

Feedback guide for working groups, teams and groups

A certain structure of feedback rounds is necessary so the whole team can have learning experiences in the sense of a learning organization. Thereby, the focus lies on two main areas:

recognize and
appreciate
proven methods

identify need
for change

Below is a detailed guide to feedback within and between teams. Feedback rounds always require a neutral moderator who oversees the structure and compliance with the rules. A team member can take over this task, ideally a different person should assume the role at each meeting.





establish framework conditions

- plan date and time for feedback
- decide on moderator
- **tasks of the moderator:**
 - monitor compliance with guidelines
 - oversee adherence to „characteristics of good feedback“, explain them if necessary
 - observe time management
 - monitor communication culture

introduction and approach to the topic

- moderator gives introduction and asks:
 - On what topic do you want to receive feedback?
 - On what topic do you want to give feedback? (this can be directed at the whole group or part of the group.)
- moderator collects all topics
- select a topic (e.g. create an agenda if there is enough time for more than one topic)

feedback

- **The following questions, phrased as I-messages, can be helpful:**
 - What went well in my opinion?
 - What can we improve in my opinion?
 - What should we keep doing in my opinion?

time slot for comprehensive questions

- clarification of open questions
- moderator prevents discussions and justifications

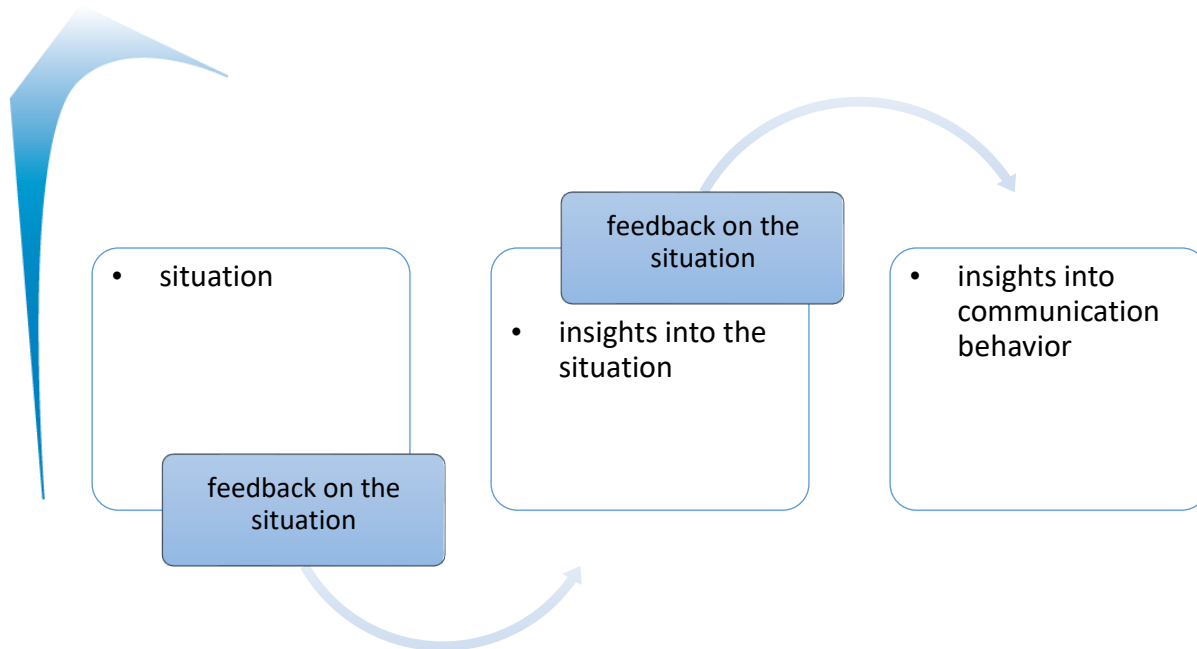
record learning experiences and conclusion of feedback round

- moderator asks: What did you learn today?
- write learning experiences down
- conclusion: It is important to prevent any further discussions so everyone can reflect on the feedback.

If there is still time, a second round of feedback on another topic can take place.

After these moderated feedback rounds on one or more topics, the participants reflect and provide their feedback on the entire meeting. This allows further learning experiences in the sense of analyzing what is going well and what could be improved when giving and receiving feedback.





Hint:

In our method database you will find the following method on the subject of feedback. This method is mainly useful to accompany the reflection on feedback (the method is not only suitable for students but also for working with your employees):

[Feedback method with students: Silent dialog](#)



Hint:

In our method database you will find the following method for feedback within your school (the method contains a handout with feedback rules)

[Collegial class visit \(hospitation\)](#)

Other feedback methods that provide quick information for group events

The following methods are useful to quickly give you and the group a first impression of how certain topics are received/understood or perceived within the group. These methods prove that giving feedback can be lively and animated yet very efficient:

Evaluating with points



Hint:

This technique is part of the

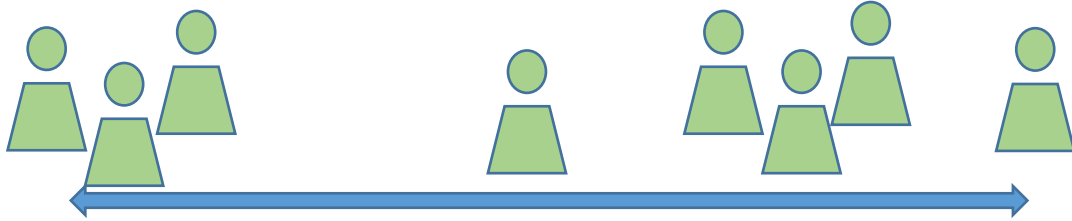
[The Metaplan technique – the card method](#)

You can find the complete method in our method database!



Sociometric differentiation exercises

Sociometric Differentiation Exercises³ are a useful technique from the action method psychodrama (often used in psychotherapy), which are also excellent for getting quick feedback from a group. In general, this exercise helps to become aware of differences in a group and make them visible and tangible. This technique immediately informs all participants about opinions/perceptions within the group on a given topics. You start this exercise by asking the participants to position themselves along an imaginary line according to their opinion on a topic. The endpoints of the line each represent the two most extreme views, which are connected by the imaginary line:



One advantage of this method is that it immediately informs the group about where each person stands on a certain topic. Without the need for many words it is clear who has the same or a similar opinion (these people are close together) and who has a rather contrary opinion (these people will be further apart).

The moderator has the option to ask individuals or groups of people for a brief statement to clarify the positions within the group.

Depending on the outcome, the moderator can immediately assess whether the group members are basically in agreement or opinions differ greatly.

Show of hands

You are familiar with this from working with your students. This simple method can be used to quickly obtain agreement or rejection on a topic and make opinions transparent in the group.

Flash



Hint:

Flash is part of the method

[The Metaplan technique – the process](#)

You can find details in our method database.

Personal query

Unlike the flash method, in this approach every participant has the opportunity to comment on a certain topic for a longer period of time. Visualize two to three core questions (on a flipchart, blackboard or with a projector) and ask the participants to take turns commenting. However, be aware this method is rather unsuitable for larger groups!

³ cf.: Pruckner, H. (2004): Soziometrie – eine Zusammenschau von Grundlagen, Weiterentwicklungen und Methodik. In Fürst, J., Ottomeyer, K., Pruckner, H. (Hg.) (2004): Psychodrama-Therapie Ein Handbuch (S.161–192). Wien: Facultas



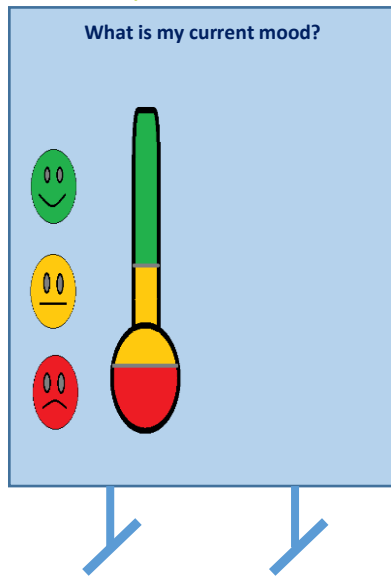
Barometer of opinions

The mood barometer is a variation of the one-point query.



Hint:

The one-point query is part of the method [The Metaplan technique – the process](#). You can find details in our method database.



Write "What is my current mood?" on a flipchart or pin board, then draw a scale with a barometer and smileys with a smiling, neutral and a sad face running vertically along the left side. Now ask your participants to mark a point next to the barometer that best reflects their current mood. Alternatively, you can ask the participants to comment briefly on their position.

If you have more time, you can also record the mood of the participants by attaching paper in landscape format to a pin board and drawing several columns next to the barometer, which allow you to monitor the barometer over time.

Caution: A negative score on the barometer does not necessarily mean that participants are dissatisfied with the meeting. There are many other factors e.g. headaches or private problems that can cause bad mood.

This method is also useful to evaluate the mood and satisfaction concerning a certain topic.

Anonymous feedback

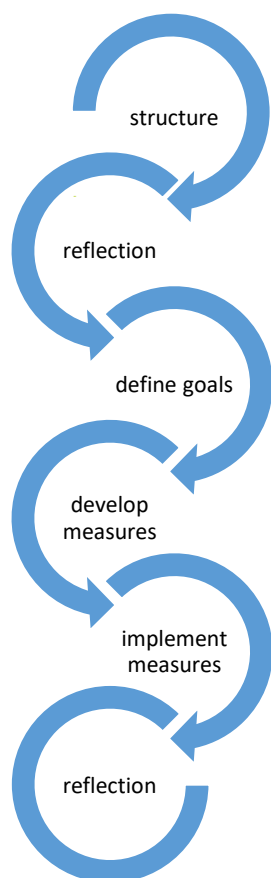
Certain circumstances may require that employees provide feedback anonymously. Create a suitable setting to create a safe environment for your staff, e.g. by setting up a feedback box for written notes.



Organizational development as a process

In order to efficiently promote organizational development, we recommend the following procedure:

Planning and structuring: Create suitable framework conditions to efficiently promote organizational development by setting up a steering group at your school.



Reflection: For each important topic of a school development process it's advisable to start with a reflection and involve all educators working at the school if possible. Furthermore, it is important to consider which other important actors should be involved in the upcoming development process: Student and/or parent representatives, representatives of external psychosocial support systems, etc. The aim of this reflection is to create a good starting point for determining clearly defined development goals.

Define goals: The goals must be immediately implementable with the available means. The clearer a goal is defined, the easier it is to develop measures to achieve that goal.

Develop measures: Actions are well described if they clearly define which actors will carry out which activities in which period (clear start and end point) with which available resources. The instrument to develop these is the so-called action plan.

Implement measures: Based on this action plan, measures can now be implemented with clearly indicated responsibilities and deadlines.

Reflection: At the end of this cycle, reflect on the process to clarify whether the measures implemented have reached the

defined goals. You should also evaluate whether changes are necessary at certain points in order to achieve goals that have not yet been reached. Additionally, it's important to assess whether new or changed goals are necessary in order to push school development forward to the desired extent. This reflection is also the starting point for a new cycle.

In the following, the individual phases are described in more detail and illustrated further with examples. The final phase of reflection is similar to the initial reflection phase and needs no separate description.



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity

[Innovative schools: from problem solving to transformative curriculum](#) presenting how a principal created an integrated framework for school development.

Structure

New social requirements for school development and quality improvement lead to an extended responsibility of the individual school. Tasks and projects are becoming increasingly complex. Project management methods can help schools to cope with these complex tasks better and more effectively as more and more responsibilities are imposed on school administrations.





Tip!

- Develop a project structure and install an effective steering group with a project leader at your school. This will help you cope with new challenges and tasks in school development. The school management is where all threads run together!

Steering group

Many schools have made good experiences with steering groups. However, it is not uncommon for a steering group to initially encounter resistance from staff and students before it is perceived as helpful and supportive.



Tip!

- It's important that you, as part of the school management, contribute continuously. A steering group that does not have the support of the principal is set up for failure. Furthermore, it will be nearly impossible to bring the staff on board when school management signals disinterest and the steering group is thereby deemed irrelevant. Transparency in the work activities of the steering group is also an important factor to ensure the cooperation of the staff. Functioning communication channels support this effort.

In the following, we will therefore present two alternatives. Choose the form that suits your school's needs best. When setting up and determining the tasks of steering groups, several factors should be considered. This can facilitate the work, effectiveness and acceptance of the steering group.

Tasks of steering groups

Steering groups take on subtasks of school development. A steering group is not a decision-making body and certainly not a power body, but rather supervises projects that have been clarified with the entire teaching staff beforehand. As such, it has a specific framework as well as a clear mandate and uses project management tools to achieve its goals.





Hint:

An important method for planning and evaluating projects is the Metaplan technique. In our method database you will find the following methods:

[The Metaplan technique – the process](#)

[The Metaplan technique – the card method](#)



Hint:

Here is a good example of a secondary school in Vienna (Austria) working consistently with a steering group for their school and organizational development issues:

[Collaborative School Governance](#)

The steering group plans, develops and coordinates suitable measures for school development. These groups are typically established for the following tasks:

taking over responsibility for the process of realizing the discussed projects for school and quality development,

informing all parties involved on a regular base,

documenting the process,

setting priorities within the focus points of the development plan,

phrasing clear goals and implementation plans while maintaining a high level of transparency,

involving the staff in the process,

developing and ensuring an implementation strategy,

coordinating work and project groups within the school,

organizing an exchange of experiences in and between work and project groups,

supporting internal evaluation measures,

preparing and carrying out feedback rounds with the entire staff,

supporting and coordinating measures for education development,

documenting the process, collecting data and reporting,

initiating and establishing of binding structures,

coordinating the needs for qualification and developing a training concept,

collaborating with parents, students and educators.



Installing a steering group

Address specific colleagues and invite them to participate in the steering group.

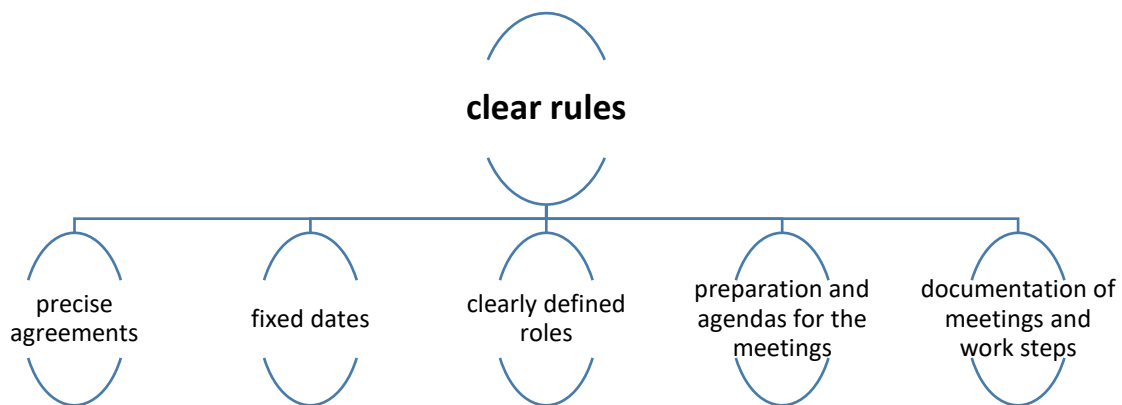


Tip!

- Steering groups are not for chatting with colleagues! Active teamwork is essential to complete the upcoming task. Therefore, you should try to put together a heterogeneous group of people and, if necessary, accompany the group process initially (team building).

How to support the work of the steering group

For a steering group to work well, clear rules that everyone adheres to are important:



The following points are important for the successful work of a steering group:

Create good working conditions for the steering group

Members of the steering group should be able to alternately assume the role of moderator.

Members of the steering group have to be able to give each other feedback.

The group may need training in order to be more effective in dealing with the tasks ahead.



Hint:

In our method database you will find the following methods, which are suitable for moderating steering groups:

[The Metaplan technique – the process](#)

[The Metaplan technique – the card method](#)





Hint:

You can find more on the topic of feedback in the chapter [Feedback culture - learning from each other](#) on page 14



Hint:

In our method database you will find the following method on the subject of feedback. This method is mainly useful to accompany the reflection on feedback (the method is not only suitable for students but also for working with your employees):

[Feedback method with students: dumb dialog](#)



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity

[ESABAC and the Prix Goncourt des Lyceens](#)

Intersectoral and international teams of teachers coordinate a student writers' competition in order to promote another culture, language, and critical thinking

Ensure maximum transparency by discussing with your staff how you can pass on the work results of the steering group to the following groups:

teaching
staff

parents

students

external
partners

You have to determine which information is available to everyone and which materials should be accessed only by the parties concerned.

Steering groups always need the mandate of the teachers council to be allowed to act in school development matters. Ensure that the entire staff is informed well ahead of time about planned work meetings of the steering group and invite interested persons to the meetings. This prevents the steering group from being perceived as an "extended arm of the school management" or as a "sworn association that promotes its own interests".



Tip!

- The workload of the steering group members is immense. Therefore, it is important that the school management contributes to the relief of the members by granting them something in return e.g. a relief hour of, less hall monitoring during breaks etc.



Reflection - Identify the development needs at your school

In terms of quality assurance, it is important to reflect on the given framework conditions for teaching and learning at your school. Since the whole teaching staff should be involved in this process, a large group of people will have to work together effectively. Therefore, it is advisable to accompany this process with suitable moderation methods so that all participants can get involved accordingly.



Hint:

In our method database you will find the following moderation methods with which you can professionally design such processes:

[The Metaplan technique – the process](#)

[The Metaplan technique – the card method](#)

The following are examples of some questions to initiate a moderated reflection process:

Where do our students come from – socioeconomic backgrounds, nationalities, living areas?

What does this mean for our teaching methods and how much we can demand from them?

Which resources do we have to help students who have little support at home?

Which synergy effects can we use in our teamwork?

What are the strengths of our school?

What do we need to improve?

How important was the topic ofup to now?

What's our current status on..... at our school? What evidence do we have to support our conclusion?

What potential do we see in the further development of?

What approaches have we taken in the past?

Which measures were successful and which were not, in regards to?

As already mentioned above, it is also necessary to clarify at this point which other important parties should participate in this process.





Tip!

- Students and parents are also an important source of information. Work with the teaching staff to put together appropriate questions and ask students and parents for feedback via a questionnaire or online form!

Define goals

At the end of the reflection process you will need to set specific goals. The following questions can be helpful:

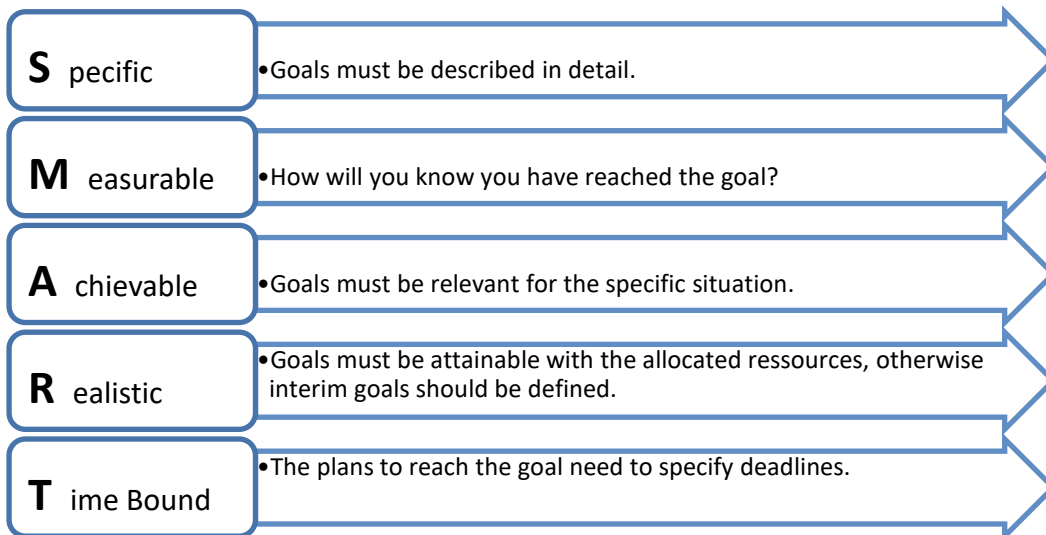
Which goals and definite measures can we agree upon regarding the topic of

Which medium and longterm goals can we reach realistically?

