

Annex A

The case study sites

Introduction

This Annex introduces the reader to the main ILE (Innovative Learning Environments) cases that have featured in this study through profile descriptions of each of the case study sites. These were selected for case study research (and referred to as the project “Inventory”) from the larger pool of innovative learning environments (the project “Universe”). Not all the cases that are cited in the publication appear in the descriptions below, but only those for which case studies were undertaken. The following capsule descriptions help the reader to gain an overview of the case study set as a whole. Yet, they necessarily omit a great deal of the information about what makes each one innovative and inspiring. The main text above contains much more information about these sites albeit through extracts related to the specific topics in each chapter.

The case study sites

The **Royal Children’s Hospital (RCH) Education Institute, Melbourne, Australia** is a place in which the health development of children and young people is extended to include social and education support. It has an Education Institute, with teachers, researchers, and communication and administration teams to assist children and young people to remain or re-engage with their education. The RCH Education Institute’s work is underpinned by contemporary pedagogical theory and teaching staff are expected to have a flexible and responsive approach to teaching and learning, especially as learners may be ill or undergoing medical procedures and tests. The Education Institute also uses the hospital community (including multi-disciplinary teams and hospital departments) and external partners (such as local authorities and not-for-profit organisations) to facilitate the inclusion of learning as an important aspect of development for children and young people with different health conditions.

Australian Science and Mathematics School (ASMS), South Australia, Australia is purpose-built on the campus of Flinders University, covering grades 10 to 12, and established to innovate mathematics and science education. Learning activities are interdisciplinary, personalised, authentic and inquiry-based, linking science and mathematics to other areas of study including cutting-edge technologies like robotics and nanotechnology, as well as to real world issues. The school has ICT-rich open flexible learning spaces for groups of different sizes, collaborative relationships between learners and teachers, and mixed-age tutor groups and support systems. The learners work with an individual learning plan and an electronic portfolio. Learners and parents can access a virtual learning environment that learners use for group work and that contains plans and materials. The

teachers work in teams, and there are extensive activities for professional development and co-operation. The school conducts action-based research to improve its educational practice, and professional learning activities to share knowledge and materials with other practitioners. University collaborations exist with scientists being involved as visiting lecturers and with some learners and ASMS teachers undertaking university studies in relevant areas.

Mordialloc College, Quality Learning Centre and Enquiry Zone, Victoria, Australia is a public secondary school that has at its core personalised learning, team teaching and planning, using flexible spaces as a means of maximising learning. Eight existing classrooms were redesigned as an open learning area, which encompasses the Year 7 Learning Centre and the Year 8 Enquiry Zone. There are family groups of learners with teacher guides; optional and compulsory workshops; learner planning and documentation; engagement in learning; regular formative assessment conversations and development of self-management and social skills. Other designated learning areas include: the Think Tank; a glasshouse; dedicated outdoor areas; as well as a library and the science and arts areas. Flexible learning is continued in Year 9 within the subjects of the Mordialloc Experience Program. The spaces lend themselves to pedagogy which engages learners in personal and interpersonal learning through an integrated oriented approach to curriculum.

Yuille Park P-8 Community College, Victoria, Australia is located on the outskirts of the city of Ballarat in an area of high disadvantage that has been going through neighbourhood renewal for more than a decade. Yuille Park P-8 Community College is at the centre of a Community Hub offering opportunities and facilities for the wider community. Every aspect of the physical buildings, school operations and curriculum has been carefully designed to enable the motto “Living to learn, learning to live” to become a reality for each learner, while staffing structures have been flattened to foster respect and equality in working relations. The new physical spaces in the school have been the focus of an intense design process, leading to a Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s School Design Award in 2008. The school buildings and layout reflect a strong vision which is also realised through the pedagogical and social approaches and relationships.

John Monash Science School, Victoria, Australia is a Year 10 to 12 government selective-entry specialist senior school that came about through a partnership between the Victorian Government and Monash University. It is in the forefront of new ways of thinking about curriculum and pedagogical practices aimed at “big picture understanding of science in the world” while reconceptualising physical and virtual spaces for effective learning. It uses flexible learning spaces, and has an exemplary culture of collaboration and collegiality, as well as strong teacher commitment to professional learning. The rigorous intellectual pathways for learner engagement and autonomy are enhanced by inquiry-based curriculum and the school’s daily practices.

