

MINDFUL ADULT EDUCATION

Theory and practical suggestions

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- in co-operation with teachers at Tibetan Transit School

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PREFACE

This book is written for the teachers at Tibetan Transit School, and we hope it can be of use for others, who are engaged in adult education. It is a result of a fourteen months long in-service training, which we had the privilege and pleasure of undertaking for the school, from January 2004 – May 2005, and which you may read more about in appendix 2.¹

The five main parts of the book are arranged around the major roles, which the teacher of adults often has, namely the roles of:

- *the didactic planner*: How to plan for meaningful education,
- *the teacher*: how to enhance the students' learning,
- *the leader*: how to encourage social skills for democratic development,
- *the counsellor*: how to help students cope with their individual aspirations and problems

The contents of the articles are in principle what we told the teachers during our presentations. We do think however that what the teachers have gained and learned is much more due to their own reflections, their very active participation and their experiments with the new ideas in their classrooms, sometimes with the help of colleagues, who observed the lessons and gave professional feedback afterwards.

In fact we strongly believe that learning – especially in adults - only takes place when you yearn for it and really dare give it a try. And this is exactly what the TTS teachers did.. Our articles, our lectures and this book were merely steppingstones for their own achievement.

THANKS

First of all we would like to thank the teachers of TTS for their effort, their curiosity towards new ideas and their independent way of accepting, rejecting or revising these ideas, according to their Tibetan culture, practical outlook and invariable concern for the students.

We are especially indebted to principal Mr. Yonten Norbu for his constant, heart warming support and co-operation, which was a daily encouragement, and for his uncompromising and wise care for the school, the students and the teachers.

Mr. Tenzin Rabyal was an exquisite language bridge between the teachers and us - thanks for precise translations and a never failing helpfulness.

We are also grateful to the Department of Education, Central Tibetan Administration, for advice and assistance.

The whole project was thanks to the funding and goodwill of the DANIDA, the Danish Foreign Ministry, which we deeply appreciate.

¹ The in -service-training included a month-long workshop on conflict resolution as well, conducted by Tibetan Centre for Conflict Resolution. The contents of this workshop can be found in the book “Meeting conflicts mindfully” by Else Hammerich, Dharamsala 2001.

We would also like to extend our acknowledgement to our Indian hosts here in Himachal Pradesh, without whom this project would not have been possible.

CONTENTS

I: TEACHER OF ADULTS: TO PLAN FOR MEANINGFUL EDUCATION

- Didactics, by Else Hammerich
- Finding a meaning, by Else Hammerich
- The learning process, by Else Hammerich
- The wider goals of the lessons, by Else Hammerich
- The overall purpose of the education, by Else Hammerich
- Detecting background and aims of students, TTS teachers

II: TEACHER OF ADULTS: TO ENHANCE THE STUDENTS' LEARNING

- Learner centred teaching style, by Else Hammerich
- Challenges to be met, by TTS teachers
- Many intelligences and learning styles, by Marianne Munis
- Three dimensions of learning, by Bo Ørsnes
- Co-operative learning, by Lotte Christy
- Co-operative structures: how to do, by Lotte Christy and Marianne Munis
- Evaluation, by Else Hammerich
- Feedback, by Else Hammerich and Bjarne Vestergaard
- Assessment, by Marianne Munis

III: TEACHER OF ADULTS: TO ENCOURAGE SOCIAL SKILLS FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

- Democracy, education and social skills, by Else Hammerich
- Social skills in group and society, by Lotte Christy
- Co-operation, communication and acknowledgement, by Lotte Christy and Bo Ørsnes
- The Iceberg Principle: Exercises of co-operation, communication and acknowledgement, by Lotte Christy and Bo Ørsnes
- Co-operative teacher, by Marianne Munis
- Groups, by Bjarne Vestergaard

IV: TEACHER OF ADULTS: TO BE A USEFUL COLLEAGUE

- Professional support among colleagues, by Bjarne Vestergaard
- Do's and don'ts of professional support, by TTS teachers