How will we measure our success?

To ensure that the above questions lead to the definition of targets, it may make sense to review these goals using the SMART rule.

According to this method, goals must be



If it is not possible to analyze a goal using this method, a subgoal should be defined that fulfills the SMART criteria. In this case, the first goal was set too high and the probability of reaching it can be considerably increased by specifying subgoals.



Developing measures

Once the goals have been clearly defined, the next step is to develop measures. Possible questions that can help you develop measures include the following:

What next steps or objectives can we define to make improvements?

What level of commitment do we require from the staff and how can we establish it?

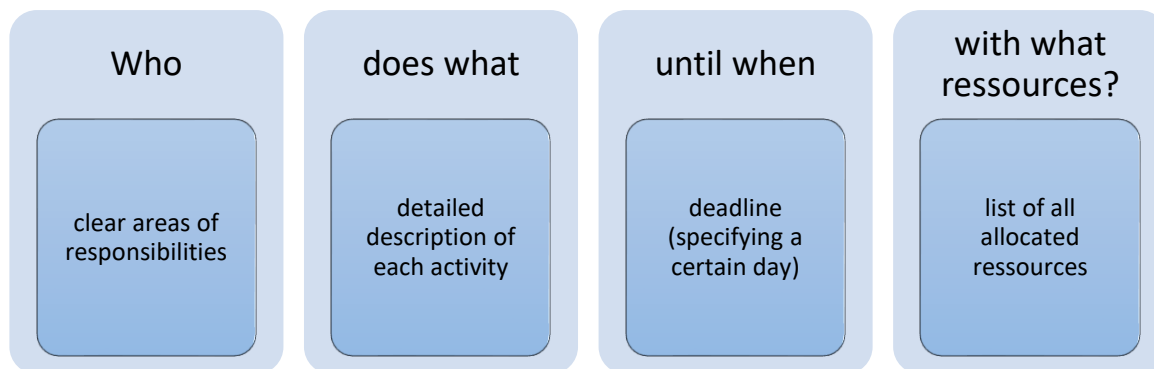
How can we integrate the topic – considering the amount of different tasks and topics – in the current process of school development?

How can we work together with other supportive parties and who will coordinate the collaborations?

What do we need from school management to ensure a successful process?

What accompanying measures do we want to focus more on in the future (parent involvement, support measures, ...)?

After the individual measures have been clearly defined, they need to be combined in a structured action plan. This should be documented in a spreadsheet to enable a structured approach and make the following key points transparent:



Hint:

The action plan is part of the method [The Metaplan technique – the process](#) which is described in detail in our method database.

Implement measures

The action plan serves as a navigation tool for management and steering groups, through which the individual activities can be coordinated and supported. In order to avoid overload, it is particularly



important that all tasks are distributed equally and that each teacher knows exactly what their responsibilities are.

As part of the school management, you have to ensure that colleagues who have taken on a specific task also receive support. If necessary, by increasingly seeking exchange with other colleagues and/or cooperating with external support systems, depending on the task.



Tip!

- Remember that school development is a joint effort and you should use synergy effects and cooperations wherever possible! Encourage your colleagues to ask for help if they need it and to inform you as soon as possible if they cannot cope with a task they have taken on. With projects, it is perfectly normal that delays can occur due to certain circumstances. The sooner this is communicated, the sooner supportive measures can be taken that will contribute to the success of a certain action.

The action plan helps school management to keep an overview of the individual activities and support their staff when necessary.



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity

[Let's play EU 60 - etwinning project](#)

This initiative connects teachers in Europe with each other enabling them to plan activities following a project based approach.

Creating health-promoting working conditions with school projects

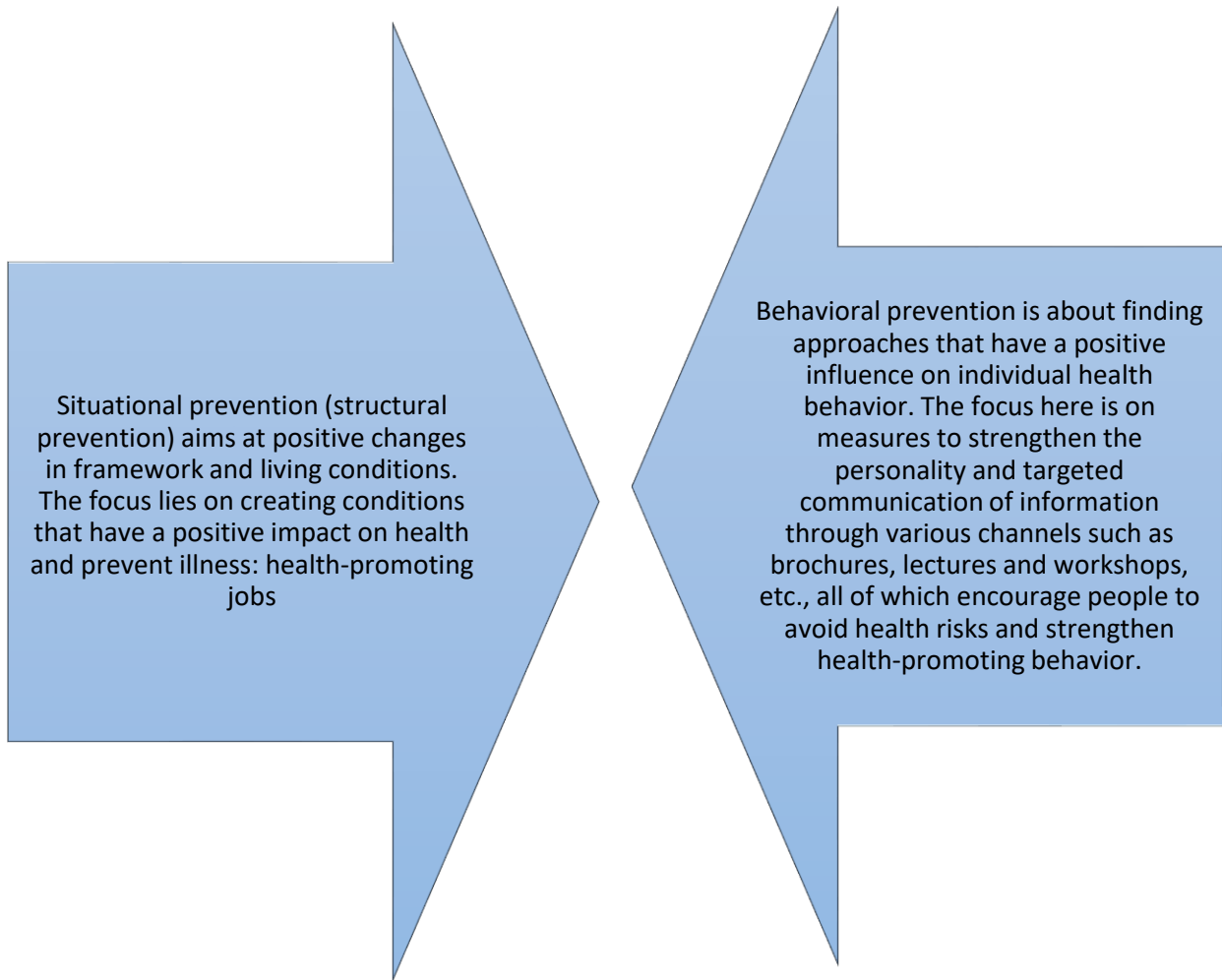


Tip!

- As part of the school management, you can make a significant contribution to ensuring that your employees remain healthy, are fully committed to your school and do not burn out. Familiarize yourself with situational and behavioral prevention and take appropriate measures at your school together with your staff!



Situational and behavioral prevention
Basically, there are two types of prevention⁴:



Examples of measures

You can implement the following situational and behavioral prevention measures at your school:

Situational measures (goal: healthy organization)	Behavioral measures (goal: healthy people)
work structure, e.g. teamwork among teachers, improvement of workflows, extended decision-making competencies, avoidance of too low and too high demands, etc.	courses and lectures, e.g. resilience training, burnout prevention, healthy eating, relaxation techniques etc.
general conditions, e.g. structural measures, ergonomic workplace design, relaxation rooms, etc.	shared activities and group activities such as running meetings, a healthy lunch buffet, etc.
company culture, e.g. agreements on bullying prevention, strategies for psychosocial health, etc.	expansion of personal competencies, e.g. team development, conflict management, time management, communication, leadership etc.

⁴ Cf.: Looser, D. (2018): Betriebliche Gesundheitsförderung in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen: Verhaltensprävention und Verhältnisprävention im Wirksamkeitsvergleich. AV Akademikerverlag



Proven methods of organizational development for school health projects
School health promotion is based on proven methods of organizational development and project management.

Development of health projects

The process of developing health projects is similar to that of school development projects.

In both cases, it is important that you create a suitable structure first by installing a steering group:



Hint:

In chapter

Organizational development as a process on page 23

you can learn more about how to set up a steering group at your school.



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity

Healthy space. Counseling for learning and wellbeing

presenting the creation of an institutional space and time within the school following the principles and values of the WHO network “healthy schools”.



Hint:

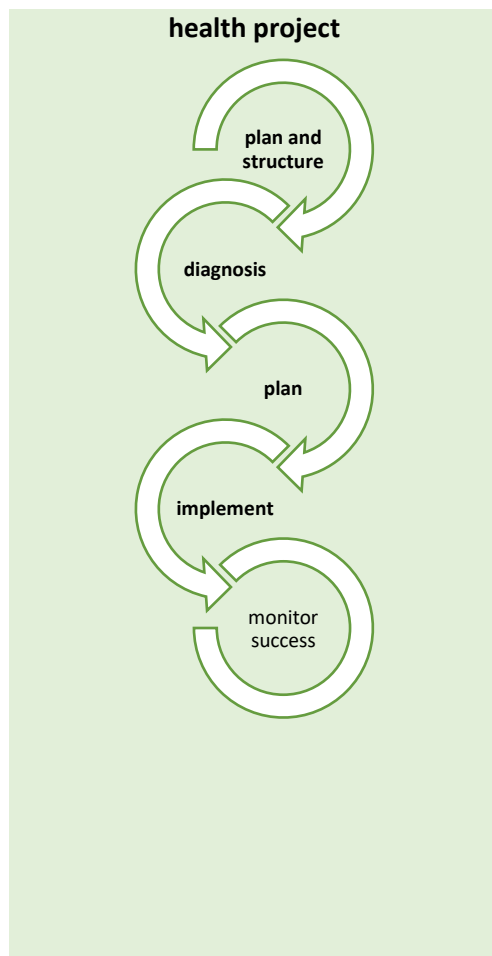
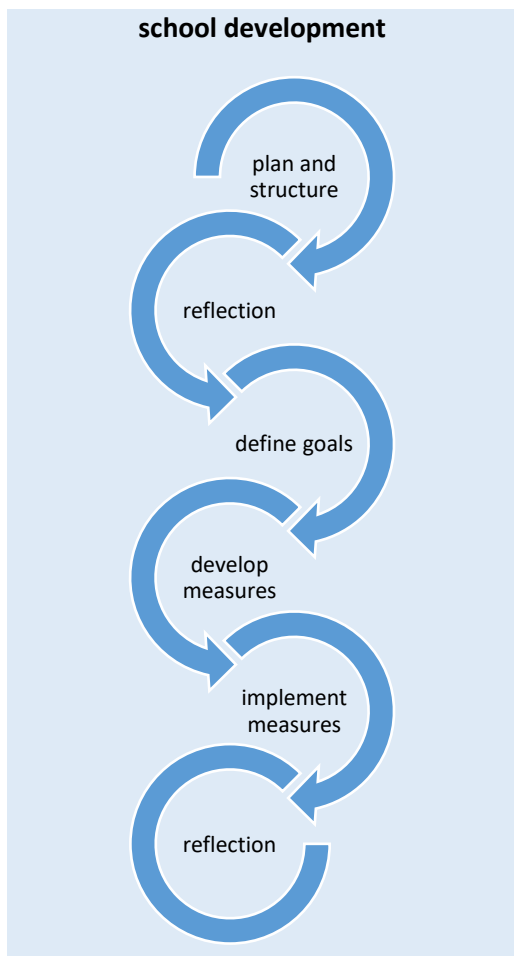
Smiling Minds

One Moment

are projects that promote and foster healthy behaviours, acknowledge emotions and control them. Give a look at our database.”.



In the following, the two process structures are compared:




Diagnosis

The aim is to assess the current need for a health project by collecting important information through various tools and summarizing the results in a report. The diagnosis should also make it possible to measure the effects of the health project ("before and after" comparison). The following instruments are available: Conversations with teachers and/or students, health trainings for teachers and/or students, structured health surveys or sick leave evaluations.

Plan

The specific steps are planned in this phase. Moderated health groups (5 to 7 people) are suitable for this purpose. In these groups, staff members can develop detailed proposals of measures for the steering group. This should be followed by a moderated workshop,



Hint:
In our method database you will find the following moderation methods with which you can professionally design such processes:
[The Metaplan technique – the process](#)
[The Metaplan technique – the card method](#)

in which the school management and staff participate. Again, an action plan as described in the chapter on school development can be used as a tool to plan the individual steps of implementation.





Hint:

The action plan is described in the chapter [Developing measures](#) on page 30

Implementation

In accordance with the needs and plans previously identified, measures of situational and behavioral prevention are now implemented in a structured manner using project management tools.

Example of a school project based on behavioral prevention



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of [Brain fitness exercises in the classroom](#)

Teachers can positively influence their own health behavior and that of their students with this activity.

Example of a school project based on situational prevention



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of [Student participation through brain fitness](#)

This activity can be helpful to create framework conditions that benefit the health of students and teachers and therefore prevent illness.

Monitoring success

After a health project is implemented it must be evaluated and documented. The project results are clearly summarized and evaluated in a final report. The aim is to anchor the topic of health sustainably in schools. This turns a temporary project into a program that is an integral part of school culture. A health survey, interviews, recording of group processes, etc. are great tools for monitoring success.



Hint:

A way to properly monitor your health project is to establish partnerships with the local entities (hospitals, clinical institutions, city council associations, etc.). Please see the example of [Smiling Minds](#)

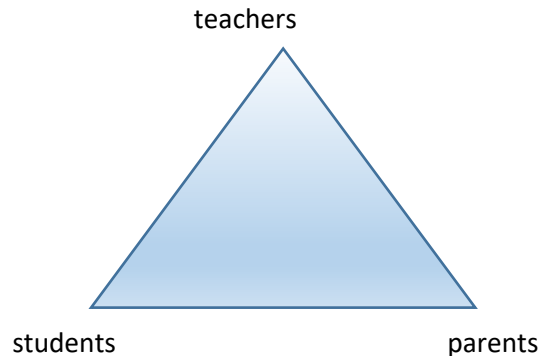
in our database.

Successful parental involvement

In many interviews, teachers mentioned that they miss the parents as educational partners. Parents have a large influence on their children's attitude towards school as well as their educational career decisions. Therefore, it is important that teachers and parents are “on the same page” when it comes to the education of children. What can parents contribute and how can parents be motivated?

Close cooperation between the following parties can strengthen the educational triangle:





Hint:

Parents can and should be involved in the students' learning process. Please see the activity [My family is history](#) that enables parents to be an active part and a source of learning for students.

Favorable conditions for parental work

What framework conditions can we create to increase parental involvement?

School management and staff decide on measures to perceive parents as education partners and involve them in school development and education development projects.

Active parental involvement becomes part of the mission statement of the school. Parents are informed and involved in school development processes.

Parents and families are perceived as part of the school community and have an important voice in matters of change and development at the school.

The school actively opens up to parents. The involvement of parents entails much more than providing cake for events or donations.

A steering group is formed within the staff, which develops concepts for parental involvement and supports the heads of class in their collaboration with the parents.

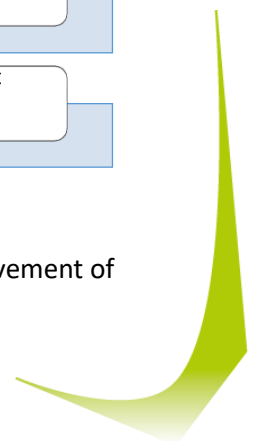
Parents are regarded as a resource and take over responsibilities in school organization. The skills of parents are actively made use of (for networking, support, specific tasks or involvement in the lessons, ...)

Low-threshold offers are created for parents (e.g. parent café, activities for multilingual parents).

Attractive training offers especially for parents ("Mom learns English", talks and workshops about educational, health and school-related topics) to strengthen the bond between parents and the school.

Gain access to parents through the parents' council

As an example, we would like to outline the following procedure which promotes involvement of parents in school matters:

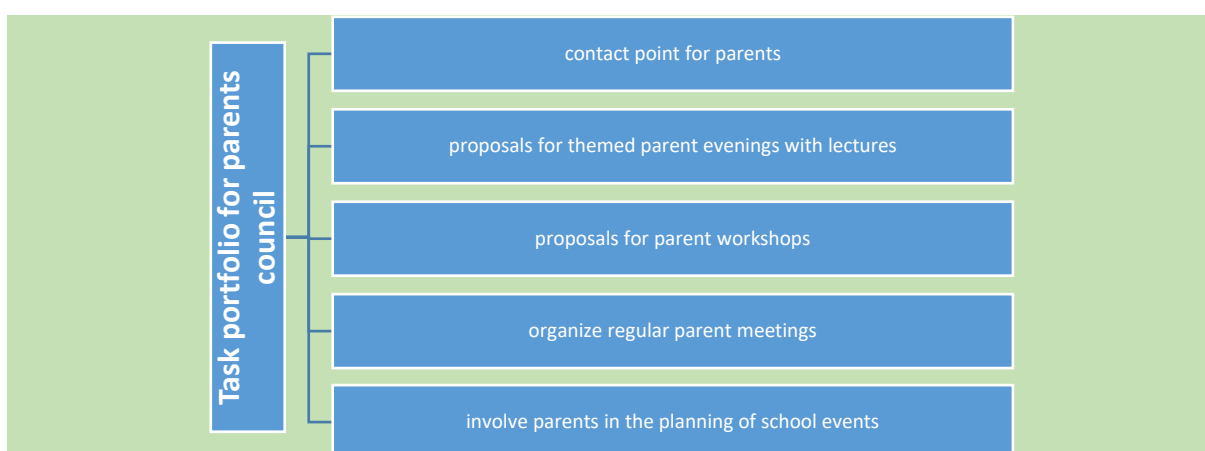


The parents council plays a central role in this approach. The school management maintains an active exchange with the council which acts as an interface between the school management and parenthood. It has clearly defined tasks to ensure that communication with both sides, the school management and parents, works well.



Task portfolio for parents' council

First, decide in which activities you want to involve parents, then create a portfolio with tasks for the parents' council accordingly. In general, the parents' representation should act as a contact point for all parents. In the following successful example, the school management also actively involves the parents' council when planning events for them:



Contact point for parents

The parents' council serves as a contact point for suggestions and concerns. Parents whose children are new to the school will find competent contact persons, who can quickly give them relevant information about the school.