Courtenay Gardens Primary School, Victoria, Australia is a public primary school in a Melbourne suburb characterised by relative disadvantage. The ILE has been developed in response to a number of societal disadvantages; it is characterised by a whole-school approach to learning, and the use of strategies which enable a consistent and predictive approach for learners. Initially focussing on the teaching and learning of non-fiction writing, the school now measures significant increases in achievement in localised standardised testing. This success has led to more recent innovations, including a rich multimedia programme. It has received numerous awards for its continued improvement in learner and staff data, and provides professional learning to other schools to help increase learning outcomes.

NETschool, Victoria, Australia was founded in 2005 as an annexe of Bendigo Senior Secondary College (BSSC), in order to re-engage young people (aged 15-20) in work or study; it is located approximately 150 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. It offers an innovative environment designed to provide positive learning experiences for learners “at risk”. The wide-ranging innovations include: a shop front setting; a workplace interior layout; a shortened school week to allow learners to undertake work experience projects; and the use of non-judgmental vocabulary to describe young people and their learning achievements. Individual learning plans are drawn up to accommodate each learner, and include the option of study in a home- (online) or centre-based setting. It is demanding for the mentors and teachers, who use both formal and informal means to assist one another, with support from the director, the professional development unit, and by professional agencies. This multi-level system is both consultative and inclusive. Some of its innovations have since been taken up by mainstream schools.

Europäische Volksschule Dr. Leopold Zechner, Vienna, Austria is for learners aged 6-10. It has a special focus on those from multi-ethnic or migration backgrounds and emphasises language competence and instruction in all languages coming into the school, including language promotion in German (national language), intensive English teaching, courses in mother tongue, and language and culture workshops for other languages (called “*Sprachateliers*”). Parents and community members are highly involved as native speakers who team up with form teachers but occasionally also as learners of German who join their children in the classroom. Other innovations include the use of English as the language of instruction in subjects like sports and arts. The teaching has elements of progressive pedagogy, such as flexible learner groups who work independently with week plans. There is a European studies curriculum that was developed in co-operation with colleagues from other countries. A development team of teachers works on new ideas and evaluates current practice.

Europaschule Linz, Austria is a secondary school affiliated with a university college of teacher education, and functions both as a centre for practical in-school training of teacher-students and as a school with the objective to offer (and to research) optimum learning conditions. Europaschule Linz has significantly evolved over the past 20 or more years. It now has an emphasis on language learning and international contacts, but learners can also choose a science, artistic or media focus. It does not use grades, and learners work in flexible heterogeneous groupings, some of which are integrative. Teaching activities are based on a sophisticated formative assessment system, which is organised as a written feedback portfolio that contains teacher reports and learner self-assessments. The aim is that learning becomes self-managed and intrinsically motivated, and lessons are designed such that learners assume a high level of responsibility for their own and for their classmates’ learning.

Community Learning Campus (CLC), Olds High School, Alberta, Canada is an innovative approach to high school, post-secondary and community education, sharing resources and working jointly with a variety of community groups and agencies. It provides an active and holistic educational environment that brings together high school and post-secondary education in one place, seeking to create a seamless transition for learners wishing to enter the workforce, apprenticeship, college, or university. The CLC is both a virtual and a physical learning space in four multi-use facilities: 1) core high school; 2) fine arts and multi-media centre; 3) health and wellness centre; and 4) the Bell eLearning Centre. Delivery is either seminar-based or class-based, both of which are constructivist and organised around project work. A web-based information system provides learners and their parents with summative and formative feedback on a daily, weekly and interim basis

and documents progress throughout a learner’s four years at the school. The programmes are organised around four pillars – personal, knowledge, community, and global – and navigation relies on the CLC Learner Map, which is both a framework for individual learner pathway decisions and a graphic enabling community access.

Elementary Connected Classrooms, British Columbia, Canada is realised in an innovative collaboration between mixed-age classrooms (age 9 to 12) from three elementary schools in a geographically isolated district. This ILE features videoconferencing, online collaborative work, online literature circles, and exchange of learner-created multimedia content. Weekly videoconferences of the three classes are delivered by teachers who have a focus area based on their expertise and interest and also manage a complimentary online forum. Inquiry projects and learner collaboration are central components of learning, with learners interacting through verbal questions, sharing smart board work, and communicating in online forums, chat rooms, and by sending messages to each other and their teachers. Each year, there are face-to-face gatherings of all learners in each participating school. The project is introduced in a family night with a live videoconference of all schools, and ends with a celebration session with similar set-up. Parents can access the online platform to get an idea of their child’s work.