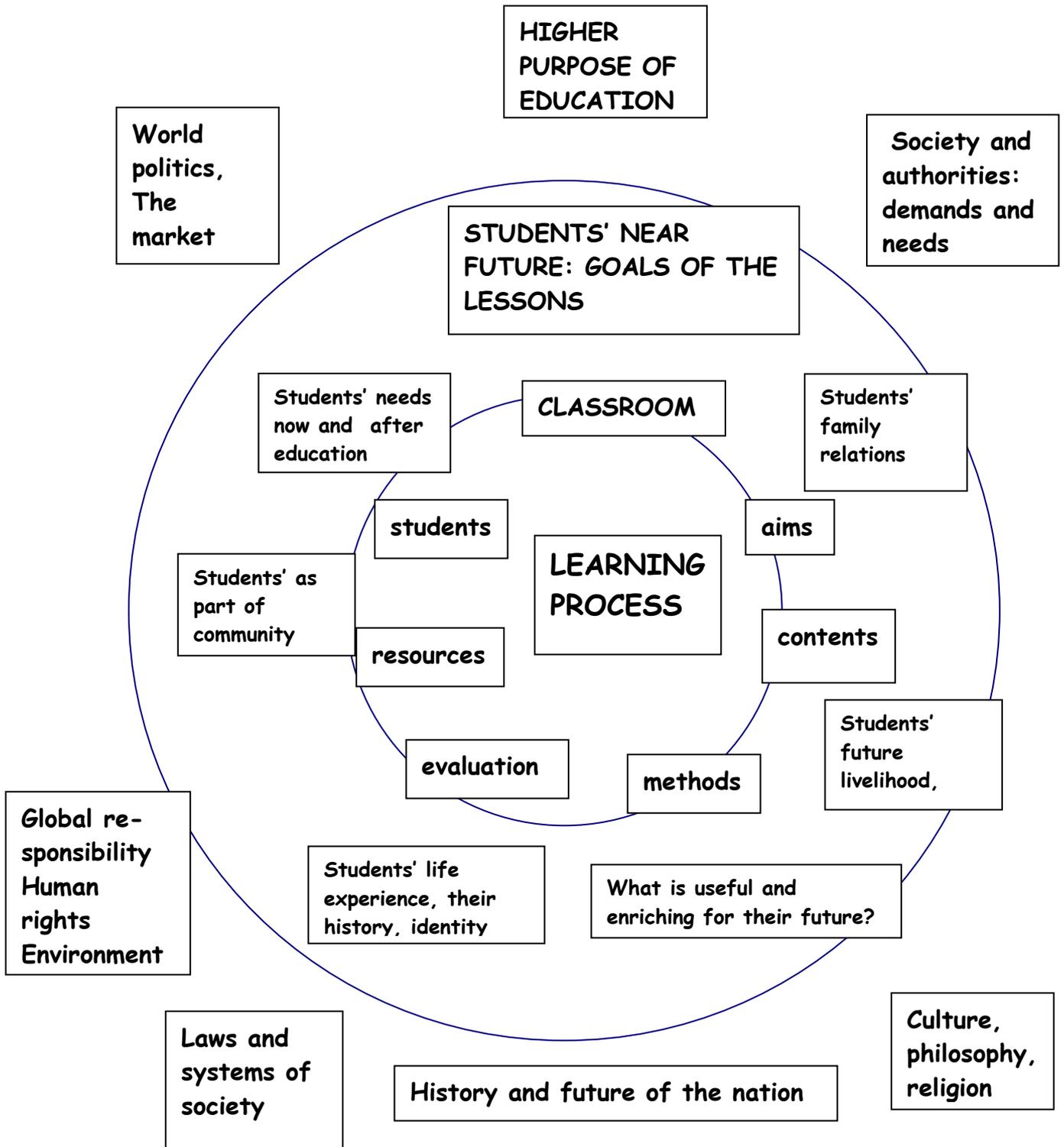
V: TEACHER OF ADULTS: TO COUNSEL STUDENTS

- Observation, by Bjarne Vestergaard
- Psychological difficulties, by Bjarne Vestergaard
- Professional counselling, by Bjarne Vestergaard
- Crisis, by Bjarne Vestergaard
- Consciousness, by Bjarne Vestergaard

I

**TEACHER OF ADULTS:
TO PLAN FOR
MEANINGFUL EDUCATION**

Didactic for planning adult education



DIDACTICS

Didactics simply means the action of planning educational events mindfully. It is to consider the wholeness of the learning situation, from your own motivation to small, practical issues.

The didactic sketch above is a tool, which may help you, when you wish to plan meaningful lessons and courses.

The sketch is circular in order to show, that all its factors are inter-related, and none of them is the most important. They are all important. The sketch does not depict a permanent situation, but a reality that is constantly moving and changing. What happens in one circle will influence the events in the other circles.

FINDING A MEANING

When we are going to teach there are so many things to consider, and it can be quite confusing. We would of course like to create a useful and delightful experience for the students, and we also want to feel secure and calm while doing it.