Proposals for themed parent evenings with lectures

At least three parent evenings should take place throughout the school year. In order to make these events particularly attractive, invited external experts give short lectures. The parents' council organizes these and proposes topics.

Proposals for parent workshops

In connection with the topics of lectures, short workshops for parents should be organized subsequently. These give parents the opportunity to gain more insight into topics they have heard about in the lectures.

Organize regular parent meetings

The parents' council schedules parent meetings at least twice per school year. These regular meetings have an informal character, e.g. if the season allows, the council could organize a barbecue in the afternoon/evening. Although these events take place in an informal setting, school issues are likely to be discussed there. The parents council will report back to the school management after these meetings and pass on the discussed feedback.



Involving parents in the planning of school events

The parents' council also plays a central role in the planning and organization of school events. Due to its informal relationship and contact with parents it can help the school management by collecting ideas for them and specifically inviting parents to participate in these events.



Lesson Design



In this chapter we first deal with what role a good and viable pedagogical relationship plays in successful teaching and learning and we supply a few suggestions originating in practice for how positive relationship-building can succeed.

Then we want to show you how you can design individual learning spaces for your students and how you can make use of class composition effects to the profit of all or as many students as possible.

Another important topic in this chapter is individualized teaching, which more and more schools are offering.

Furthermore, you will learn about using feedback constructively in your lessons as well as the important role of attribution theory in this context.

The last section of this chapter is devoted to the question of brain-friendly teaching methods to motivate your students. Here you will find methods to help you pass on your enthusiasm for a new topic.



Lesson Design

Pedagogical Relationships

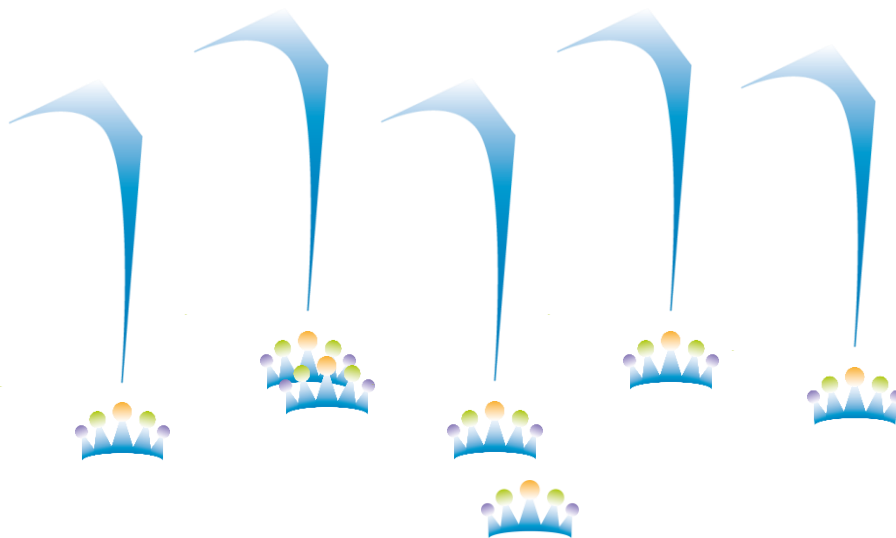
Have you ever asked other adults about their positive memories of their school days? Try it out! In all probability you will hear something about one or more “wonderful” teachers. In these stories, there will be less said about their subject expertise or other competences; instead there will be much more about how these teachers succeeded in a special way to connect with children/youth in the classroom at a cognitive and emotional level and how they could build a sustainable pedagogical relationship with their students.

Pedagogical relationship – what are we talking about?



People are relationship creatures by nature. Since the beginnings of humanity, development and learning took place primarily in and through relationships. Whether it is the oldest conveying their knowledge and wisdom to the younger in an informal way – often through storytelling – or the formal way in schools where teachers educate students, in both cases we speak of pedagogical relationships.

What is the quality of the relationship we are looking for?





Reflection

- Think about a teacher from your time at school who brings back good memories - a teacher you liked.
- Why did you like her or him?
- What qualities did this teacher have?
- What connection did he/she build with you?

- Reflect now for a moment on how you as a teacher relate to your students. What are your fundamental principles?

An educational relationship is an interplay between the pedagogical role (the institutional dimension in scholastic contexts) and the actual ability to form a relationship with individual students (the personal dimension). A pedagogical relationship – as we are talking about here – does not automatically arise whenever an educator and a learner exist. A personal intention on the part of the teacher is necessary – as is effort.⁵

Annedore Prengel considers the quality of esteem to be a significant characteristic of functioning pedagogical relationships.⁶ She refers to three types of esteem:

Recognizing and respecting the value of each individual.

Holding the individual abilities, strengths and efforts in esteem.

Recognizing the basic human rights of children and youth.

As John Hattie describes in his meta-analysis⁷ „Visible Learning“, many research studies worldwide (also the PISA study) show that the quality of the relationship between student and teacher has a strong influence on the learning process. The quality of the relationship is one of the major factors in academic achievement:

⁵ Giesecke, Hermann (1999): Die pädagogische Beziehung. Pädagogische Professionalität und die Emanzipation des Kindes

⁶ Prengel, Annedore (2013): Pädagogische Beziehungen zwischen Anerkennung, Verletzung und Ambivalenz

⁷ Hattie, John (2014): Visible Learning.



Teacher care, empathy, esteem, as well as clarity regarding values and borders

Student trust, curiosity and openness

In the words of the well-known German sociologist Hartmut Rosa, a resonance must exist between the teacher and the student. ⁸

The Advantages of a High Quality Pedagogical Relationship

The ability to form and maintain qualitatively high value relationships brings many advantages with it – for the teachers as well as the students.

Teachers

joy and satisfaction in their work

less exhaustion or even burnout

Students

higher motivation to learn

more lasting learning results

We now want to take a closer look at the two advantages students have from a good pedagogical relationship:

Higher Motivation to Learn

Students have to learn how to study content and do assignments without being intrinsically motivated to do so. It is a so-called executive function that people must develop. Studies⁹ (e.g. the work of Daniel H. Pink) have shown that this works best when four major needs are satisfied:

Autonomy

- I can manage it alone!

Mastery

- I can do it!

Goal

- I know why I am doing it!

Belonging

- I am accepted just as I am!

The last need is best satisfied in a good pedagogical relationship. The idea that “I am seen as a person and accepted regardless of the my academic achievements” must play a central role in a teacher/student relationship

⁸ Rosa, Hartmut (2016): Resonanzpädagogik – Wenn es im Klassenzimmer knistert.

⁹ Pink, Daniel H. (2011): Drive- The surprising truth about what motivates us.



Long lasting Learning Results

Most teachers recognize that feelings and emotions influence the performance and learning of students, just as much as the physical state of the body, such as if the students have gotten enough sleep or how well they eat, or whether they feel sick or healthy. While the well-being of the body (e.g. healthy nutrition, regular exercise and sports, etc.) stands high on the agenda in most schools, the emotional well-being of students is given less attention as a rule. However, the most recent neuroscientific research studies¹⁰ (e.g. the important work done by Mary Helen Immordino-Yang and Antonio Damasio) reveal the preeminently important role of emotions in learning processes.

Gerald Hüther, the famous German neuroscientist, talks about „enthusiasm” as an important promoter of learning.¹¹

When children are excited their brains function better and therefore they learn better. Enthusiasm functions like a kind of “glue” in the brain that creates stronger neuronal connections. And it increases the probability that what was learned is not only retained in the real world, but it is also used.

Along with enthusiasm, stress another emotional state that strongly influences the learning process. In several test, researchers could find clear evidence that a high amount of the stress hormone Cortisol has negative effects on memory and perception. In other words, learning under stress (or even fear) does not lead to good results. Additionally, stress and fear literally hold the learned thing in the brain – when the time comes to demonstrate the learned content (for example in a test), the level of Cortisol increases again because a physical connection exists in the brain. It is obvious that something learned under these conditions cannot easily be transferred to real situations.

It is possible that all teachers wish their students were enthusiastic about their subjects. In reality, however, this is often not the case. It is surely not entirely the responsibility of the teachers when students are excited about a topic. The resonance and the relationship to young learners that teachers can build with their students can, however, increase the chance for enthusiasm and, what is more important, help prevent stressful learning conditions.



¹⁰ Immordino-Yang, M.H. / Damasio, A., (2007): We Feel, Therefore We Learn: The Relevance of Affective and Social Neuroscience to Education. In the Journal of the International Mind, Brain and Education Society.

¹¹ Hüther, G. (2016): Mit Freude lernen.



Suggestions for Forming Positive Relationships¹²

Pay attention to the beginning of the hour!

- An especially suitable moment to actively enter into a relationship with your students is at the beginning of the hour! Please notice here their body language and eye contact in particular. The danger exists that formalities (class book entries, attendance, etc.) that are done at the start of the lesson can disturb relationship creating with the class or even subvert it.

Be a role model!

- Especially as a teacher and role model, you can contribute significantly to succeeding in having positive relationships between yourself and your students and, what is at least equally important, building stable and respectful inside the class between the individual students.
- As a role model, you can give important impulses to exactly those children and young people who come from difficult social circumstances which disadvantage their educational career.

Express esteem!

- In traditional thought patterns we are used to evaluating our learners according to different perspectives: first impression, general impression, traits that seem to us to be typical characteristics. This categorization at the start often dims the ability to discover hidden resources and potential of the students. One possible objection would be, as stated above, that such perception is normal. With regard to learning goals, however, it must be asked if such a strategy is sensible.

Be approachable as a person yourself!

- Authenticity in communication – another word for it is »self-congruence« – demands of you as a teacher not to hide behind a role or facade, but instead to truly insert yourself into the particular situation. Congruent behavior distinguishes itself in that verbal statements match gestures, facial expressions and tone.
- Your congruent behavior makes it possible for your students to build trust in you, which in turn prepares the ground for a sustainable teacher-student relationship.
- As a role model, you also create the framework in which your students can have diverse learning experiences. The openness with which students approach you and one another - how much they are willing to behave cooperatively - will also be determined by the openness you demonstrate and the example for behavior you set.

¹² Linde, S. / Linde-Leimer, K (2017): Ausbildung bis 18 für alle! Wie Schulen einen wesentlichen Beitrag dazu leisten können



Establish the connections between learning content the world your students live in!

- Naturally you find this or that out about your students over the course of the school year. So you will learn more and more about the freetime activities of your students and more clearly know where their respective strengths and talents lie and what they enjoy. Use this knowledge and create a connection to the current teaching topics!
- If you succeed in relating to the worlds your students live in , you will increase the interest in the current classroom activities and convey an honest interest in your respective students at the relationship level.

Bring all of the students in!

- Pay attention to eye contact and always try to bring those students who tend to withdraw from classroom happenings actively into the lesson. Consider that passive potential drop-outs are much harder to recognize as their signals are much subtler.

Pay attention to positive qualities and behavior of your students!

- Through you education, you are trained to notice mistakes and to evaluate the performance of your students. At this point, we would like to encourage you to pay attention especially to the positive qualities and behaviors of your students!



Hint:

You will find the description of the following measure in our methods database:

[Teachers Become Tutors](#)

In that the main teachers of a class support 10-12 students at an individual level in the role of „tutor“. In order to see the entire child in his/her development, they offer the students the chance to speak with their tutor one-on-one.



Hint:

You will find the description of the following measure in our Methods database:

[KoKoKo \(CoCoCo\)](#)

Whereby one lesson hour per week (45 minutes) is created in all classes and years to focus on communication, cooperation and conflict resolution.



Hint:

You will find the description of the following measure in our Methods database:

[Pedagogy Focused on Potential](#)

This attempts to get away from a deficit orientation where mistakes are evaluated and judgment is passed. Its goal is to make the children capable of taking their learning process as much as possible into their own hands.



For the last suggestion „Pay attention to the positive qualities and behavior of your students!“ we have prepared a small thought experiment: Have you already heard something about the so-called Rosenthal Effect?¹³

Thought experiment

The American psychologist Robert Rosenthal analyzed what influence teachers' expectations and attitudes have on the performance of their students. At the beginning of the school year, Rosenthal tested all of the children in 18 classes of a school. He then gave the teachers the names of individual students who on the basis of the test results, should have “an unusually good scholastic development” (20% of the students in all). The names of the “highly talented” were selected completely randomly. In the higher school classes, the expectations of the teachers had only a minor influence on the achievement of the students; in the younger classes, however, the effect was dramatic: the result was that at the end of the school year, the supposedly “highly talented” made a great leap forward in comparison to the other students according to a school achievement test.



Reflection

- What would happen if you regarded your students as if they were all highly talented?
- Do you think it is possible that this could change the relationship between you and your students?
- Do you think it is possible that the achievements of your students would then improve?

No shame for mistakes and weaknesses

A troubled pedagogical relationship often leads to shame – a phenomenon that has spread through (too many) schools.

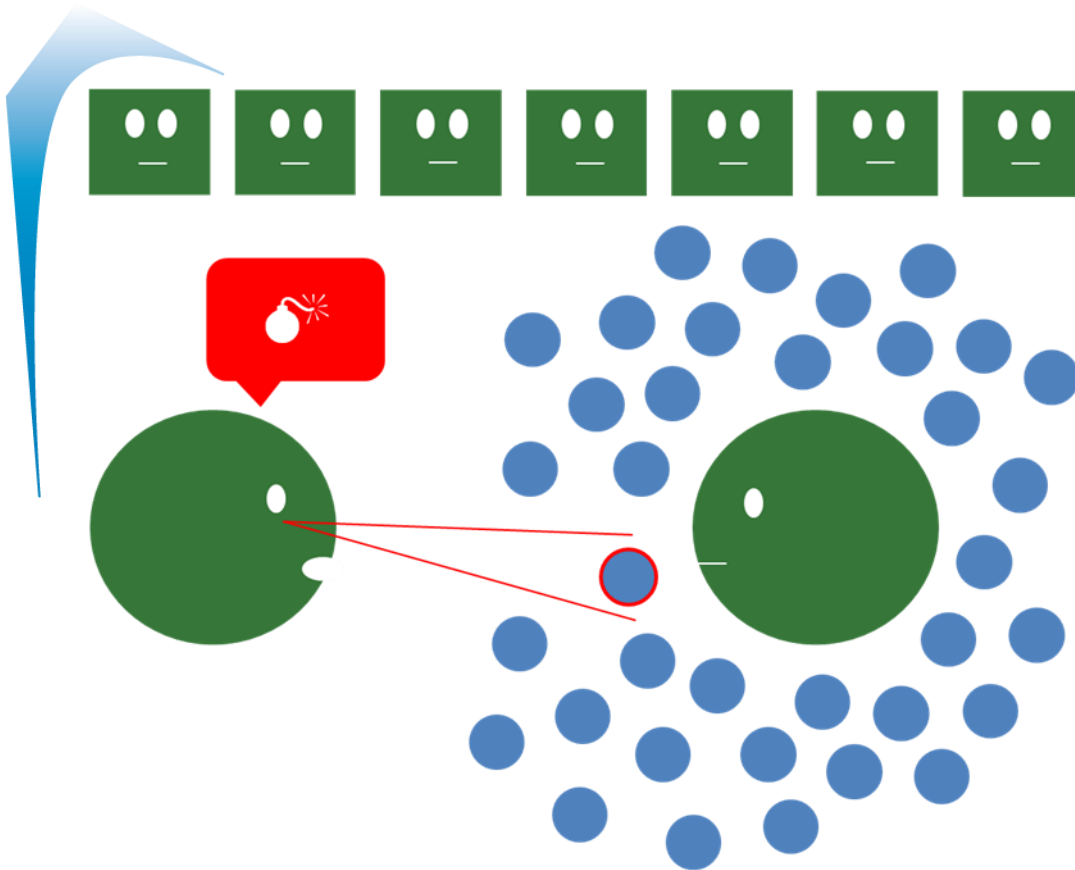
Shame is a psychological condition inherent to humans. A healthy expression of shame helps us in our efforts to belong as it makes us aware of behavior that do not conform with the norms and conventions of a group to which we would like to feel we belong. Feelings of shame have an emotional as well as physical dimension. When I feel ashamed about something, I often have a quicker pulse, red cheeks, a higher body temperature, etc.

Most experiences in which we feel shame are not pleasant, but they are illuminating and support us in our development and growth. Feeling ashamed for something can possibly be damaging when the following situation is at hand¹⁴:

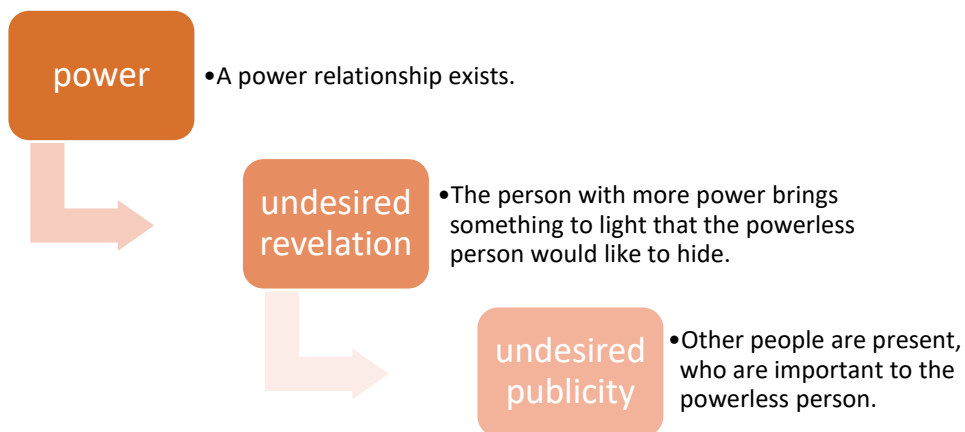
¹³ Rosenthal, Robert / Jacobsen, Leonore F. (1968): Pygmalion in the Classroom: Teacher Expectation and Pupils' Intellectual Development. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York. deutsch: Pygmalion im Unterricht. Lehrererwartungen und Intelligenzentwicklung der Schüler (übersetzt von Ingeborg Brinkmann [u. a.]), Beltz, Berlin/Basel.

¹⁴ Wertschätzen statt Beschämen (2017), Publication of the Austrian association “Jedes Kind” (www.jedeskind.org).





Aspects of Shaming:

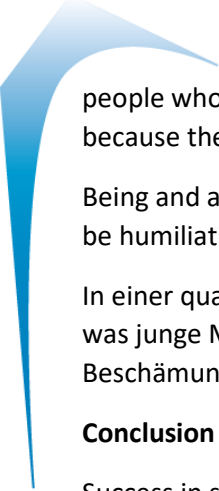


Examples of shaming that unfortunately still take place daily in schools:

- Letting a student know and also feel in front of the entire class that he/she is incompetent and doesn't know anything.
- Having a student demonstrate "something" in gym class that they currently can't do
- Showing drawings or reading essays out loud without asking permission of the student first.
- Making fun of the appearance of student in front of his/her peers.
- Sentences like: „You are too dumb to understand“, „You are always the one who is disturbing the others“, „You will never succeed in getting a good job“.

All of these situations do not automatically lead to damaging shame of the students. Many children and youth are luckily steadfast enough to deal with such situation. But there are plenty of young





people who are not resilient enough. Most shaming teachers unintentionally humiliate their students because they are not aware of the possible effects of their actions.

Being and acting in a quality pedagogical relationship creates a consciousness for what things might be humiliating to young people. Care, esteem and empathy prevent shaming!

In einer qualitätsvollen pädagogischen Beziehung zu sein und zu handeln, schafft Bewusstsein dafür, was junge Menschen beschämen könnte. Sorgfalt, Wertschätzung und Mitgefühl verhindern Beschämung!