Saturna Ecological Education Centre (SEEC), Gulf Islands, British Columbia, Canada is an experiential, place-based ecological learning centre on Saturna Island, British Columbia, which learners attend for a semester. Originally designed for grade 11-12 learners, it has evolved into a flexible programme, serving learners from grade 7 to post graduation. The learning is focused strongly on *how* students learn, with a deep appreciation of different generations and of the natural environment. The environment is the main learning resource and the ecological lens runs through all the learning programmes. Among its innovative programmes is “Teaching and Learning”, covering theories and practices of teaching and learning and employing this with younger learners as mentors. Among the middle-years learners, about half the time is spent outside the school building working on personally designed small group projects. Learners experience a great deal of inter-dependent, intergenerational learning, and this is supported by “Connecting Generations” – a database which allows young people and older members of the community to connect up for focused “cognitive apprenticeship” opportunities, as well as more general learning from each other.

Community of Learners Network, Nanaimo Ladysmith, British Columbia, Canada is a “mini-network” within the larger Network of Performance-Based Schools in British Columbia. It involves intensive collaboration on applying inquiry methods. The teaching/learning interface is markedly different from traditional modes of schooling. Curriculum and schedules are built around large-scale inquiries that blur traditional school subjects and schedules. Formative assessment and meta-cognition are integral to the learning, as is collaboration through the “Circle Discussion” approach, where learning is co-constructed and facilitated in small groups of four to eight learners, followed by reflective writing and representations of evolving conceptual understanding. Community members with expertise are regularly invited into classrooms, and local resources are viewed as an integral part of the learning environment. Aboriginal place and culture are fundamental. There are approximately fifteen classrooms that fully integrate the core approaches.

Instituto Agrícola Pascual Baburizza, Los Andes, Chile is a private state-subsidised vocational high school with many learners from disadvantaged economic backgrounds. It provides learners with a cross-disciplinary balance of general education subjects (mathematics, languages, science) and agricultural subjects (horticulture, watering and

cattle management), as well as sustainable agricultural practices, leading to a professional diploma as agricultural technician. A strong emphasis is also placed on learning “soft skills” such as leadership, initiative and honesty. Learning is facilitated by teachers who also act as personal mentors by providing guidance and support for groups of ten learners. National evaluations reveal that language and mathematics scores have steadily improved, and improvements have been observed in graduation rates and employment rates after graduation as well.

Colegio Karol Cardenal de Cracovia, Santiago, Chile is in a low-income community with high rates of unemployment and drug problems and caters for learners from kindergarten to 8th grade. It has an innovative organisation as a “state-school” for learners to know how to function in a democratic society: classes represent communities that are like government departments, there is a school constitution regulating behavioural rules, a (symbolic) ministry of justice, a court, elections for student presidents, and learners can actively participate in the school government. In this ILE’s own incentive system, the school currency can be exchanged for rewards. The innovations were initiated by the principal to create an environment of strong and caring relationships to help all learners discover their own potential. Scores on national standardised tests have significantly increased since then.

Culture Path programme, Kuopio, Finland is targeted at learners aged 7 to 16 in the city of Kuopio, and aims to enhance their social, emotional, and physical well-being providing them with culture and art through access to the city’s cultural services. This is realised with practical tools for teachers to implement goal-oriented cultural education, and by strengthening the co-operation with cultural institutions. The programme is divided into nine “paths” related to art, libraries, theatre, etc., which are designed for the needs and curriculum objectives of a particular grade level, within and across different subjects. Learners visit at least one local cultural institution outside the school environment every year. After eight years on the Culture Path, 9th graders can use the city’s cultural services for free with a K9-card.

Fiskars Elementary School, Fiskars, Finland encompasses the whole village community, connecting the school to the surrounding community and using the knowledge of local artisans and artists, the village history and the surrounding nature in education. From the perspective of an individual learner, the Fiskars Model is a six-year learning path. Artists and handicrafts from the village give workshops on topics like woodworks, fine arts, or glass blowing. Main pedagogical methods are learning-by-doing, immersive learning and student-professional collaboration. The local museum also organises workshops on historical periods, and learners contribute to local cultural activities like theatre productions and exhibitions. In this way, they are taught to value and harness the traditions of the village and to respect their own and others’ originality in creative work.