There are some traps to fall into, when you are planning lessons. One of them is too quickly to decide what to do – “because that is what I always use to do”. Or because you think they will enjoy it? Or because you feel safe with these tools? These reasons are not sufficient to create meaningful learning.

Another trap is to fill the lessons with your own talk. We must remember that the learners really need to digest and work with what we taught; otherwise nothing is obtained. Except, perhaps, that the students are impressed and think “what a knowledgeable and eloquent teacher!” – but what did **they** learn that could make their lives more rich and complete? Teaching is much more than talking – it is helping someone to learn. And learning is much more than listening and taking notes – it is to be able to use what was learned.

So it goes for all effective lessons that they should contain:

- ACTION – is what happens during the lesson or course - it could be the teacher’s presentation, explanation, or instruction. It could also be an excursion, an exercise, or a video.
- REFLECTION – means to give students time to digest what they have heard or seen or done. “What was it, the teacher told us?” “What did he or she mean?”, “What was the essence of what heard? “Did I understand it?” How did I feel about it”? Reflection is about what has happened.
- LEARNING – it is about the present and future: “what did I learn that can bring me forward?” “what do I know now that I did not know before”, “is this useful for me – how?”

- STRATEGY – it is about using the new learning, “if this is useful, how can I use it” – “how to progress, how to obtain further learning?” – “how to use this in my daily life now or in the future?” “what will I do?”

THE LEARNING PROCESS

Let us start from the inner core of the sketch. In the inner circle describes the very process, - that which happens during the lesson or course.

The process is an interaction between the teacher and the students, and between the students of the group. It is meeting and relating to the issues taught and to the teaching material, and developing new knowledge and skills that can be used in the adult person’s real life.

There are so many things to consider for the process to flourish. In the sketch this multitude is arranged into 6 categories: the students, the aims, the contents, the methods, the resources and the evaluation. If you include each of them in your planning, it will help you to get better hold of your teaching.

The students

Who are the adult people you are going to educate? We call them the students, and we might as well call them “the learners”. What are their preconditions and qualifications? The more you know about them, the more suitable approaches you can think of.

Some things, which you will need to know before planning the lesson or course, are the age, the educational backgrounds and the general abilities of the students. This will help you to decide the level of complexity of the issues to work with.

When it comes to adult learners, a first rule of thumb is, never to under-estimate their intelligence and never to over-estimate their knowledge.

One great challenge is the vast differences that may exist between the students as to abilities and educational levels, so it is important to identify the scope of intellectual capacities in the group of learners, and to consider their many intelligences and various learning styles.

The aims and objectives

The aims are the skills and knowledge that you want the lesson or course to lead to.

What should the students be able to do and understand after the lesson or course, and what should they be able to practice in their lives? What ideas would you like them to reflect upon? These are some questions you can ask yourself in order to identify the aims of the lesson or course.

The more precisely and down-to earth you can state the aims when planning; the more easily you will develop your ideas for the process.

If you wish that the students take responsibility for their learning, you can openly tell them about the aims of the lesson or course and discuss their relevance with them. This is especially true when it comes to adult learners.

The contents

When you have stated the aims and investigated the students' abilities and needs, you will have a firm ground to stand on, when you decide what contents to choose for the lesson or course.

The contents are the issues of the lesson or course **and** the activities you plan for the students.

What theories, concepts and skills do you plan for them to learn? What competences need to be developed? What would be useful for them to understand and to be able to do?

And what activities will you plan for the students?

At the beginning of our careers as teachers, we often fill too many issues and activities into the lesson or courses. But what really matters is how deeply the students are able to understand and manage the essentials.

The contents and students' activities are closely linked to the aims. If you want the students to be able to reflect, then you should give them time to reflect. Whatever you wish for them to learn, they should have the chance to practice these skills during the lessons. This is why the contents have two aspects: the issues taught and the activities of the students.

The presentations or lectures you choose to give are important. They can give structure, clarity and new perspectives to the students' way of thinking and experiencing their life situations. Try to make your presentations fairly short, precise, lively and with down-to-earth examples. If your presentations can mingle with a conversation with the learners, it will be livelier and also more relevant for the adult students.

The activities of the students and your presentations are equally important.

The methods

The methods are the strategies you as a teacher choose to support the learning process of the students.

The basic question to put, before you choose your methods is: how can the students become active in the learning process, not only with their brains but also with their feelings and their needs?

Action, reflection, learning and strategy - a real life method.

Action is the presentation or the exercise with which the teacher opens a new subject.