Conclusion

Success in school for young people depends on various factors. Clearly, not all of these can be influenced by teachers – structural dimensions (school system, organization of lessons, the architecture of the school building, political interests, etc.), socioeconomic backgrounds of the students, or their support from home.

An extremely relevant factor for school success is to what extent the individual youths feel they are accepted, seen and even appreciated. Every young person must have the feeling at school of belonging there. His/her dignity and value may not be questioned, also not in the case of possible academic weaknesses or failures. Teachers can influence this factor – it lies largely in their hands.

Teachers who wholeheartedly have the intention and attitude to form qualitatively high value pedagogical relationships with their students prepare the ground from which academic success and sustainable learning can grow. And even when the grades don't reflect the success, a high probability exists that the youth will learn the significant things for their future lives.

Class structure and design of learning spaces

Our research process brought us in contact with schools that are breaking new grounds both in the structuring of their classes and of learning times. When deciding how to divide students into classes, a strong focus lies on creating a heterogeneous environment to avoid negative effects of class composition.

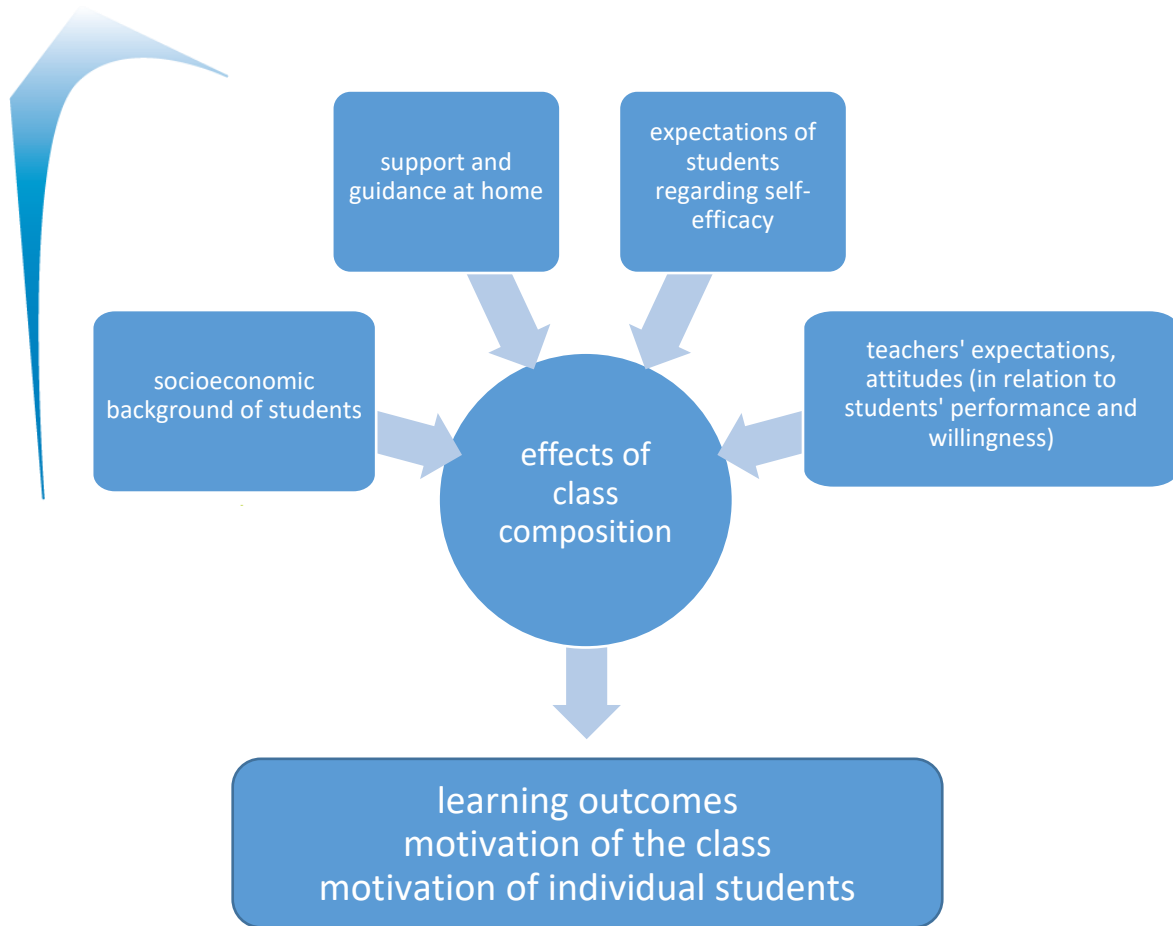
Effects of class composition and school organization mechanisms

Effects of class composition¹⁵ stem from the social or socioeconomic as well as the linguistic and ethnic backgrounds of the students. As a teacher, you know about the effects of having many children with weak socioeconomic background in a class that lacks strong learners as role models. Researchers are trying to analyze how the complex interplay of socioeconomic background, support from home, students' and teachers' expectations, attitudes and ascriptions (in terms of students' performance and willingness to learn) creates certain effects that in turn affect the learning outcomes and motivation of the class and individual students.¹⁶

¹⁵ cf. Bellin, N. (2012): Klassenkomposition, Migrationshintergrund Und Leistung: Mehrebenenanalysen zum Sprach- und Leseverständnis von Grundschulern. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften

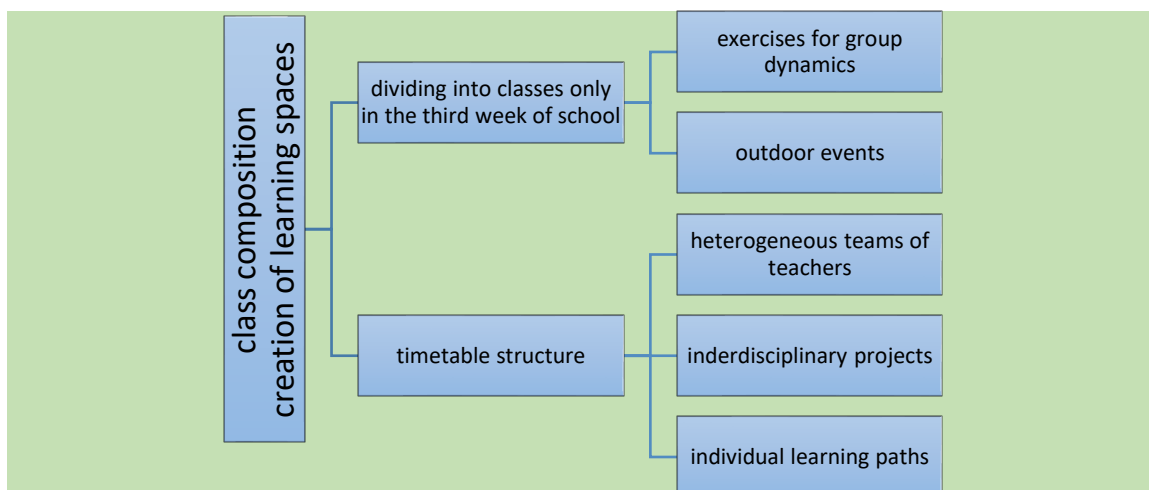
¹⁶ f. Brunefort et al. in the National Education Report 2012, p. 196





The school can influence the composition of the classes in order to mitigate expected negative tendencies and facilitate positive synergies. If necessary, school management can assign more experienced teachers to the classes that face particular challenges.

In the following, we describe how a school can implement new approaches in teaching through class composition and timetable structure:



Dividing students into classes in third school week

Students are assigned to classes only after they have gotten to know each other better. Therefore, all students spend the first two weeks of school together in a large group. This large group is supervised by a permanent team of teachers. The aim is to give student an idea about who they would like to be in a class with and to give teachers the chance to observe the students in order to decide later on how divide them into classes. To this end, students go through a varied program that allows them to get to know each other in many different situations. The teachers make sure that the large group of students is divided into smaller groups on different occasions, so students meet as many others as possible. The agenda consists, among others, of the following activities:

At the end of these two weeks, each student writes the names of two students they would like to be in a class with on a piece of paper. The school management promises to take these into account and guarantees every student will be in a class which at least one of the mentioned persons.



Hint:

In our methods database, you will find a description of the following activities, which can serve as icebreakers for a new group of students:

[Coffee Morning \(concentric circles\)](#)

[Speech Chain](#)

In these activities, the students get to know students they don't know yet or usually do not talk to.

Timetable structure

The timetable is a powerful tool for teaching. When used as such, new opportunities and learning spaces can present themselves. The following are two innovative examples that are easy to implement and highly successful:



Hint:

Here you can read about a school who made space in the timetable for two hours a day where students can direct and determine their own learning process and content.

[INDY: Individualized and potential-focused timetable](#)



Hint:

in our method database you will find a description of the following activity:

[Creative classroom Lab](#)

combining CLIL methodology, project based learning and ICT



Heterogeneous teams of teachers

More and more school administrations are setting up teams of teachers to be in charge of classes. In contrast to the concept of the class council, in this case 2 to 4 teachers, depending on the type of school and the subjects taught, are responsible for class management. These teachers usually teach the main subjects. Teams are generally very productive when the individual team members are assembled in a heterogeneous way.

It is important students experience these groups as well-established teams that react competently to their needs and offer suitable solutions.

In many cases, school administrations have to actively support the formation of these teams since teachers will often have to leave their comfort zone. In the end, all participants benefit from heterogeneous teams because this setting allows the teachers to enter the learning and growth zone directly.



Hint:

More information on the comfort and learning zone can be found in the chapter

[Support for change processes - the comfort zone model as a method for changes](#) on page 81

Teachers gain new perspectives from their team members and are encouraged to reflect on their own pedagogical practice as well as try out new strategies. This benefits not only the individual teachers in terms of constructive human resource development, but ultimately also all students.



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity,

[Collegial case consultation \(Intervision\)](#)

which teams of teachers can use to give each other feedback and utilize common resources.

The principal often takes on the role of supervisor for these teams of teachers. This can be helpful to keep dominant characters in check and make sure less outspoken teachers will also be heard.



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity,

[I get excited at school](#)

to address class management and emotional behaviours.

Interdisciplinary projects

The school management inserts as many interdisciplinary projects as possible in everyday teaching when structuring the timetable. It ensures that lessons are also offered in blocks and that subjects involved in interdisciplinary projects ideally follow one another.





Hint:

In our database you can read about an inspiring attempt in a Viennese upper secondary school to intertwine the curriculum with more real-life-experiences:

[PRACTICE CLASS](#)



Hint:

in our database, there are examples of activities that rely on more than one subject. Through

[Dramatization of historical events](#) and

[My family is history](#)

students have the chance to consolidate their knowledge in 2 disciplines at the same time.



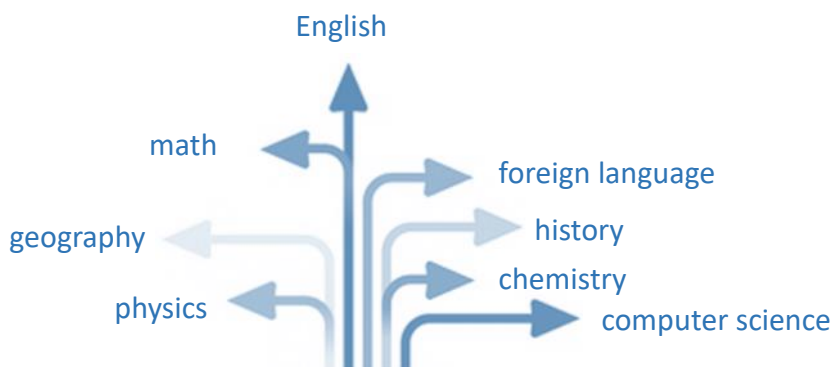
Hint:

[The modern school method](#),

available in our database, allows students to pick subjects and work them in groups.

Free time

30 minutes are reserved per school day at a fixed time, during which students have the opportunity to make up for learning deficits, deepen acquired knowledge and receive individual support.



In these 30-minute time slots the class structure is dissolved and students can choose their learning content on a demand-oriented and individual basis. The teachers are available for questions at any time. There is a teacher in each classroom, and a list indicates which teacher can be found where, enabling students to find the teacher they need support from at the moment. Teachers who are not assigned to a specific classroom walk around and are also available to the students.

Would you like to know more about individualized teaching?





Hint:
In chapter
[Individualized lessons](#) on page 59
you will find more information on this topic



Hint:
in our method database you will find a description of the following activity.
[Good morning Class! Connecting mind and body before lecturing](#)
presenting a relaxing activity to promote a better relationship
teacher/student and healthy learning



Hint:
[Free thinkers](#)
also provides an opportunity for students develop transversal skills such
as critical thinking, ethics, though the method philosophy for children. It
is available in our database.

Feedback in class - Providing helpful feedback using attribution theory

More and more schools are discovering constructive feedback as a central element of creating a motivating school culture. Students can be informed about their current level of knowledge and encouraged to achieve new and better results through appropriate feedback.

"Nothing motivates more than success."

Celebrating small successes with the students and setting individual and realistic goals together has proved to have a positive impact. Students need to know what they are already good at and which areas they need to improve. In the long run however, they also need to learn to assess their capacities and willingness to perform themselves. When a student fails, it's a teachers' job to reassure her or him that, with the appropriate effort, things will go better next time.

In order to reach the required learning goals, it is advisable to take small steps to be able to perceive and celebrate partial successes. For weaker students it is often helpful to notice and acknowledge even very small improvements.

But what are the aforementioned attribution theories and how can they be applied in class?

Helpful Attributions

Attributions in the sense of psychological attribution theories are assumptions people make in order to explain the reasons behind the behavior of other people or - which is particularly important in this context - their own behavior. The concept of attribution theory can be traced back to the social



psychologist Fritz Heider¹⁷, who distinguished between external and internal attribution. The extension of Heider's model by Martin Seligman¹⁸ is discussed here in particular, as his model is especially well suited to support students who lack motivation due to school failure.

Internal / external attributes:

Success or failure can be attributed either to one's own person (internal) or to circumstances (external). The student sees herself/himself either as a "master" of her/his fate or as a helpless "victim" of uncontrollable powers.

Variable / stable attributes:

The second dimension of attribution is the stability of explanatory factors. The reason for a behavior can either be effective for a long time (e.g. intelligence) or it can occur on short notice (e.g. current mood). In both internal and external attribution, students can make assumptions about whether their case is a fixed fact (stable) or a changeable cause (variable).

If we combine the dimensions internally/externally with the factors variable/stable, the result is the following four-field scheme:

	internally	externally
stable	skills, ability	difficulty level of a task
variable	effort, will	luck, fortune

Global / specific attributes:

The third dimension refers to the range of the cause. A cause is global if it has the same effect in different situations ("It will affect everything that comes."), while it is specific if limited to a certain situation ("It will only have an effect on that specific situation.").

Combining the above four-field scheme with the factors global/specific leads to the following classification:

	internal+stable	internal+variable	external+stable	external+variable
global	general ability or inability.	general commitment, diligence, effort	general external requirements	happiness, bad luck (in)favorable circumstances in general

¹⁷ Heider, Fritz (1944). Social perception and phenomenal causality. Psychological Review, 51.

¹⁸ C.f.: Seligman, M. E. P./Nolen-Hoeksema, S. (1987): Explanatory style and depression. In D. Magnusson and A. Ohman. Psychopathology: An Interactional Perspective. New York.



specific	necessary skill for a particular job	commitment, diligence, effort in a certain situation	certain requirements in a specific situation	happiness and bad luck in a certain situation
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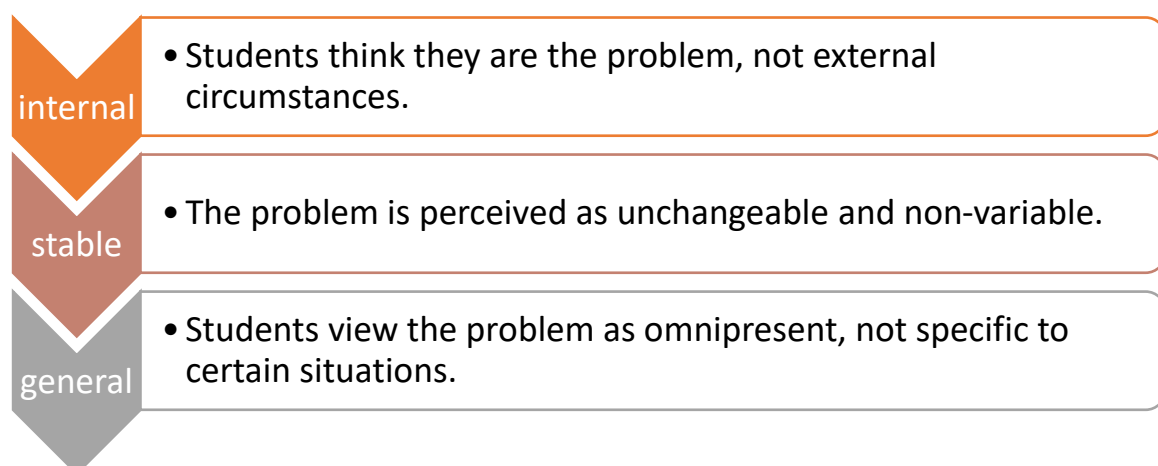
How can a student explain a failed exam?

	internal+stable	internal+variable	external+stable	external+variable
global	I'm incapable of passing exams.	I never study enough.	Teachers always ask too much.	I had bad luck and got difficult questions.
specific	The subject matter was too difficult for me.	I didn't study enough for this exam.	This teacher is too demanding.	I was not prepared for these questions.

Use of attribution theory in teaching

Teachers have an influence on the conclusions and assessments their students come to about themselves through the way they comment on their students' successes and failures. Depending on the style of attribution they use, they can help to ensure that especially weaker students either remain motivated and continue to try, or begin to withdraw more and more from school life and its requirements.

According to Seligman, a certain style of attribution can lead to depression, namely to explain **negative experiences** through **internal, stable and general causes**:



The opposite, namely evaluating negative experiences as external, variable and specific, can lead to not assuming responsibility for one's own mistakes and consequently not having any learning experiences.



To use the words of Heckhausen, an expert in the field of motivational psychology: "If you ALWAYS attribute good experiences to INTERNAL and bad experiences to EXTERNAL, you may suffer from megalomania!"

For these reasons, general recommendations cannot be given.

However, it has proven quite useful to refer individually to each students' personal attributions and include the results in the evaluations of their school performance.

Students who show a tendency towards the attributions internal/stable/general need help to modify their thinking patterns. As a teacher, you can support those students by consciously commenting on negative performance in an **external, variable and specific** manner, for example: "**This time** (specific) you were not well **prepared enough for these questions** (external) (variable). Therefore, **this time** I couldn't give you a good grade."

Students who show a tendency towards the attributions external/variable/specific often do not seem to assume any personal responsibility for failures. Firstly, you should question whether this reaction could be a defense mechanism to protect themselves. You can clarify how the student really feels about the failure and what kind of support she or he needs in a one-to-one conversation.



Motivation in the context of situation and meaning



Reflection

- What learning experiences do you want your students to make?
- Would you like to participate in your own lessons if you were a student?
- Can you justify every learning method you use?
- Can your students apply what they learn in your classes in everyday life?

Surely, you have noticed that your class pays much more attention when you or your students recount a personal experience, i.e. when a connection to everyday life is established. Our brain reacts attentively to situations and is less able to memorize abstract contents. You should therefore refer to a **situational context** when you

want to convey new content,

control the classes level of knowledge,

support your students in applying knowledge.