Liikkeelle! (On the Move!), Heureka, Finnish Science Centre, Finland is a web service to support secondary schools in reforming their learning practices by means of inquiry-based, multi-disciplinary pedagogy. It seeks to take learning out of the classroom, for instance, to study and evaluate their local environment. Thus far, more than 50 schools have participated. “On the Move” features an open virtual environment in which learners, teachers and external experts interact, exchange information (including using interactive tools and maps), and publish. It presents a range of teaching methods and project ideas for enhancing multi-disciplinary co-operation and inquiry learning as well as tools for teachers to share good pedagogical practices. It offers a step-by-step model for planning, organising and conducting a developmental project in line with the “On the Move” pedagogy. Learning activities have included, for example, mapping the area or measuring air quality.

ImpULS-Schule, Schmiedefeld, Thuringia, Germany is in a rural area, with 123 learners aged 10 to 16, and using the “Jenaplan” reform pedagogy. Its classes are mixed in terms of learner abilities and, in part, learner age. Learning days are structured by recurring routines, like a morning assembly and an end-of-week meeting of the whole learning group, and further include blocks of time allocated to cross-curricular work and to the planning of individual learning activities interspersed with exercise breaks. Learners present their work in weekly sessions. ImpULS uses learning diaries and learning contracts, and supplements regular school certificates with individual report letters. Its approach to preparing learners for choice of a profession (e.g. yearly practical projects in different companies from grade 7 to 9, portfolio work, etc.) has received several awards.

Jenaplan-Schule, Jena, Thuringia, Germany includes learners from kindergarten age right through to age 20. Learners with minor physical or learning difficulties are integrated in mixed-aged classes as well as learners with difficult school biographies. The teachers co-operate in teams, both for team-teaching and peer-coaching. Like the previous case, this school uses many elements of “Jenaplan” pedagogy. Learners work partly in cross-grade and partly in homogenous age groupings, with a strong emphasis on open learning and interdisciplinary project work which is organised with individual week plans. The schedule is periodic with a focus on changing subjects every 3 to 4 weeks in areas like history or geography. Written reports replace or supplement traditional grading, and learners’ peer- and self-assessment is emphasised. Monthly round table meetings give parents the opportunity to discuss group-specific problems with the teachers and regular consultations between parents and teachers help support the child’s individual development.

Lobdeburgschule, Jena, Thuringia, Germany integrates primary and comprehensive secondary-age learners from age 6 to 17. The first years are mixed-age groups to allow for a flexible transition between grades depending on learners’ abilities. From the 4th grade onward, learners work in grade-level classes on interdisciplinary projects that often last around two months. The learning day is organised into phases of autonomous completion of tasks and free creative work, interdisciplinary lessons and projects, professional lessons, and electives in areas of special interest. A key feature of Lobdeburg is the systematic development of methodological competencies like scientific literacy, mind maps, creative play and learning how to learn. Teachers work in grade teams and strongly focus on differential, formative feedback.

Lok Sin Tong Leung Wong Wai Fong Memorial School, Hong Kong, China is for learners aged 6 to 12 in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. It follows the pedagogy of “invitational education” (i.e. practice based on respect, trust, optimism and intentionality), which is realised in small class environments. It places significant emphasis on ICT: teachers, learners and parents share materials with an “electric schoolbag”, and a distance-learning classroom is used for joint projects with other schools. The garden and library are the responsibility of the young people. Every classroom has a mini performing stage and a reading corner; books are also spread all over the school to stimulate children to read after school. The extensive after-school programmes include tutoring and supervised homework sessions as well as artistic and athletics projects. Mixed-age “caring groups” with an attached mentoring teacher meet monthly. The staff regularly attend professional development seminars and engage in collaborative lesson planning, and peer lesson observation.

Dobbantó (Springboard), Hungary is a full-time compensatory programme integrated within regular vocational schools preparing those with unsuccessful educational careers to return to schooling or professional life. The key element is an elaborate support system. Learners work in small groups, and meet at least weekly with a personal mentor

teacher who evaluates their progress and draws up individualised learning plans. There is a large selection of modules to choose from for this purpose. Activities focus both on basic competencies for reintegration in schools, and on groundwork for realistic career planning and improving self-knowledge. There are regular workplace visits and “job shadowing” to facilitate realistic and informed career choices. Learners work in well-equipped, newly renovated classrooms, not in inferior facilities with the stigma of catch-up classes. There is extensive professional support for teachers to successfully implement the programme (e.g. external advisors, regular team meetings within and between participating schools). Dropout rates are low and most learners successfully move on to further education or work upon completion. Dobbantó has informed Hungarian education policy on bridging the social gaps among students.