This being done, you will need plans for how to make the students **reflect** on what they have heard or experienced. What relevance did it have to them? What questions, feelings and thoughts came to their minds?

And then: What **learning** can they extract? What can be of use to them in their daily situations?

As for **strategy**: How do they wish to make use of it?

Some other questions about the teacher's methods are:

- How will you support the social interaction in the group? We know that the more the students feel at ease, the more they will learn. They can also learn a lot from each other, if the group feeling is safe and open.
- When will you use experimental learning = inductive method (experience before theory) and when will you use the more traditional teaching = deductive method (presentations before exercises)?
- How will you arrange the balance between bodywork and mental work? This has to do with retaining and refreshing the energy of the students, but also with considering the students' different learning styles.

The answers to those questions may depend on which methods you feel safe with, and which methods the students feel safe with. But sometimes we have to go beyond safety in order to grow. The learning process gains when the teacher challenges himself or herself, and when the students' habits are challenged as well.

The resources

The resources for the lesson or course are:

- Venue, classroom, arrangement of furniture, decoration
- The span of time available
- Books, written materials, teaching aids,
- Resource persons, the teachers

The most crucial resources are the qualities of the resource persons, the teachers:

- How well have you prepared the contents and methods of the lesson or course?
- What are your strong points and what are your limitations? What are your special contributions? What are your visions for the lessons and what are your concerns?

Maybe the most important resource is your motivation. Often when we teach, we have several motivations, and that is only natural. We may find it exciting to teach adults. We may find our salary important. We may enjoy the special contact we can have with our students. We may love to organise. All this is totally legal. Nevertheless it is vital for the quality of our lesson or courses that our root motivation is to enrich the minds, the daily lives and the future of the students. When that simple motivation is present it really makes the task so much easier, and it makes us much more clear about what we have to do. Our teacher role becomes more authentic.

The evaluation

You would of course like to know what your students gained from the lessons – how useful were the issues to them? And you would also like to know how the students feel about the process. Are they safe and comfortable, do they enjoy, do they find the lessons interesting, or are they bored?

Sometimes you may have your own notions about all this; you can maybe perceive how the students are thinking and feeling. But often a teacher is not quite sure about how the process is working. Those who really know it are the students. So you can simply ask them. You can do evaluations during the lesson or course. This process we call continuous evaluation.

This means to make many small evaluations, maybe after each major activity. At the beginning the students may be very silent and polite. But they will quickly get used to be more outspoken and frank, if you really wish for it and ask for it.

This will be helpful for the students' learning process; for one of the core elements of adult education is that the students have the right and obligation to take responsibility for their own learning. And to do that, the evaluation is a most useful tool. It will also be helpful for the teacher, because you will be on more solid ground when you know – and not merely guess – what is on the minds of the students. Then you will know how to plan and improve your lessons and courses.

So there are several reasons for doing evaluations at the end of the lesson or course:

- The teacher wants to know what activities and issues were useful, relevant and workable for the students, and which were less valuable, in order to develop and improve future lesson or courses.
- The teacher wants to know “how was I doing? We are sometimes worried about our performances, and indeed we all need acknowledgement and feedback. That is a very human need and not to be judged as “egotistic”.
- Evaluations are useful for the students. Firstly it is their democratic right to express their views on what they have been spending time on. Secondly some well-put evaluation questions can make them identify and summarise what they have experienced and learned, and it can make them reflect: how will I use this in my personal and professional life?

There are so many methods of evaluations, and it is important that you make it clear for yourself what you wish to obtain by the evaluations, which you plan to do.

THE WIDER GOALS OF THE LESSONS

In the middle circle we find the wider goals of the lesson or course. They are closely linked to the near future of the young adult students. How can the students benefit from your teaching? How can they use the outcome of the lessons in their lives? What are the needs of the adult students?

So what are the specific present and future perspectives of your adult students? What are their aspirations and real possibilities? What are their conditions? What are the concrete challenges they meet in real life? What kind of conflicts do they have to deal with?

When you know the students' real life perspectives you will find yourself better prepared to identify appropriate goals of your teaching. And the more your lessons are linked to goals of the students, the more meaningful and useful they will find the lesson or course, and the more they will be engaged and active.

On the other hand, if the goals and aims of the education are not determined in order to meet the needs and future perspectives of the young adults, it may be very difficult to offer them a learning process that can interest them and make them genuinely active.