Brain-friendly learning

During an educational event on the topic of "early school leaving", a teacher spoke up and said:

"Many students are lacking the motivation to learn something new. Why don't they just study the subject matter for once! They can't know now if they will be needing their knowledge later on as adults!"

In the context of this statement, the individual student can be imagined as a barrel in which the teacher pours knowledge. The more you can pour in a barrel, the more competent a student should become. However, something important is completely disregarded in this image: The learning logic of your students!



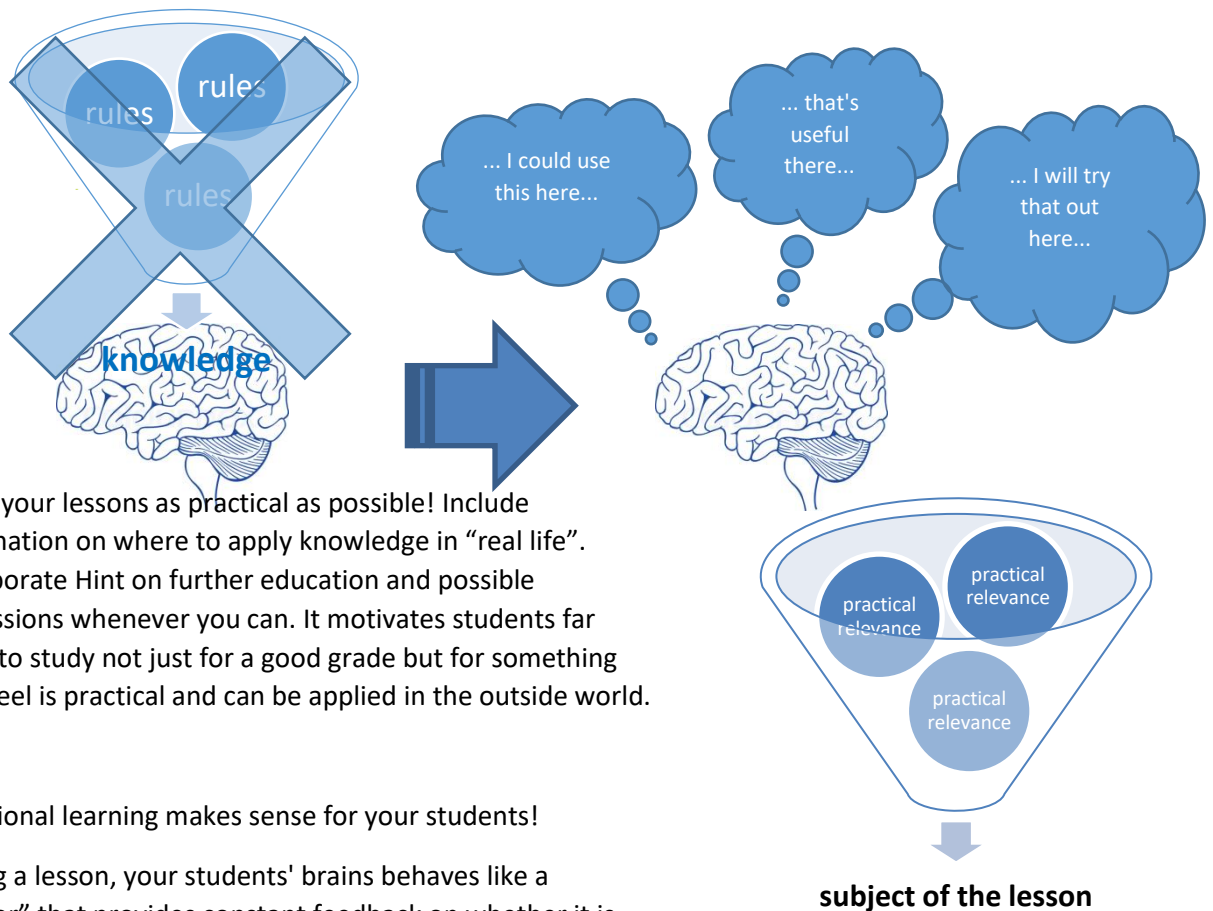
Tip!

- Connect the logic of the content with „psychologic“ and your students will learn much more willingly!



What does that mean? Let us digress and take a look at brain research:

Brain researchers believe that abstract knowledge without a situational context remains inert. Our brain does not normally learn from rules, but from relevant and fundamental examples.¹⁹



Make your lessons as practical as possible! Include information on where to apply knowledge in "real life". Incorporate Hint on further education and possible professions whenever you can. It motivates students far more to study not just for a good grade but for something they feel is practical and can be applied in the outside world.

Situational learning makes sense for your students!

During a lesson, your students' brains behaves like a "sensor" that provides constant feedback on whether it is important to stay alert and vigilant. You should take this sensor seriously!



Tip!

- Work with the "sensor" of your students as much as you can. Establish a tangible connection between the topic of your lesson and their personal world and experiences of your students. This will create so-called mobile knowledge that students will be able to remember in different contexts!

¹⁹ cf. Siebert, Horst (2010): Methoden für die Bildungsarbeit: Leitfaden für aktivierendes Lehren (Perspektive Praxis), Bertelsmann, S. 104.

Methods to situate your teaching in the present

- Pretend a marker is a microphone and interview a student, asking them if they can apply what they just learned in their daily life.

Situating in the class



- Form groups of two and ask the students to discuss whether and where they can apply knowledge from your lesson. Evaluate the results with the whole class.

Situating in groups of two



- After a quick introduction, conduct a roleplay with your students to situate the material they have learned about in a context.

playing out situations



Methods to situate your teaching in the future

- Play suitable music (relaxation music).
- Guide the imagination exercise by describing the **specific behavior (application of the learning material)** that should be displayed in a **concrete situation**.
- Let your students imagine how this behavior affects the specific situation.
- Additionally, introduce an external perspective by asking your students to imagine how this behavior will reflect on others.
- Address what would happen if everything remained the same.

Imagination



- One student explains how they plan to put their knowledge into practice. The others give her/him feedback. Then it is the next students' turn.

groups of three:



- Students describe a worst case scenario and then reflect on how they would react according to the approach they have just learned about.

worst case scenario:



Individualized teaching

Our research process brought us in contact with schools that have chosen individualized teaching as an overall concept or that incorporate parts of individualized learning into everyday school life.



Hint:

You can read more on how to integrate individualized learning in conventional school teaching under

[Free time](#) on page 50 in the chapter [Timetable structure](#)



The idea behind individualized teaching is to use the learning potential of all students and to respond to the individual learning requirements with corresponding offers.



Hint:

here you can read about different approaches to individualized learning:

[Individualized math lessons](#)

[INDY: Individualized and potential-focused approach](#)

[COOL approach](#)

[Potential focused pedagogy](#)

[Learning Boxes](#)

[Courtship Period](#)

[Modern School Method](#)



Hint:

You can find an example of an individualized teaching method based on individual work in our database:

[Difficult Levels by Traffic Lights](#)

This method provides students with tasks of different difficulty levels during an activity. Moreover, it gives student the possibility to independently determine their personal performance level.

Individualization of teaching – two strategies

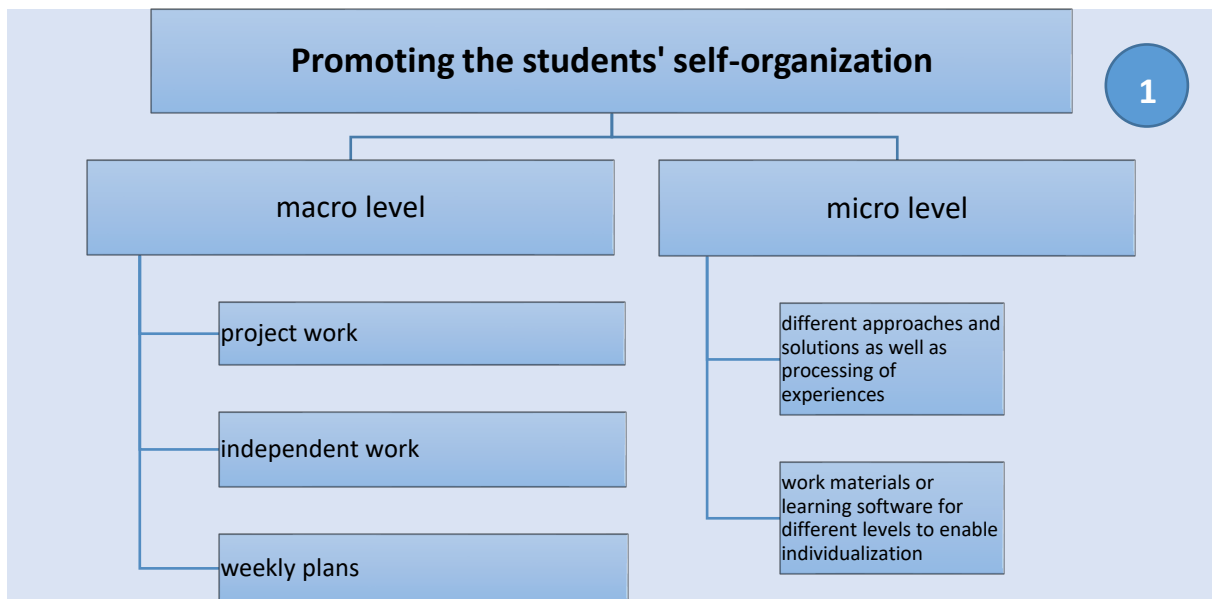
Basically, we can distinguish two different strategies that complement each other:

promoting the students' self-organization

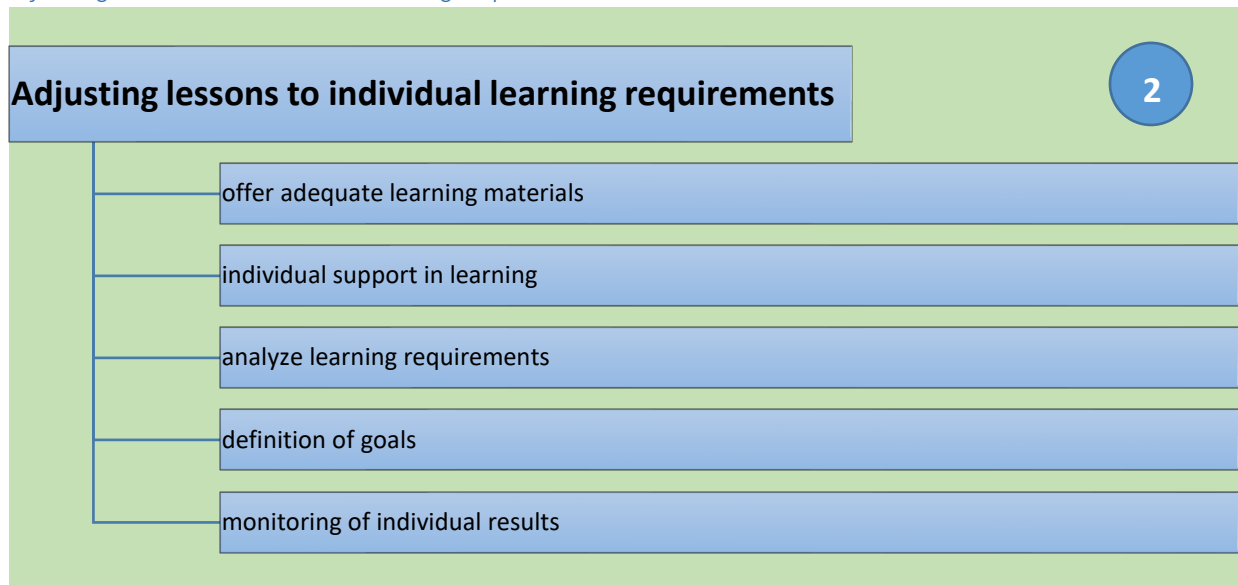
adjusting the lessons to individual learning requirements



Promoting the self-organization of students



Adjusting lessons to individual learning requirements



Elements of individualized teaching

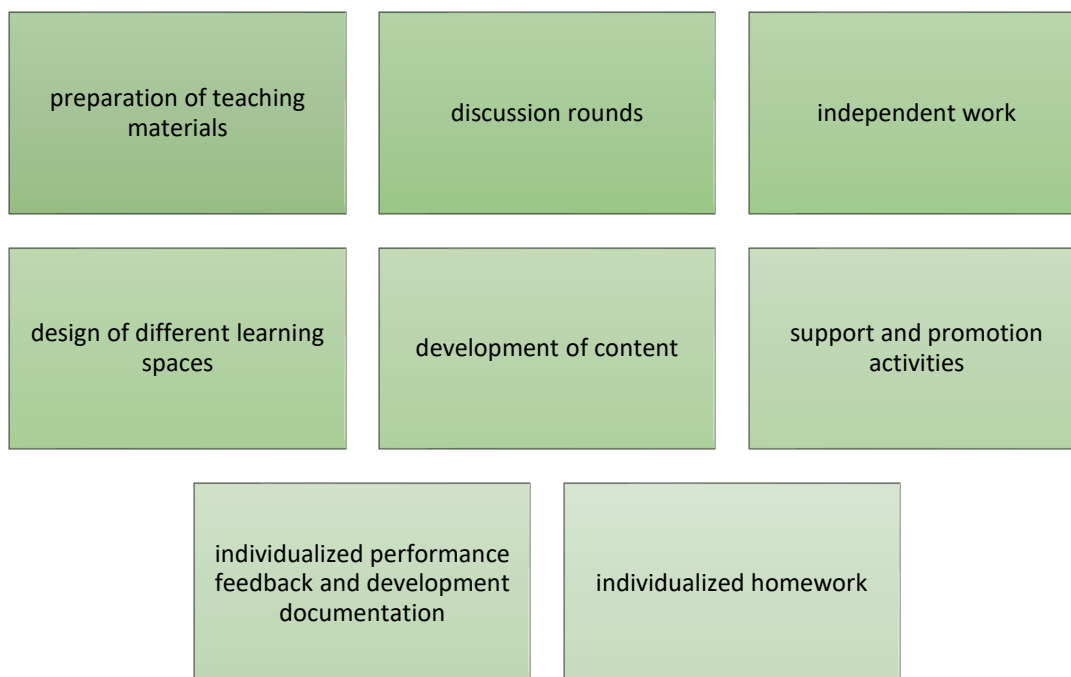
Below you will find a compact overview of the specific elements that enable individualized teaching, based on the strategies mentioned above:

- Promoting the self-organization of students
- Adjusting lessons to individual learning requirements






Structure:




In individualized teaching, traditional frontal teaching is only one of many methods. Depending on their performance and their current level of knowledge, students are assigned various tasks. They are free to complete these tasks however they wish. The students must be able to fulfill the task by applying the corresponding methods and by working in a planned, purposeful, constructive and rule-bound manner.

Depending on the task, **individual work**, **partner work** and **group work** are possible.



Hint:
More about individual work, partner work and group work can be found in the chapter [Methods of individualized teaching](#) on page 68



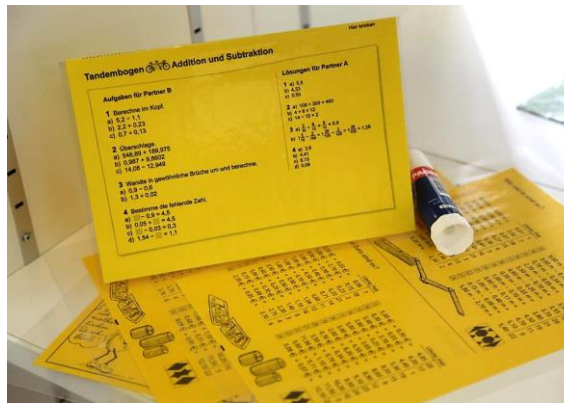
Hint:
in our method database you will find a description of the following activity:
[Healthy space](#)
finalised to support time management and study strategies.

A fundamental condition for the success of individualized teaching is that students are able to apply learning and working techniques. Therefore, these techniques should be regularly discussed and applied during the introductory, working and reflection phases of the lessons. In addition, students should work on their communicative and cooperative skills and abilities.

Design of teaching materials

Students should be able to work on the learning offers as independently as possible. Therefore, teaching materials must be quantitatively and also qualitatively differentiated.





Discussion circles

Morning circle/Introduction: Each school day begins with a morning circle. This provides a forum for the students to learn and practice the rules of conversation.

After the morning circle, during which the teachers also discuss certain projects, rules or organizational matters with the students, the independent work phase begins.



Hint:

Read here about a school that introduced morning circles with great success:

[Class Council](#)



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity

[I get excited at school](#)

which proposes circle time and emotional learning strategies.





Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity

[One Moment](#) and [Smiling Minds](#)

which provides an opportunity for a morning stretch and debate students' emotions.

Topic/Work: Frontal lessons are held for the whole class. This allows all students to quickly learn new content or repeat and consolidate subjects already covered (e.g. discussion of spelling problems, essay writing, studying mathematical methods, introducing a topic...).

In heterogeneous classes with stronger and weaker learners it may make sense to divide the class into smaller groups. You can also offer a topic only to certain subgroups (half-topics). In the meantime, students who are not part of a group can work independently.

Closing circle/Reflection: The closing circle takes place at the end of each school day or at the end of a school week. The goal is to give students the opportunity to reflect on their own work behavior or to present work results and receive feedback from teachers. Students in higher classes present their results to the group, learn to deal with feedback and to assess their own achievements and those of their fellow students.

Independent work

During independent work time, the usual lesson plans are suspended and the students can choose to work on different subjects. This approach allows students to focus on learning content at their own pace and according to their abilities and interests. They have all the time they need. Underachieving students are under less pressure and high-performing students don't get bored. During the independent work phase, the teachers act primarily as **learning guides** instead of mere knowledge mediators by being available to answer questions and monitor work results.



Hint:

In our method database you will find a description of the following activity


[What is today's art?](#)

which comprises individual and group reflection exercises and students' point of view are considered.

Design of different learning space

During independent work time students may go to various learning locations and find the one they feel comfortable with. A pleasant environment will support their learning efforts. These spaces are supervised by teachers who are also available as contact persons or actively approach students to offer them specific learning opportunities.



Hint:
 Here you read about a great example of a participatory project redesigning the classrooms - involving the children in the planning process provided for a lot of learning along the way next to more suitable learning environments.
[We make school](#)

Planning of learning content

All students receive schedules with topics for the individual subjects. Depending on their level of achievement and pace of work, the students receive an individual plan. The aim is to carry out these plans more and more independently and to register completed tasks themselves. Once students have completed a task, they mark it as “done” in their work plan. Thereby, students, teachers and parents always have an overview of completed and unfinished tasks.

Support and demand offers

In addition to independent work, there are obligatory support and demand offers. This ensures students also learn content they might not work on during the independent work time. The workload can be structured for individual students with the help of **compulsory tasks (weekly plans, daily plans)**. However, the aim is to enable all students to work independently and take over responsibility for their studies.

Individualized performance feedback and documentation of learning development

Basically, teachers have to **control** and sign off on all completed tasks.

Once students have finished studying a defined topic, they can register for a knowledge test. Unlike an exam, however, this is a rather manageable workload. The aim of this form of feedback is to provide students with a continuous, clear and comprehensible awareness for their individual performance level. This allows them to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and define areas for improvement.