Mevo’ot Hanegev, Kibbutz Shoval, Israel is for learners aged 13-18 and it is an officially recognised model school. It has a shorter school week (5 days) and longer lessons (60 minutes) than is customary in Israel, to allow for deeper engagement. There is an emphasis on project-based learning on self-chosen questions within extensive study units on basic themes and learners demonstrate their learning through so-called “Performances Understanding”. All teachers have time put aside for personal and team preparation, and they and external specialists serve as pedagogical mentors. To create close teacher-learner relationships, the number of learners that a teacher meets each week has been halved (from 120 to 60). There is also extensive use of ICT, with a laptop for each teacher and learner and an online learning management system (“virtual campus”) through which teachers and learners communicate and store learning products and content. Mevo’ot Hanegev emphasises environmental education, democratic values, and diversity of cultures and identities.

Makor Chaim (Life source), Yeshiva High School, Israel is a boys-only boarding high school (age 15-19), which is selective and based on criteria such as self-awareness and learner autonomy. There is high demand for admission. It is part of an educational centre operating in three circles: at the heart of the inner circle is the school; the intermediate circle comprises a Teacher Education and Rabbi-Teacher Education Programme; and a study hall for the general public constitutes the outer circle. There are full-day secular and religious studies, focused on the learners’ meta-cognitive, personal, and interpersonal development. Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, by choosing subjects and conducting research. They collaboratively study complex, non-linear Jewish texts using the Hevruta method in which learners are challenged to develop their thinking abilities. Each learner has a homeroom teacher who functions as mentor throughout the four years, but who also studies alongside the learners. In addition to a diploma, learners receive a detailed personal assessment from their homeroom teacher every year.

Miwon Elementary School, Gyeonggi-do, Korea is a small elementary school with many learners from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. It introduced multicultural education to meet the needs of its high ratio of learners with multicultural background and lack of language proficiency, and this is highly innovative in this system. Activities in multicultural education are comprehensive and holistic so that learners are provided with experiential learning opportunities, being engaged in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic experiences as well as cognitive-driven learning experience. Learning hours are extended after class, and learning sites are expanded to various places. Examples of activities are supporting classes and extra language courses for learners with multicultural backgrounds and their parents (also during holidays), and multicultural and Korean culture experiencing days for all learners, after-school classes taught by bilingual

parents, bilingual presentation contests, and artistic projects on multicultural topics, such as learner-produced movies.

Itinerant Pedagogical Advisors Programme, Conafe, Mexico is run by the National Council for the Promotion of Education (Conafe) and focuses on schools with very low performance in highly marginalised small rural communities. Pedagogical Advisors are university graduates in pedagogy or education who alternate between two community schools throughout the school year, providing advice to the community instructors (young people without professional teacher education who teach for a limited period of time in small marginalised rural communities), while also offering individual assistance to learners with low performance, and promoting parent participation in education. The Advisors employ diagnostic instruments to identify learners with special needs, monitor and coach the community instructors, and give recommendations to be followed up by the next instructor. The project began in 2008, and by school year 2010-11, nearly 1 400 schools in 14 states were participating, among them, the **Netzahualcoyotl school, Los Coyotes, Mexico**.

Centros de Desarrollo Infantil del Frente Popular Tierra y Libertad (CENDI), Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico is a public early childhood centre (CENDI 4 “Genaro Vaquez”) and part of a network of pre-school centres in socially and economically disadvantaged, marginalised areas of Monterrey. Conventional pre-school provision is supplemented by extensive co-curricular activities in language learning, arts, ICT, sustainability, and sports as well as the active integration of the children’s family and wider community into the educational activities. Learning is by doing and reflecting, with pedagogy inspired by socio-constructivist theories. Parents and grandparents come in at least once per month to pass on family stories and traditions. The centre actively participates in local festivities as well as family celebrations, and offers a range of community programmes including for pregnant women (about a third of whom are under 18), a women’s health programme, parent training on topics like early child stimulation or health and nutritional practices, and a senior club.

Centre for Studies on Design at Monterrey (CEDIM), Nuevo León, Mexico is a design school that offers bachelor level programmes through innovative teaching and educational models that have helped to open the traditional pedagogical paradigm. Learning is largely project-based, giving the learners an active role and responsibility for their learning. The work is organised around authentic real-life problems typically posed by external enterprises or institutions. These are then addressed by teams of learners, guided by their teachers who act as team partners and coaches. Each project takes several months and is integrated into coursework. Different forms of evaluations are used, including peer feedback which is combined with exhibitions of works. The best student work is typically honoured with an award.

Valby Oppvenkstsenter (Early development centre and primary school), Larvik, Norway is an early-development day-care centre and a primary school for learners ranging in age from 1 to 13. Learning is regarded as a comprehensive and continuous process in which children are actively engaged from the earliest stages, and this approach smoothes progression throughout the time at Valby. Learning is organised in groups, which remain constant during parts of the week, but the group size varies according to the children’s needs. Teachers regularly spend time with small groups to facilitate interactions. Pedagogy is inspired by social-constructivist ideas and is open to alternative philosophies as judged useful for the children. Professional development is regarded as key. This is often organised by having teachers co-operate with a colleague to do assignments and develop and reflect on good interventions, and then share insights about improved practice with the other colleagues.

Breidablikk School, Sandefjord, Norway is at lower secondary level in which learners can choose among several “paths” covering the regular curriculum. The content may be on, for example, nature and outdoor, media, or music, and the path adopts different learning and teaching styles. The choice of path depends on learners’ motivation and interests. Groupings are flexible depending on the paths that the learners choose. The year is divided into six-week periods that focus on a certain topic, and each of these periods includes one week in which learners work intensively on their own interests, following an individual learning plan that they make together with a teacher. There is a special trajectory for learners with maladjustments or drop out problems, who are taught in small groups alternating theoretical and practical work aimed to enhance their motivation and improve their social behaviour, punctuality, etc. The learning environment works on major shared projects like the annual school musical with up to 150 learners and a building project in which groups of learners design their own houses in co-operation with professionals from the business world. Learning spaces include outdoor areas that were in part constructed by learners and teachers.

Internet Classroom, Kkofja Loka Primary School, Slovenia is a virtual learning environment (“e-classroom”) within a school to individualise learning, foster creativity and innovation, and to improve the safe and critical use of ICT by learners aged 8 to 15. Learners work individually or in pairs with materials and quizzes that their teachers have designed in order to reach goals determined by the official curriculum. The work with younger learners focuses at computer literacy, whereas older learners increasingly use the digital tools for subject-oriented learning. The work of individual learners becomes visible to teachers – for example, which sources were reviewed and which activities were performed. The e-classrooms are also open to parents to observe activities in progress in individual subjects. Communication tools like chat rooms and forums allow interactions between learners and teachers.

Enrichment Programmes, Rodica Primary School, Slovenia allow additional contents such as artistic pursuits (theatre, journalism, calligraphy, film, music), or research or international, linguistic and social (rhetoric, debate, volunteering, reading) activities to complement the regular school curriculum. This increases learners’ motivation and fosters their social skills, learning strategies, independence, and self-confidence. The programme is particularly used as an instrument to stimulate gifted learners. Teachers use alternative forms of assessment, for example, pedagogical dialogues with the learners about their individual progress, and learners present their results and products through performances and exhibitions (e.g. in films). Learning outside the classroom is encouraged (in nature, camps, etc.), as is active learning and interactions with parents and community members.

CEIP Andalucía, Seville, Spain is a pre-primary and primary state school with many gypsy learners and all at risk of social exclusion. The concept of learning community is key in providing quality education and to break the circle of poverty and social exclusion. This is realised through such activities and approaches as the school’s own classroom curriculum, based on democratic learner participation and prominent recognition of cultural background; participation of families through volunteering and in so-called “mother’s schools”; weekly tutorship; students’ representative meetings; the monthly family assembly; and an assessment tool which comprises indicators of achievements and obstacles while also guiding improvements. Strong emphasis is placed on co-operative group work which is organised into activities of 15 to 20 minutes with teams of teachers who switch between groups. Project work in a single class or in a grade or group of different grades aims to overcome curriculum fragmentation and is organised around four stages: planning, searching, organising, assessing.