Hint:

In chapter

[Feedback in class - Providing helpful feedback using attribution theory](#)
on page 53

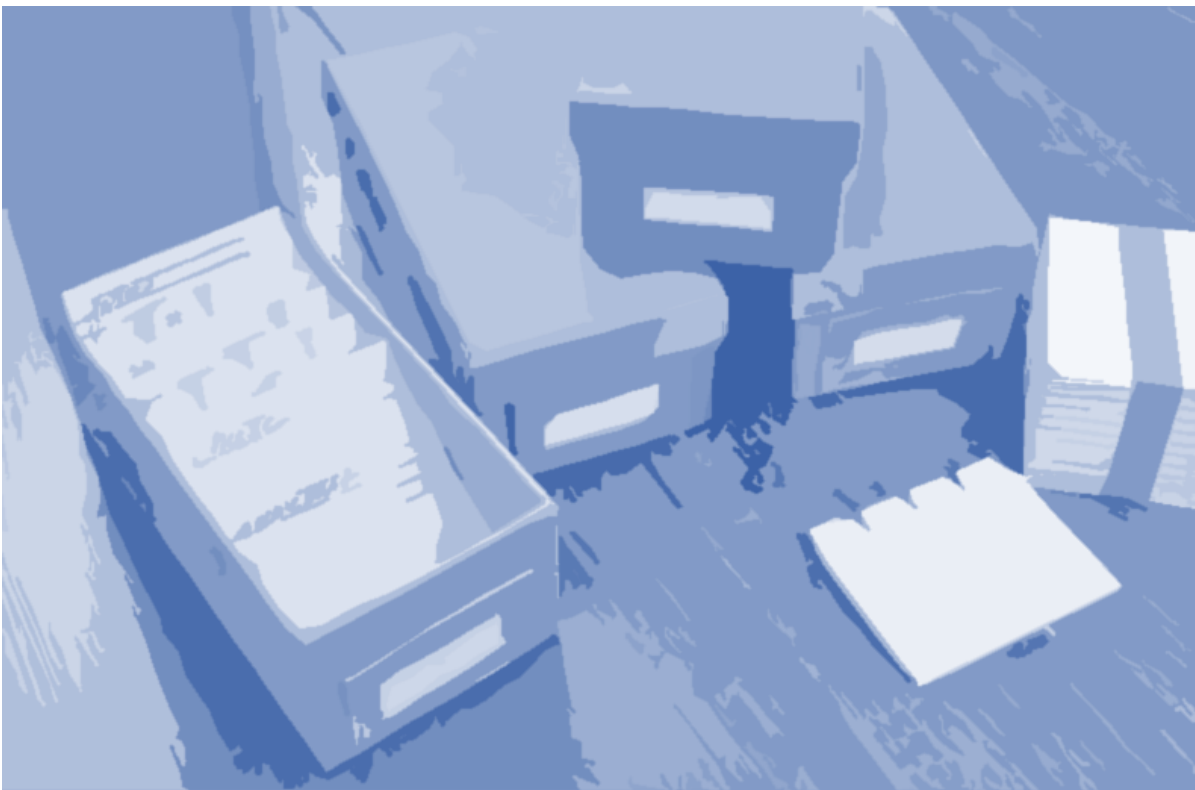
you will find suggestions on how to give constructive feedback to students – even or especially when they need to be made aware of weaknesses.



Hint:

The learning boxes are a great tool to support autonomous learning and individualized performance feedback:

[Learning boxes](#)



In addition to the traditional report cards, the following feedback methods can be useful:

parent – child meetings at school

- 2 to 3 mal times per school year, students participate
- explanation of the learning development according to the results that have been discussed before in the „pedagogic conferences “
- review of the students' self assessment form
- definition of support and demand focus areas (agreements)
- weekly plans, planning books, treasure maps and self assessments form the base for the parent-child-meetings in relation to their work and social behavior as well as their performance level in math and English. The teachers complement these assessments with their own observations.

self assessment form for students

- self-assessment and assessment of the teacher in terms of main competence areas

student/- student feedback rounds

- continous self assessment of independent work
- student/- student feedback during the morning circle
- student/- student feedback during the literature/presentation circle

written assessment

- spelling
- reading
- regular written assessments in almost all subjects
- math tests

weekly plans (grades 1/2) / planning books (grades 3/4)

- documentation of independent work/control by teacher
- differentiated learning offers
- option to create day plans

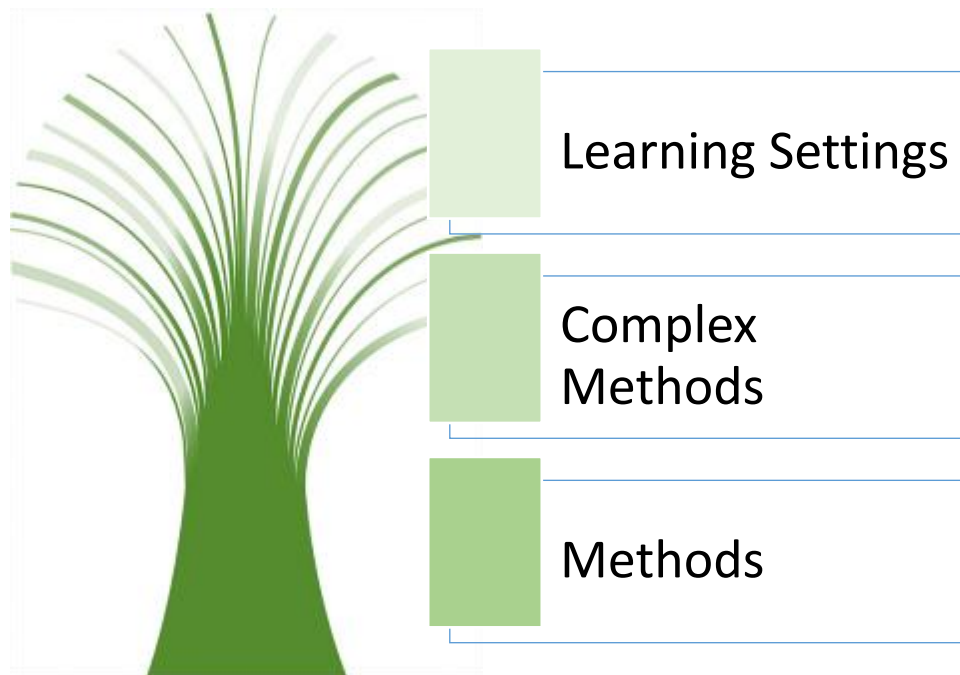
Individual homework

Considering the students' level of learning development is very individual, therefore it makes little sense to give all students the same homework. As many parents also help their children, homework is not particularly meaningful as far as the actual level of knowledge of the respective student is concerned. In the sense of individualized teaching, you should attempt to give students different tasks according to their current performance level and level of knowledge.



Learning Settings and Methods of Individualized Teaching


According to our research, educators who practice individualized teaching like to distinguish between the following hierarchically structured pedagogical approaches:



These three methodological approaches are briefly described below and examples are provided:

Methods of individualized teaching

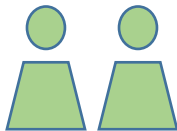
There are multiple methods depending on the objectives. In our research we found that these are quite similar to methods used in adult education. Some methods and their goals for various group settings are described in more detail below:

individual work	
Use individual work in the classroom in order to	
1 student individual work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• give students the opportunity to review the material they have just studied and to assess whether this content is of importance to them. In this case, you are working again with the "it pays off - sensor" of your students.• to give a special meaning to learning about the topic. This method is required if you want your students to engage in a very personal way.• to give your students the chance to form resolutions on how they will apply the learning material in practice (transfer).

group work

Working in pairs is suitable for intensive and intimate editing of content

2 students partner work



murmur

- For longer inputs, form groups of two (left or right neighbor) at critical points during your presentation. The students receive structured questions and are given the opportunity to discuss what they have just heard as well as to detect possible ambiguities.

from coach to coach

- The students discuss personal matters and give each other feedback in one-on-one conversations.

realize intentions

- students support each other in learning transfer (What do I want to do?)

resolve difficulties

- If there are ambiguities or tensions in the classroom, solutions can be discussed in an intimate atmosphere.

group work

Three students working together may also lead to an extensive discussion of the topic, plus a third perspective is added!

3 students group work



brainstorming

- Use this method if you want to develop new ideas.
- Also apply it when you want your students to work intensively with each other.

short role-playing games

- One student can take over the role of observer and give feedback. This is a suitable exercise if you want all students to engage in a short role play and receive feedback.

counselling

- One student phrases a question or request, the other two act as coaches and provide support and Hint. In contrast to working as a pair, here we gain the advantage of an added perspective!



Hint:

In our method database you will also find a method for working with three people:

[Reflecting in Triads](#)

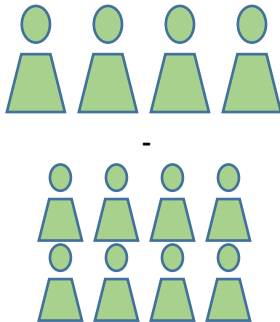


group work

parallel working groups

If you work in groups, you will encounter difficulties when presenting the results. Students can quickly become bored since each group has worked on the same topics. You can prevent this by forming two larger groups ahead of the presentations. One group can then find and present all the common results, while the other group shows all the differences.

4 to a maximum of 8
students
group work



gallery from two perspectives

- Distribute the posters with the results along the walls, similar to an art gallery. One group's task is to find all the similarities, while the other group looks for differences.

group meetings

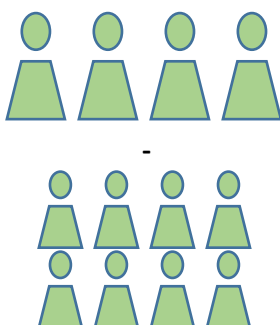
- Two groups go through the posters before the presentation and look for similarities as well as differences which they then present to the whole class.

group work

for different tasks

If groups are to present different topics to the whole class, it often leads to the problem that students only pay attention to the presentation of their own group. To prevent this, you can use the following methods:

4 to a maximum of 8
students
group work



press conference

- The listeners become reporters. Create a press conference setting! The students are invited to actively ask questions.

hearing

- Each group presents its results to potential clients. The "jury" must carefully listen and consider whether the presentation makes sense to them, as they have to come to an assessment afterwards.



Hint:

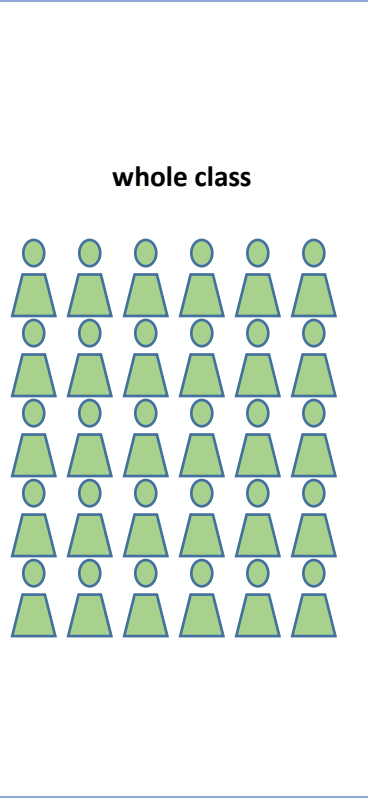
Group work can be highly beneficial in heterogeneous classrooms. In our method database, you will find the following method:

[Group Activities in Heterogeneous Classes](#)

Through this method, students with different performance levels work together in groups and are encouraged to help each other learn.



If you work with the entire class, you are faced with the challenge of holding the attention of as many students as possible. Therefore, keep it short! For longer inputs, check whether you can interrupt your presentation in appropriate places and whether your students can consolidate the material through suitable exercises!



- topic**
- This form of teaching takes place as frontal instruction. This allows all students to quickly learn new content or to repeat and consolidate subjects already covered (e.g. discussion of spelling problems, essay writing, studying mathematical methods, introducing a topic...).
- educational conversation**
- Develop the learning material together with the whole class on the basis of prepared questions that inspire the students to think and engage in a discussion.
- flash**
- ... is a method to quickly assess the current mood in the class through one short sentence from each student.
- survey of experts**
- Your students develop questions on a topic and write them down on moderation cards. You answer them in your role as the expert afterwards. Hereby, it's also an option to introduce issues that are important but have not been noted on the cards.



Complex Methods of Individualized Teaching

Complex methods are far more comprehensive than simple methods. In many cases, they consist of two or more simple methods of individualized teaching combined. They contribute to the learner's greatest possible involvement in lesson activities and in this way promote the active generation and processing of knowledge by the learner.

World Café

The World Café is a workshop method developed by the American corporate consultants, Juanita Brown and David Isaacs. It is suitable for group sizes from twelve up to 2000 participants (large group moderation) and is therefore easily applied in classrooms. The goal is to bring the participants together in constructive discussions of relevant topics with appropriate questions.

The formation of small groups allows all the participants the chance to speak and to actively contribute to discussions and the exchange of knowledge.

In this way, the World Café promotes self-development, self-monitoring and self-organization of all participants, making the performance advantages apparent and the strengths of the group tangible.



A World Café lasts from about 45 minutes to three hours. The participants stand or sit at small tables spread around the room in groups of four to a maximum of six people. The tables are equipped with pens or markers and covered with white "tablecloths" (often flipchart paper) that can be written on and where notes on contributions to the discussion can be recorded. A moderator introduces the way things work, explains the process and points out rules of conduct or Café etiquette. "Hosts" at each table ensure the content connection of the insights from different rounds of discussion.

Over the course of the session two or three different questions are worked on in successive discussion rounds of 15 to 30 minutes at all tables. Between rounds the groups are remixed. Only the hosts stay at one table for the entire time: they greet the new guests, briefly summarize the previous discussion and set the discourse back in motion.

The World Café concludes with a reflection phase.



Group Puzzle

A topic is divided into several subtopics and cooperatively worked out.



Phase 1 – Individual Work:

Each student is assigned a subtopic and works on it using prepared materials.



Phase 2 – Expert Group:

All of the students who have worked on the same subtopic come together to discuss it, expand on it, and to work out the most important aspects.



Phase 3 – Mixed Groups:

The groups are remixed so that in each one every subtopic has at least one representative. The individual students introduce their subtopics to the group one after another.

At the end of the group work, a complete picture of the topic has been created out of the individual puzzle pieces.



(possible) Phase 4 – Evaluation:

The students test their knowledge with a quiz or similar task, reflect on their learning success and the learning process . . .



Learning Settings of Individualized Teaching

Learning settings are elaborately designed forms of learning– in terms of physical space as well as method. They employ both simpler and more complex learning methods, incorporate the learner as much as possible into the planning, execution and presentation of educational results, and thereby promote holistic and self-determined learning.

Learning Office

Students learn in a self-regulated and individualized way in a prepared environment.



Working instructions and materials are prepared in such a way that students can learn with them in a self-determined way. All resources and materials are available in a room – the Learning Office – as well as working places for the students. Lessons in this subject take place at arranged times in the Learning Office. The students work individually at their own pace, with peers or alone, toward their own learning goals. In the process, they are coached by one or more teachers who support them in their learning processes and give them regular feedback on finished tasks. They make sure that at least the required learning goals of a school year or semester are reached.

The verification of what was learned can also be integrated into the Learning Office. As soon as students have reached a learning goal, they can volunteer to demonstrate it with a Learning Check.

Explorative Learning

Explorative learning is a dynamic process with unpredictable results in which interdisciplinary thinking and working are a central focus.

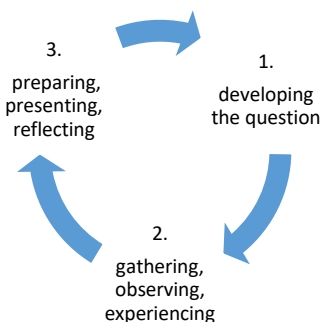
Exploratory children and youth can:

independently develop their own relevant questions or hypotheses,

search for answers with the help of various methods (more complex and simpler methods of individualized teaching),

design their own research process and reflect on it, and

prepare and present their results.



An exploratory process always consists of several phases which, however, should not be regarded as a rigid step-by-step model. It is much more of a dynamic framework in which all phases can be placed.

Research is a dynamic process consisting of several phases that are tied together and continually influence one another.

In its basic structure, exploratory learning can be implemented by elementary school children in Science and Social Studies as well as by youth in working on relevant questions in all major and minor subjects.

The following phases are relevant in research processes of all types:



Developing the Question

Arousing curiosity through appropriate questions – that is the basis for exploratory learning! At the very start of every research process, therefore, a topic and a correlating question must be developed.

Research questions fulfill the following criteria:

- The researcher themselves have great interest in finding the answers to these questions.
- The research questions are absolutely relevant for the learners because they are directly related to their lives and can be tied to what the children and youth already know about the world.
- The children and youth chose these questions themselves.
- The research questions cannot be answered with a simple „yes“ or „no“, nor can the answers be found in an encyclopedia or the internet.

Gathering, Observing, Experiencing

Research, to a certain extent, is detective work; it means observing a situation or issue from different angles and being able to get to the bottom of something.

Which methods the researchers use in their inquiries and substantiations depends on them as well as on the context in which the exploratory learning takes place.

Researchers can freely compile their own individual approaches out of the following steps:

- making conjectures,
- conducting experiments,
- observing and documenting the observations,
- researching in the internet or library,
- consulting experts,
- gathering materials,
- photographing,
- etc. ...

Preparing, Presenting, Reflecting

Materials have to be organized and results presented – and not just at the end of a research process. During the research, the explorers have to repeatedly exchange information with their “colleagues”. Here the simple methods of individualized teaching described above come into play in that they support the researchers in reflecting on their own ways of proceeding.

Important questions for reflection are:

- Did the researcher succeed in developing his/her own questions?
- What was the starting point for the children/youth? What is the significance for their own current life situations?
- What answers did they find? What remains unanswered and requires further research?
- What new questions result from the work so far?
- What methods did the researchers use? Did they employ different methods?



A Practical Example from Austria - COOL – Cooperative Open Learning

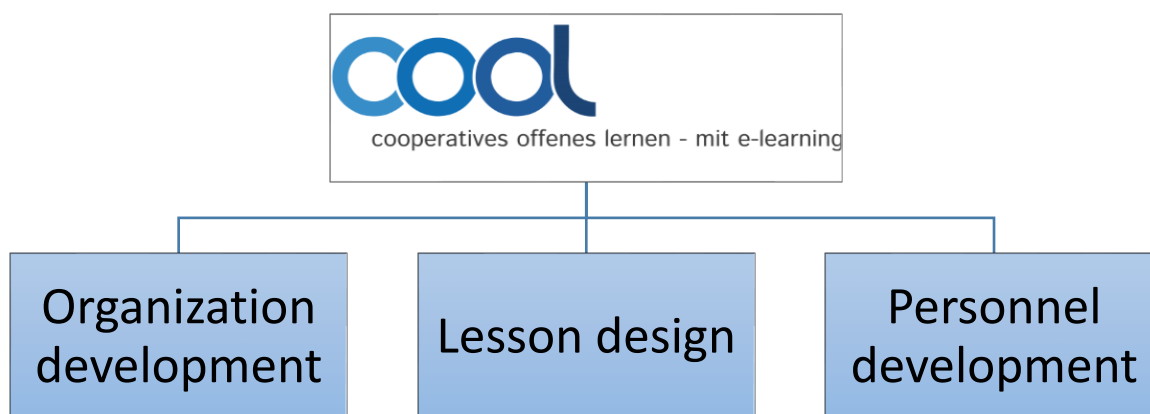


COOL stands for Cooperative Open Learning and is a teacher initiative that has been active in Austria for over 20 years. Beyond the borders of Austria, COOL has also been met with great interest. Cooperations are currently underway at the school level as well as with school boards, universities, and at the level of teacher training and continuing education, especially in Lower Saxony (Germany) and Southern Tyrol. As a cooperating partner in EU projects, COOL continually contributes Know How, also in order to learn and to widen its own perspective.

Cooperative Open Learning sees itself as an educational teaching and school development approach. Therefore, COOL is not a teaching method, but a holistically

informed, systematic approach in which the attitude of a school's participating actors stands at the center – "a way of life" as Helen Parkhurst calls her reform-pedagogical approach.

In this way, COOL stands on the three columns of school development described in this publication and offers students, teachers and schools the chance for continuing improvement:



In the following section, the aspect of lesson design will now be singled out and presented with examples:

The Dalton Plan from Helen Parkhurst builds the foundation of COOL. In exactly the same way, COOL does not see itself as a finished model, but rather an approach that in each school location is developed and advanced.

The 3 COOL principles, according to which this teacher initiative works, are:





Freedom

- Free space for self-directed holistic, interdisciplinary learning is created in order to enable freedom of choice in tasks, their sequence, setting and social form.
- These free spaces are used by students as well as teachers to discover and develop their potential.

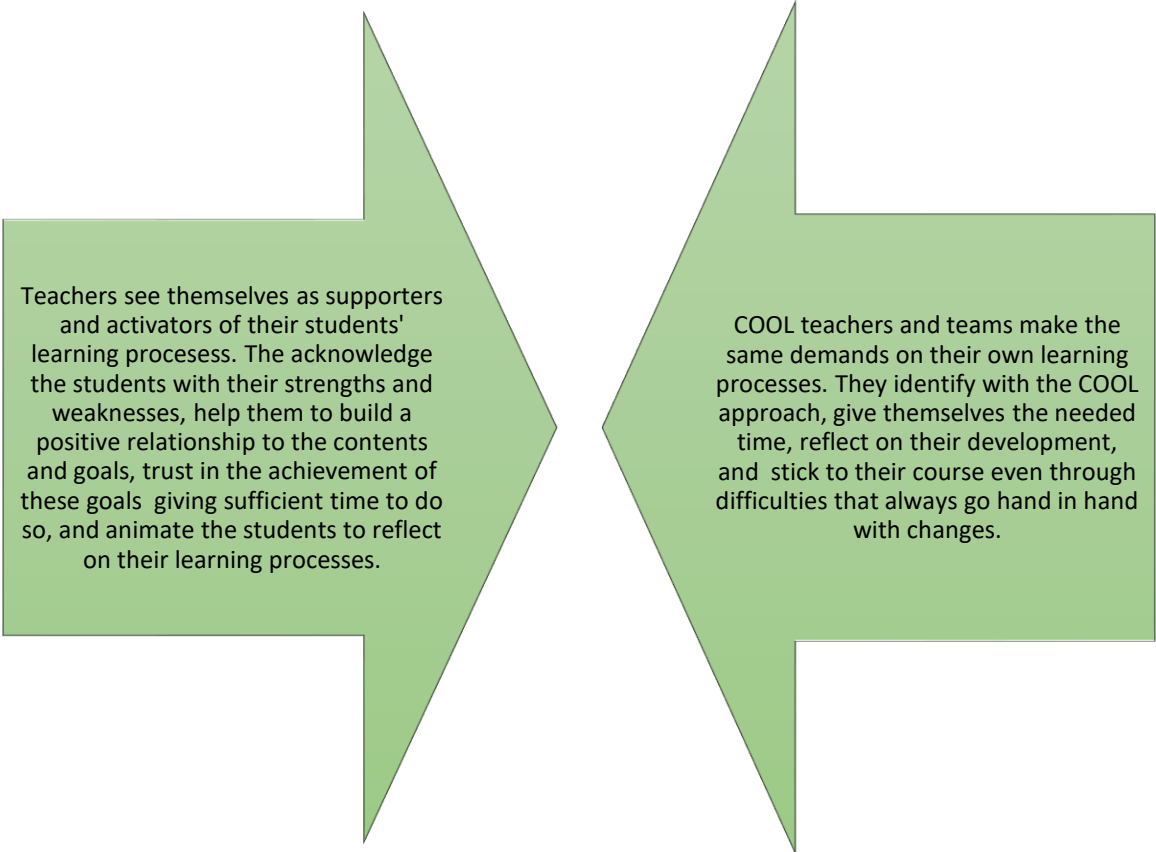
Cooperation

- Teachers and students cooperate with one another in the most varying of settings and learn both with and from each other. In this way they can further develop their social and personal competence and strengthen their ability to work in teams.
- Teachers cooperate with students in that they accompany their learning with esteem and at eye level.

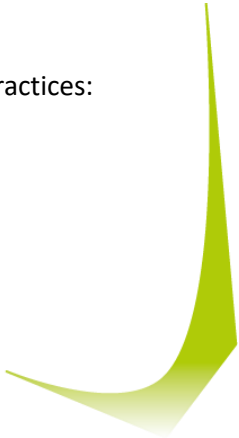
Self-responsibility

- In COOL lessons, students taking responsibility is empowered in that they independently plan and organize their own work. They also take responsibility for their surroundings while learning together.
- Class assemblies that take place regularly offer additional space for active participation in decision-making processes.

The pedagogical attitude standing behind COOL means:



The following significant building blocks illustrate how COOL is implemented in school practices:



- The educators cooperate in class teacher teams: If the learners are to be capable of teamwork then the teachers must be so too. There are regular team meetings, a common retreat at the beginning of the school year, and conferences of the class teacher teams for reflection, planning and further development of instruction work.

class teacher teams

- The students work on written, often interdisciplinary assignments (work tasks) whose formulated goals are oriented toward established competences in the curriculum.

written, often interdisciplinary assignments

- In approximately a third of the time in COOL lessons (COOL hours, COOL days, COOL blocks) the learners can decide freely when, where and how they will accomplish the assigned tasks by the due dates given. The gradual opening of lessons in many subjects (or all , if possible) trains content-based, social, and personal competence in equal measure.

free time allocation for assignments

- The free and independent working phases
- Die freien Arbeitsphasen ermöglichen den Lehrenden erst die Veränderung der Rolle vom lehrerInnenzentrierten Unterricht zu ModeratorInnen und BegleiterInnen des Lernprozesses ihrer SchülerInnen. Sie können so auf die Lernenden einzeln eingehen und diese auch gezielt und individuell fördern.

teachers as moderators and companions along the learning processes

- Der Einstieg in den fächerbezogenen und fächerübergreifenden COOL-Unterricht und dessen Reflexion ist Basis und Trainingsfeld für die Einführung weiterer offener Formen: Projektunterricht, forschendes Lernen, themenzentrierter Unterricht, Arbeit in Lernbüros oder offene Lernzeiten, in denen SchülerInnen ihre selbst definierten Lernziele verfolgen.

open forms of learning

- Die Nutzung von digitalen Medien und Methoden des eLearning („eCOOL“) ergänzen und unterstützen die differenzierte Unterrichtsarbeit (Lernplattformen, elektronische Assignments, learning Apps, eFeedback, ePortfolio,...)

use of digital media

- In regularly held class conferences, the learners discuss their concerns, reflect on their progress, get training in conversational rules, writing protocols and moderation techniques. They learn to take active part in decision-making processes and experience democracy in the process.

regularly held class conferences

- Along with the legally prescribed summative forms of performance evaluation (tests, exams), formative means of evaluation are also used, such as self-reflection or portfolios, in order to support the students' change of roles from consumer of the lessons to self-directed learner.

additional formative means of performance evaluation

- Through regular parental contributions, the parents are encouraged to provide feedback and co-design the learning process.

parents as partners in education

Most schools find their entry point into COOL in that school teams (2 or more teachers per school) take part in the 4-semester COOL training course. In addition to being introduced to the theoretical foundations of COOL, the participants work primarily on their own attitudes while getting to know innovative (COOL-) school locations. The core of the course is built around the COOL development project for the team's own school which is initiated and accompanied within the framework of the course. In this way, the transfer into the daily proceedings and thereby the sustainable teaching as well as school development in the principles of COOL is ensured.





Hint:

Read here about a school that made space in the timetable for COOL lessons where there is space for autonomous self-directed learning for students:

[COOL approach](#)

Concurrently with the testing and development of its own approach in practice, COOL relies on regularly juxtaposing its principles with current scientific findings. The scientific support and underpinning of the Johannes Kepler University in Linz (Professor Herbert Altrichter) should make the successes already experienced in practice apparent while also providing new insights for the further development of COOL.

On the topic of teachers' „attitudes“ within the framework of the project on self-direction competence of educators, COOL cooperates with the University of Salzburg (Professor Franz Hofmann) and is developing continuing education formats to professionalize teachers and school administrators in this area.

The COOL community, which is probably the first community of practice in the Austrian educational sector, is continually reinforced at various levels: every two years a COOL Biennale, a pedagogical trade convention, takes place. Every year in autumn, COOL multipliers meet to exchange ideas and further develop their own competences as well as those from COOL. Using digital support, intercommunication is also promoted and cooperation intensified.

The teacher's initiative COOL is open to all interested parties. It is not only a component of the educational landscape in Austria and beyond, but also hopes to make valuable contributions to the further development of school practices in Austria and far beyond its borders.

You can find further information about COOL at the following websites:



Note:

At the website



**COOL cooperative open learning –
with e-learning**

you will find more information on contact possibilities to this teacher's initiative

[**https://www.cooltrainers.at/**](https://www.cooltrainers.at/)



Human resources development



The subject of this chapter is how to prepare, accompany and support your staff during a process of change: "The comfort zone model as a method for changes".

Teachers throughout Europe are at risk of burnout, so this could also be a topic at your school. Therefore, we have devoted a separate section to this important topic. Learn more about the typical phases of burnout, what indicators you can observe in your employees and what support you can offer.



Human resources development

Change does not always come easy. In organizations - and schools are organizations – some employees can build up great resistance. This can render the management of a change process considerably more difficult.

In our interviews, principals have repeatedly presented us with a model that they like to use as an introduction to performance reviews and staff meetings:

Support for change processes – the comfort zone model as a method for changes

Man is a creature of habit...

Often, the reactions of teachers to planned changes at a school are overlooked and not considered. The staff is literally pushed into the change process.

Most people, however, tend to make themselves at home in their personal comfort zone. It takes a lot of time and energy for them to let go of familiar structures and behavioral patterns.

The quality of management culture at a school reveals itself particularly in times of change: excellent school management involves the teaching staff from the very beginning.

When someone is taken by surprise they usually react with resistance – it's a very basic human reaction. The earlier you involve the teachers in a change process, the better you can control the process.

Through performance reviews, you can find out what support your employees want (or need) in order to be able to accept and keep up with the changes. Support your staff in leaving their comfort zone. As a rule, your employees have become accustomed to a certain routine, so they mainly stay within their comfort zone in their daily work. They prefer to do what they are good at and indeed they often have a very high level of competence in the respective areas.

However, when changes occur, they must leave their comfort zone and enter the learning zone. This means doing things they haven't done yet, but they could learn or do in the future. Most employees rarely take the initiative to cross (old) familiar boundaries on their own initiative. Therefore, school management must support their employees during change processes.



Tip

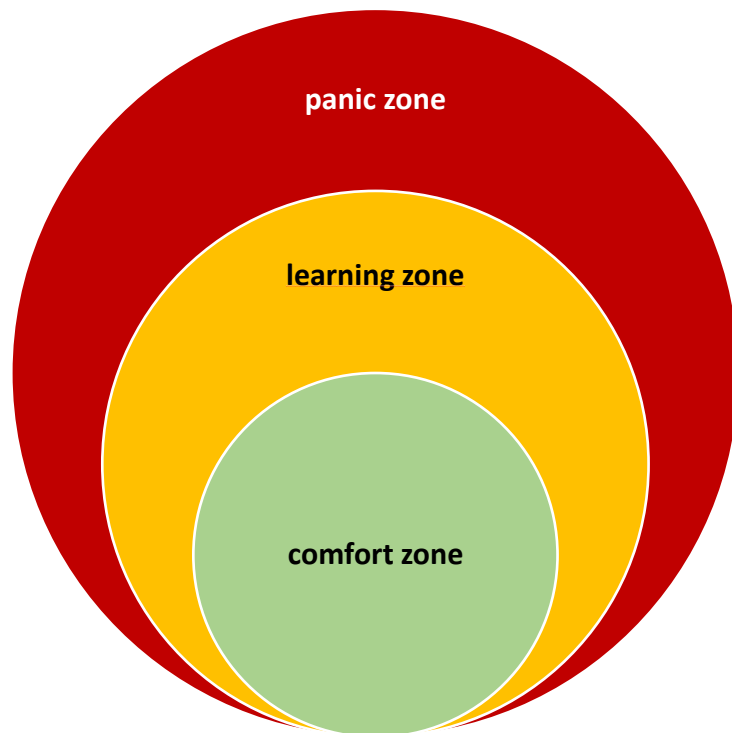
- Make yourself and your teaching staff familiar with the comfort zone model and use it in performance reviews and staff meetings to promote personal development!



The sections of the comfort zone model

The comfort zone model distinguishes three sections in the process of change:

the **comfort zone**,
the **learning zone**
and
the **panic zone**.



Comfort zone

Every person has their comfort zone in which they feel content and can accomplish their tasks confidently and routinely, since they are aware of their own strengths and abilities. Outside of this comfort zone begins the unknown, with new tasks and responsibilities beyond the familiar boundaries. That's why leaving the comfort zone usually causes unease; your employees have to overcome themselves – and many of them struggle with doubts or fears of failure.

Learning zone

In this borderland between comfort zone and new challenges lies the learning zone: here you have the chance to grow, to learn and to make new experiences. If these experiences are positive and your employees are able to meet the challenges, their comfort zone increases. However, if they advance too far or if they want too much too fast, the risk of failure increases.

Panic zone

In the panic zone lies everything that cannot be mastered, that can no longer be controlled. Risk and danger become overpowering, therefore learning is no longer possible. When failure is experienced in this zone, employees usually withdraw back into their comfort zone and even increase its boundaries. It will then become much more difficult to motivate employees to make a new attempt.





Tip!

- As part of the school management you can support your staff throughout the individual zones, especially when they are in the panic zone. You should adjust your reactions to the phase an employee is currently in, and the direction you want them to take:

Ways out of the comfort zone

Involve your staff by providing detailed information on the change process and by making them part of the decision making process whenever possible.

Schedule one-on-one meetings to talk about the comfort zone model and what zone a staff member is in at the moment (coaching).

Make your teaching staff aware of objectives, meaningfulness and necessity of the changes.

Develop different scenarios together.

Determine realistic goals together and plan measures to reach them.

Everything is better together: providing support in the learning zone

Describe perspectives and opportunities, agree on development and performance goals.

Identify potential for improvement, support these areas with trainings and coachings.

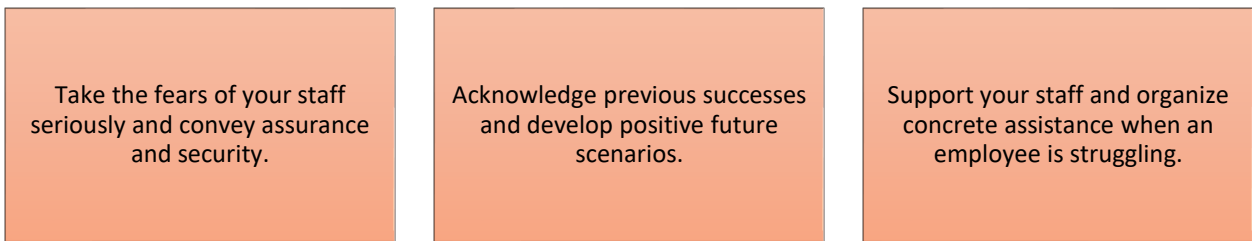
Distribute information, communicate status reports and partial successes.

Promote cooperation of the teaching staff.

Recognize performance improvements, praise employees and give feedback.



Don't panic...! First aid in the panic zone



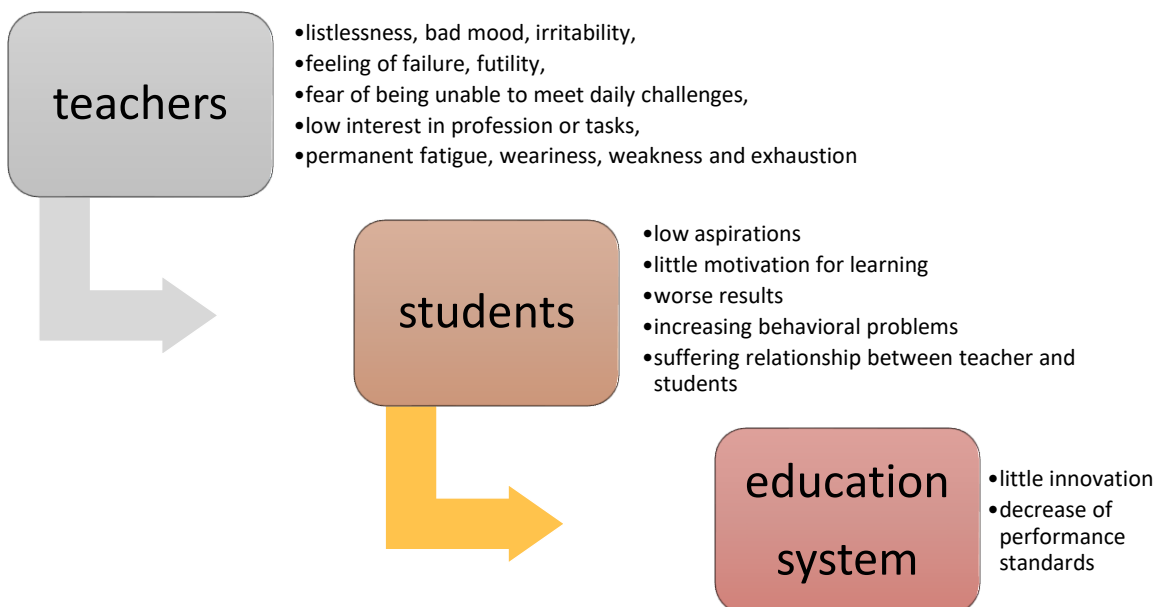
Burnout as a health risk for teachers

Throughout Europe, teachers and principals are under a great deal of stress due to the high complexity of the challenges they face. They are encouraged to teach in increasingly multicultural environments, integrate students with special needs and use ICT to teach more effectively, work with new assessment and evaluation processes, and effectively involve parents in their respective schools.

They are under growing pressure, which is exerted on them from various sides: Students, parents, media, political stakeholders and other interest groups place multiple and often contradictory demands on educators.

According to various studies, the burnout rate of teachers in Europe is estimated between 25% and 35%. This psychological suffering has a negative impact on the teachers themselves as well as on their students and consequently, on the entire educational system.

The following overview shows symptoms of teacher burnout and its effects on students and ultimately on the education system:



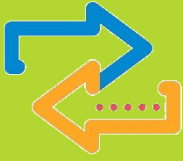
New challenges (including the objectives of the EU and member states) posed by the education system and by society cannot be effectively tackled by teachers struggling with burnout.

Burnout

Burnout, also known as burnout syndrome, is a special form of personal crisis that begins with rather unremarkable early symptoms and can end in the complete inability to work or even suicide.



Burnout is accompanied by emotional exhaustion and a feeling of being overworked as well as reduced performance satisfaction. Both external factors of the (working) environment as well as personal dispositions such as perfectionism or the inability to differentiate are assumed to be causes of burnout.



Hint:

The following instrument can be found on our project website:

[Self-evaluation form for teachers](#)

This self-evaluation tool shows you, among other things, which dispositions render you particularly susceptible to stress.

Burnout develops slowly over months and years due to continuous physical, emotional and mental exertion and ends with the physical, mental, psychological and social collapse of those affected.

The main symptoms of burnout are physical and emotional exhaustion, persistent lack of physical and mental performance and motivation and the increasing inability to recover. In some cases, phases of improvement and recovery are followed by further phases of deterioration. Unfortunately, burnout is often not detected in time because the transition from normal exhaustion to the first stages of burnout often go unnoticed and are perceived as normal development.