Instituto Escuela Jacint Verdaguer, Catalonia, Spain is for learners aged 3 to 16, with integrated pre-primary, primary and secondary cycles. Teacher questioning is prominent, and the learning objectives emphasise learner autonomy, responsibility and learning skills, for active inquiry-based learning, co-operative project work on authentic problems, and individual study. Music, drama, yoga, kinesiology and other activities are used to develop self-control, self-expression and social skills. The new organisation of the curriculum is open and arranged into instrumental areas, knowledge areas and expression areas (inner knowledge). The environment has created wide, open learning spaces to facilitate mobility and co-operation among learners and teachers, and makes use of extensive ICT resources, including a virtual learning environment, digital boards, student laptops, and a robotics classroom.

Institut Beatenberg, Bern, Switzerland is a private boarding school for grades 5 to 10 in which many learners arrive after negative prior school experience. It is geared towards independent, goal-oriented learning that recognises prior situations and backgrounds while integrating this into a social framework. Learners work in mixed-age and mixed ability teams, with both individual and group learning. Time units are longer than single lessons and cover subject settings (mathematics, German, French, and English) and “Actives” (for science, arts, creative, manual, and sports interests), with the majority devoted to individualised learning in teams. The last three units of each week are devoted to summing up, reflecting on the activities of the week, presenting results to the community, updating portfolios, and finalising the weekly work plan. Each learning team has access to a large workroom as an open plan space in which to co-operate and engage in peer learning, and each learner has a personal workplace and “home base”. The ordinary programme is regularly interrupted by several days devoted to projects and service learning.

REOSCH, Ressourcenorientierte Schule, Bern, Switzerland is a private secondary school in the centre of Bern and runs one class each in grades 7 to 9 and one class in non-compulsory grade 10 intended to ease the transition to upper secondary or vocational training. It is mainly for young people with problematic motivation and achievement. The approach is grounded in sensitivity and awareness training. Resource-oriented pedagogy means discovering and using one’s own resources: Mental training, meditation classes, martial arts and outdoor activities are integral components of the curriculum, with a focus on self-perception as a prerequisite for emotional and content learning. Prospective learners decide after a one-day trial whether they want to continue attendance and follow its approach. Learning is individualised with a strong emphasis on self-directed learning supported through weekly plans and journals (“energy diary”) and regular evaluation emphasising individual progress more than comparison across learners.

One-room school, Gesamtschule Lindental, Boll, Switzerland is a small one-room state school in a rural municipality, with just one class of learners from grade 1 to 9 with individualised education aiming at integration and autonomous learning. Activities are adapted to learners’ current level of development, to challenge gifted learners as well as fostering of self-confidence in weaker learners. There is no grade repetition. Half the lessons are taught by two teachers, sometimes divided into two groups according to age or subject. There are few disciplinary problems, which is attributed to the individualised education and the social dynamics in which younger children learn from the older ones. Activities are inspired by Pestalozzi pedagogy, with much autonomous work based on weekly plans, with autonomy increasing with age. Lessons are linked to an overarching theme each quarter, at the end of which learners present their work to parents.

Chiamale Emozioni (Call them emotions), Locarno, Ticino, Switzerland is a project aiming at the development of socio-emotional skills in young children in kindergarten and the first years of primary school. One main objective is to increase teacher skills in managing and effectively fostering socio-emotional learning. Another objective is to improve the social and relational skills of the children. Various learning activities have been developed to target self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relational skills, and responsible decision-making. Children are expected to use these skills in establishing and maintaining positive relationships, to be able to recognise the feelings and perspectives expressed by others, and to master communication and apply decision-making skills to deal responsibly with daily academic and social situations.

Obiettivo: comprensione (Target: understanding), Bellinzona, Ticino, Switzerland is a project focussing on vocational schools, with the objective to develop habits of self-evaluation and self-analysis in schools and improve learners' reasoning abilities. Teachers are stimulated to use "Understanding by Design" methodology based around the desired outcomes. The main school involved is the Scuola professionale artigianale e industriale of Mendrisio, where the whole school staff has participated. The "Understanding by Design" method provides learners with opportunities to explain and apply knowledge. The curriculum is developed on the basis of the end goal to be achieved. This strategy is called "backward design", which delays the planning of classroom activities until goals have been clarified and assessments designed. **School Improvement Advisors** are introduced as new figures in the school domain, acting as consultants, critical friends, and academic researchers. The aim is to extend the project through co-operative networks.



From:
Innovative Learning Environments

Access the complete publication at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264203488-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2013), "The case study sites", in *Innovative Learning Environments*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264203488-11-en>

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.