Hint:

Please see

[Reflect and share to improve practices method](#)

in our database. This approach will increase teachers' support to each other and contribute to the prevention of burnout.

At the same time,

[Smiling Minds](#)

also work emotions with teachers so they can keep a healthy mind needed to provide a happy learning environment for students.



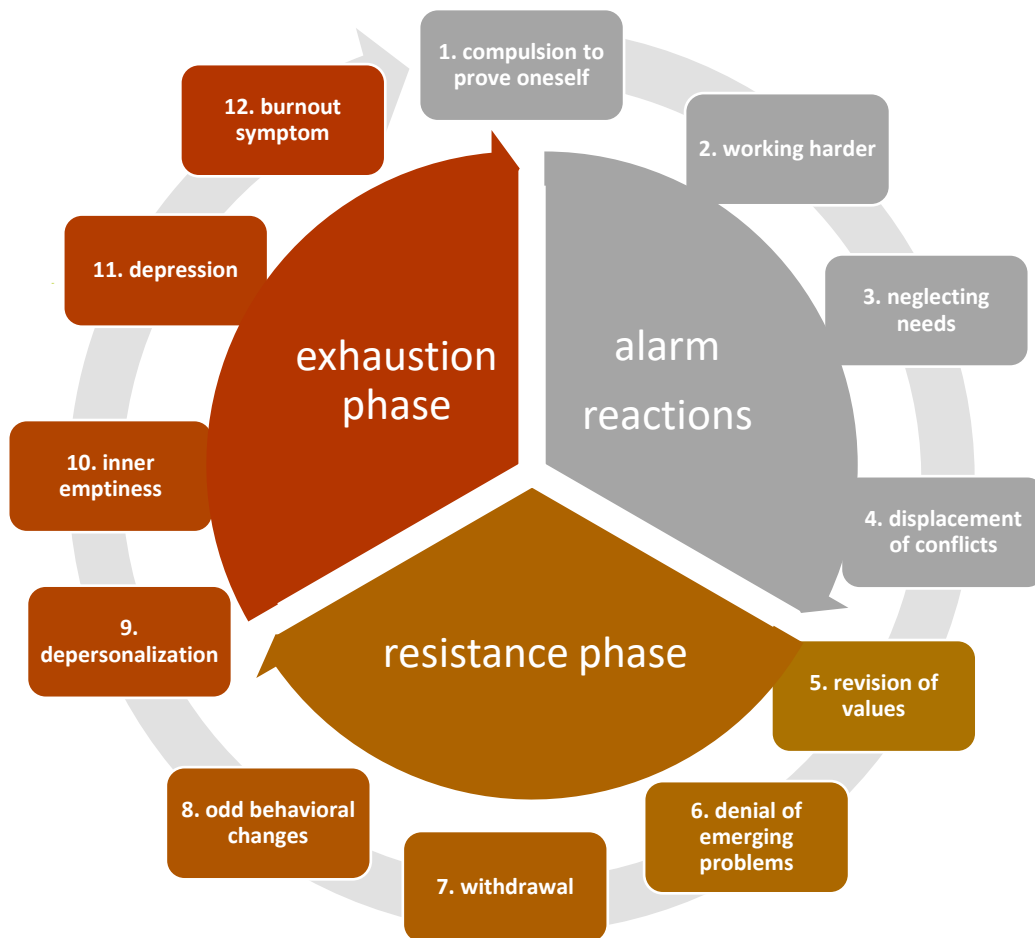
Tip!

- Learn about the different phases of burnout so you can spot the early warning signals when a colleague is at risk of burning out.
- You can then offer your help and support or recommend they seek professional help in time.



Phases and symptoms

There are various burnout models. One well established model is “12 stages of burnout” by *Herbert Freudenberger & Gail North (Freiburg, 1992)*. It is briefly described below:



Often, not all of the 12 stages can be distinguished clearly. The individual steps can also merge or overlap.

alarm reactions

stage1 compulsion to prove oneself	stage 2 working harder	stage 3 neglecting needs	stage 4 displacement of conflicts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> special enthusiasm for work increased expectations of oneself overlooking one's own limits and deferring one's own needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> special willingness to take on new tasks voluntary and unpaid overtime, even on days off, on weekends and during holidays sense of indispensability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chronic neglect of one's own needs increased consumption of coffee, stimulants or cigarettes occasional insomnia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mistakes, e.g.: forgetting appointments, not completing promised tasks, inaccuracy, lack of energy, feeling of weakness abandonment of hobbies



resistance phase

stage 5 revision of values	stage 6 denial of emerging problems	stage 7 withdrawal	stage 8 odd behavioral changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dullness and attention deficit avoiding private contacts that are perceived as stressful relationship problems, signs of relationship burnout increasing cynicism and sarcasm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lack of recognition, disillusionment resistance to go to work, attitude towards work that can be described as internal dismissal increased absenteeism, late start and early end of work day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disorientation and hopelessness, powerlessness, inner emptiness compensatory satisfaction: food, alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex performance reduction, inaccuracy, disorganization, inability to make decisions psychosomatic reactions, weight changes, palpitations, high blood pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eccentricity, self-pity, loneliness, annoyed reaction to well-intended attention reduced initiative and productivity: work-to-rule decreasing social life: indifference, sense of futility decreasing social life: little personal sympathy for others, at the same time excessive attachment to certain individuals, avoidance of professional social contacts

exhaustion phase

stage 9 depersonalization	stage 10 inner emptiness	stage 11 depression	stage 12 burnout symptom
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alienation, inner emptiness functioning on autopilot increasing psychosomatic reactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> switching between strong emotions and inner emptiness phobia, panic attacks and fear of people loneliness, negative attitude towards life occasionally excessive sensual satisfaction, e.g.: rushing to buy snacks, spending sprees, excessive sex without real satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> negative attitude towards life, hopelessness exhaustion, strong desire for prolonged sleep existential despair, suicidal thoughts and intentions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dangerous mental, physical and emotional exhaustion weakened immune system, cardiovascular diseases, gastrointestinal diseases risk of suicide

Assistance with burnout

The first three stages can occur again and again depending on the situation – but if such behaviors persist for a longer period of time or repeat themselves systematically (become chronic), they are definitely warning signals! In a performance review, try to get to the bottom of the causes and suggest appropriate measures in the context of situational and behavioral prevention.



Hint:

Here you will find further information on situational and behavioral prevention:

[Situational and behavioral prevention](#) on page 32



At stages 4 to 8, the physical-mental health and social life of a person can already be affected. In addition to the measures mentioned above, it is important to encourage seeking professional help (life and social counseling, psychological counseling, etc.) in such cases.

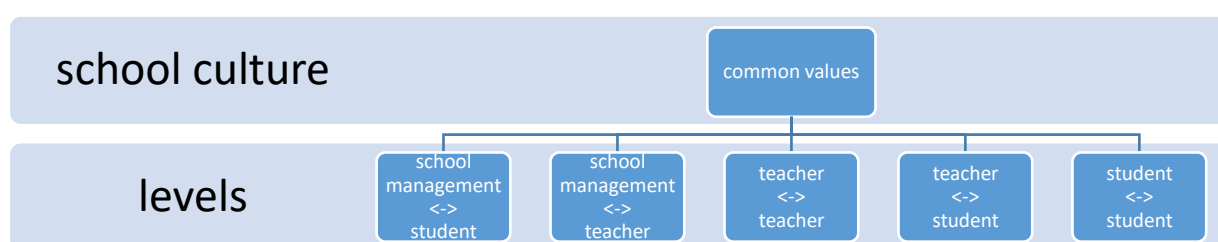
Therapy should be considered from stage 9.

From stage 11 onwards, additional medical treatment is necessary due to the acute health hazard.

Burnout prevention

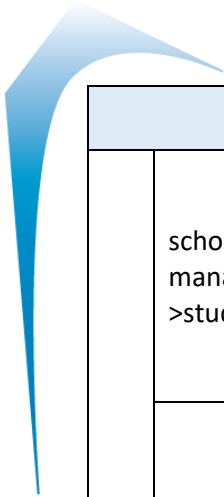
Many methods in our database are the result of attempts to create better working conditions for students, teachers and the whole school organization. Our research has shown that in cases where only behavioral prevention is implemented, but the general conditions don't change, employees are still at risk of burnout and unhealthy behavior.

In this context, successful school management means that the following values should form an essential part of the schools' culture and be reflected in all levels of relationships:

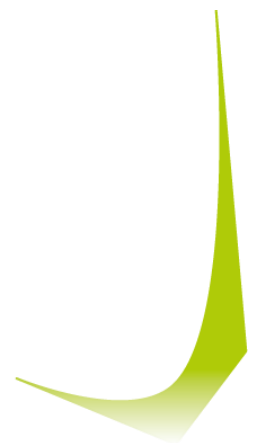


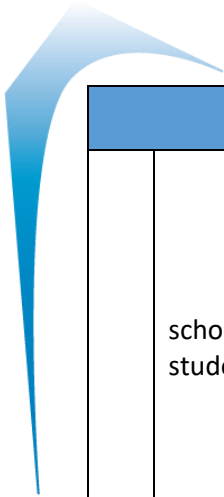
positive identification with the school		
level	school management<->student	Enable your students to be proud of their school. A mission statement containing values that appeal to the students and reflect the special features of the school can be helpful in this context. Organize school events that create opportunities to get to know each other better and enable students and parents to become actively involved. Celebrate festivities and successes together!
	school management<->teacher	Together with the teaching staff, analyze what makes your school special and unique. Compose a mission statement and make sure that it remains up-to-date. Design an attractive school logo and make it visible as often as possible (posters, T-shirts, mailings, etc.) Strengthen the team spirit of the school through recurring teambuilding activities.
	teacher<->teacher	Reflect by yourself and with colleagues what values you find essential and important at your school. Share the results with the school management.
	teacher<->student	Hang up a copy of the mission statement in the classroom. Often you will be able to establish a connection between the school values and the students' life. Encourage reflection and critical analysis of these values to keep them up-to-date. Make the students aware that they represent their school culture not only in their life at school but also to the outside world. Create experiences that encourage students to be proud of their school.
	student<->student	Organize competitions or projects in which students present their work and school to students or other institutions (exchange projects).
		Actions and measures



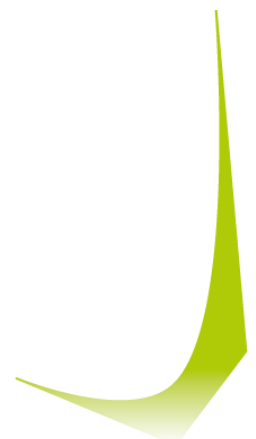


self-determination and co-determination			
level	school management<->student	<p>Show leadership and ask for feedback from your students and their parents (feedback culture).</p> <p>Assign students defined areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Use the voice of the student council to base decisions on broad and common consent.</p> <p>Involve students and parents in school development through creative competitions (idea management).</p>	Actions and measures
	school management<->teacher	<p>Assign specific responsibilities and set up steering groups for clearly defined topics and areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Use methods from organizational development to promote school development with the staff.</p> <p>Consciously design your timetables to allow self-determined and team-oriented work.</p> <p>Act as a role model to show that critical thinking and daring to think outside the box are valued at your school.</p>	
	teacher<->teacher	<p>Use your decision-making competences to get involved in staff meetings with suggestions and ideas (e.g. interdisciplinary project work).</p>	
	teacher<->student	<p>Show leadership and ask for feedback from your students and parents (feedback culture).</p> <p>Use the voice of the student council to base decisions on broad and common consent.</p> <p>Promote the independence and self-responsibility of your students by letting them participate in their own learning processes (individualized teaching).</p>	
	student <-> student	<p>Always encourage your students to form and express their own opinions (culture of reflection and feedback, communication).</p> <p>Assign students defined areas of responsibility within the class management.</p> <p>Create settings in which students can practice self-determined action (peer systems, tutoring).</p>	





respectful relations			
level	school management<-> student	<p>Be aware of your role-model effect. Show the students that meetings at eye level are possible and important in a hierarchical system.</p> <p>Create a school climate of appreciation in which people are not judged solely on their performance.</p> <p>Pay attention to polite manners (e.g. greetings) and set a good example.</p> <p>Establish not only a performance culture but also an atmosphere in which everyone feels encouraged to try something new and make mistakes in order to learn from them (error culture).</p>	Actions and measures
	school management<->teacher	<p>In performance reviews, focus on the strengths and resources of teachers and point out their potential.</p> <p>Always remember to appreciate the commitment of your employees.</p> <p>Vice versa, give your staff the chance to experience your own commitment and to appreciate it accordingly.</p> <p>Organize trainings to strengthen the communication skills of your employees (non-violent communication, feedback based on attribution theory, etc.)</p>	
	teacher<->teacher	<p>Create appropriate settings in which your employees can give each other constructive feedback.</p>	
	teacher<->student	<p>Use attribution theory to give your students personal and appreciative feedback.</p> <p>Continually relate to your students' life by situating the learning material and thus creating possibilities to connect it to their own world.</p> <p>Address the individual skills and abilities of your students through individualized teaching.</p>	
	student<->student	<p>Teach your students communication techniques that support an appreciative class atmosphere and let them regularly reflect on the conversation culture in the classroom.</p> <p>Create opportunities for your students to give each other appreciative feedback.</p>	



build positive relationships and mutual support

level	school management<-> student	Be present in daily school life. Get in contact with your students as much as possible (not only when the rules are violated) and make an effort to remember their names.	Actions and measures
	school management<->teacher	Show an interest in the person in front of you and their state of mind during performance reviews. Use joint activities with the teachers to get in personal and informal contact.	
	teacher<->teacher	Many teachers are still working as lone warriors. Help your employees to become team players who support each other by creating suitable framework conditions!	
	teacher<->student	Ensure that every student feels appreciated as a person through good class management. Show your personality to your students, do not claim to be infallible and omnipresent. Show a personal interest in your students. Consider what suitable type of relationship you can offer your students. Be aware that treating students equally means responding to them and their needs individually. Expect the students to cooperate and support each other.	
	student<-> student	Support your students in building sustainable relationships within the classroom (team building, training of social skills) Create settings in which students can practice teamwork (projects, pair and group exercises, peer systems, mutual learning support, tutoring, etc.).	



mindfulness with oneself and others

level	school management<->student	Take mindfulness seriously and ensure that it can be used as a resource in particularly demanding phases of the school year. Together with your staff, create conditions to integrate mindfulness into everyday school life. Take good care of yourself and set a good example.	Actions and measures
	school management<->teacher	Use the performance review to incorporate mindfulness in interpersonal communication. Try to perceive yourself as a facilitator to make teachers more aware of mindfulness. Consciously establish mindfulness also in meetings and conferences in order to establish it as an attitude and to use its advantages.	
	teacher<->teacher	Observe in what kinds of situations you feel stressed and consciously let go of the tension when the situation is over. Ask for feedback regarding your behavior in stressful situations from colleagues or fill in our questionnaire. Integrate mindfulness into your team meetings and regularly reflect on its use and benefits. You can also use these team meetings as a resource and pool of ideas on how to integrate mindfulness into your lessons.	
	teacher<->student	Remember that you are a role model and take good care of yourself in your daily work. Reflect together with the students on current dynamics and tensions in the classroom. Use the strategies of good class management to ensure everyone has the learning and working conditions they need.	
	student<->student	Identify current dynamics, emotions and needs together with the students. Allow for short moments in which everyone focuses on getting in touch with themselves.	



dealing constructively with diversity

dealing constructively with diversity			
level	school management<->student	<p>Strengthen the sense of belonging by creating appropriate occasions (school events, projects, competitions, etc.). Acknowledge differences and diversity as resources. Always emphasize common and unifying factors, instead of overvaluing dividing and incompatible characteristics. When dividing the students into classes, make sure that synergy effects can be used.</p> <p>Invite parents who are not actively involved in school life to commit themselves by offering low-threshold activities. Use opportunities to emphasize the treatment of diversity issues as a special feature of your school.</p>	Actions and measures
	school management<->teacher	<p>Strengthen your team by promoting the teachers' individual personalities (human resources development). Convey to your team that you trust them, that you know everyone is doing their best and that you stand behind them. Support heterogeneous teams of teachers to cope with heterogeneity in the classroom.</p> <p>Encourage participation in education projects of the EU. Use the comfort zone model to address diversity as an opportunity to learn from each other. Encourage your employees to participate in intercultural trainings.</p>	
	teacher<->teacher	<p>Use your colleagues as a resource to reflect and receive feedback and suggestions for working with students from other cultures (feedback culture, intervision, observation). Make yourself aware of your own cultural background and take an interest in the living conditions of your colleagues. Encourage each other by exchanging ideas – also or especially with those who disagree with you – and acknowledge differences as an enrichment and opportunity to learn from each other (comfort zone model).</p>	
	teacher<->student	<p>Monitor the dynamics in the classroom and react quickly to the first signs of bullying. Use different methods to strengthen the position of outsiders and help them to establish their position within the class. Reflect regularly on your own values and evaluations. Remember that you are a role model and act accordingly, demonstrating a positive approach to diversity.</p> <p>Always emphasize common and unifying factors, instead of overvaluing dividing and incompatible characteristics. Promote the individual strengths and competences of your students (individualized teaching) and refrain as far as possible from comparing students with each other in front of the whole class.</p>	
	student<->student	<p>Promote positive conflict management by establishing clear rules and consequences. Use conflicts in the classroom to learn from them together and to develop a positive approach to different interests and strategies for satisfying needs.</p> <p>Steer intercultural discussions and conflicts away from a personal level and emphasize common values and needs. Organize international student exchange projects.</p>	



fun and joy as driving forces to experience and try new things

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Have the courage to be a pioneer in your field and use the power that lies in every beginning (beginner's mind). </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> school management <-> student </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Perceive your school as a living and learning organization. Use the desire to grow that is inherent to all of us for the schools' development. Establish fun and joy as important values in the mission statement of your school. Keep reminding yourself and your teachers that inner motivation is the strongest driving force in learning. Collaborate with your colleagues to create a positive framework at your school. Schedule fixed dates during the school year to celebrate successes together. Encourage and support the teachers in tackling innovative projects. 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	Actions and measures										



Measures and activities for situational and behavioral prevention in our method database
Our method database contains activities and measures that you can apply at the following levels:

Organizational level

- This level refers to situational prevention: What methods can we use at the organizational level to initiate positive changes?



Hint:

We would particularly like to recommend the following methods from our method database:

[Case discussions \(Intervision\)](#)

[Teaching visit \(Hospitation\)](#)

[The class council](#)

[school break with movement](#)



Hint:

In our database you find inspiring examples of activities that sustainably impact positively on the school culture, the positive identification with the school and the positive relationship between teachers and students:

[Mental Fit](#)

[KoKoKo](#)

[Assembly of praise and appreciation](#)

[Teachers become Tutors](#)

[One Moment](#)

[Smiling Minds](#)

[MindUP](#)

Individual level

This level refers to behavioral prevention: these activities can be implemented immediately without great effort and prior measures. The focus is on the acquisition and training of cognitive, emotional as well as social and behavioral competences.



Hint:

We would particularly like to recommend the following methods from our method database:

[The culture of agreement](#)

[The class council](#)

[Brain fitness](#)

In addition to the methods in our project database, we can recommend further exercises and methods of resilience training for behavioral prevention measures:



Hint:

In the EU-Project



a key skill for education and job

we have collected methods to strengthen resilience and improve crisis management. These are available as downloads for free on our project website:

[**http://www.resilience-project.eu/**](http://www.resilience-project.eu/)



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Dare to be excellent!