The young adult learners

In order to plan meaningful education and meaningful lessons for young adult learners, we have to look into their special situation, their aspirations, tasks and future perspective. So what characterises a young adult, as compared with a child. Here are some challenges, which face the majority of young adults:

- **Livelihood:** to be able to provide for yourself. To have an education, a profession, a vocation, and a job.
- **Reproduction:** To have children, make a family, find a partner – pursue sex and love.
- **Citizenship:** How to participate in community, nation, and the world. To contribute and to be acknowledged. To make use of your democratic rights and duties.
- **Relation to parents:** To take care of them as they took care of you.
- **Personal identity.** To anchor yourself with certain values and morals – in a culture, a religion and a mindset. The personal identity is not an isolated issue – it has to do with all the above perspectives of an adult.

THE HIGHER PURPOSE OF THE EDUCATION

In the outer circle we find the overall purposes of the teachers' work. These purposes include much more than the aims of the single lessons, as they signify the very meaning of the school's activities.

One of the factors is *the needs of society and authorities*. What do they need the school to teach? What qualifications do they want the young people to obtain? These needs will often be expressed as demands put forward by the authorities, written or unwritten. It could be demands of some special skills, a special knowledge and certain attitudes. The Central Tibetan Administration in India is in a very extraordinary situation because of the exile, and it could be expected that its needs and its demands to its schools will project that uncommon situation.

Nevertheless it goes for all education that it is necessary for the teachers to know and acknowledge the purposes that society has laid down for the school in order to know what is expected from them.

This is why most societies lay down written purposes and core curricula for their schools, after lengthy discussions, which are often public, at least in societies, which subscribe to democracy. This is because the aims and contents of the educational institutions are of uttermost importance for all communities, since the new generations are the most essential raw materials of any development.

Another important factor is *the laws and systems of society*, especially the conditions of admission to colleges, universities, job training and further education. These conditions will often dictate great parts of the school's curriculum via the tests and examinations, which are necessary to proceed in the educational and vocational systems.

In the outer circle we also find other factors from the outside world that strongly influence the school. No school is isolated from *world politics and the economic forces* that determine the conditions of people's lives, and that is especially true in the Tibetan case. The history and future hopes of the Tibetan society are also closely linked to the purpose of the school. You might say that every single student of a Tibetan school carries the weight of Tibet's history, and at the same time is an active part of the future of Tibet – interacting with the international society.

In the outer circle we also see the world of ideas: *Global responsibility, human rights, democracy, care for environment, cultural values and religion*. The more the teacher has reflected on these philosophical and social questions, the more secure he or she will feel when planning a course and in also the middle of a lesson or course. For the actions may then be carried by a sense of conviction and meaning.

All these thoughts may seem rather far from the down-to-earth job of doing a decent lesson. But for the teacher it is helpful to reflect on the great issues of society and philosophy. You will sometimes meet them in questions from your students. And you will surely meet them as questions from yourself, because we all need to sense the deeper meaning to our doings.

Questions for recap:

Explain what action, reflection, learning, strategy means

What are the differences between the aims of the lessons, the wider goals and the overall purpose?

And how are the connections between them?

Questions for reflection:

What relevance does the didactic model have for your lesson planning? If any, how can you use it?

DETECTING BACKGROUND AND AIMS OF STUDENTS

An example by the teachers at Tibetan Transit School,

Why are the students coming to TTS? What are their aims?

To receive the blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to learn Tibetan language, tradition and culture.

To have an education and be able to compete and improve their future, learn English.

Some don't have aims: no proper country, no proper aims

What do they refrain from telling you?

Their true life story, marital status and livelihood, political activities in Tibet – those who are wanted by the Chinese; hardships they faced, past negative deeds

How do their backgrounds vary?

Most are poor and with no family in India; some are rich

Majority background: farmers and nomads

Some are business men or government servants, some Tibetan doctors, monks, nuns

Some held posts in Chins military; many are unemployed or expelled from jobs

How does their education vary?

Some never went to school; some are illiterate, some know both Chinese, Tibetan and English. Some went to high school, universities or higher studies at monasteries

30 % of the students will stay in exile – what are their job perspectives?

Few of them will get jobs, but some can work at cyber cafés, in small business, like street hawkers, at hotels & restaurants, in the army, as Thanka painters, tailors, musicians, singers
Some will be monks or nuns, some go to the army, some go abroad, some go “after foreigners”, some create small ventures like cooking classes, massage centres, some will teach Tibetan to foreigners or translate

Some go for entrance exams to get employed in exile government

Some who are good at Tibetan may go to higher Tibetan studies and later work in institutes

70% of the students go back to Tibet – what are their job perspectives?

Some become English translators or tourist guides, guides , some work at cyber cafés, some teach English at village schools, some will study at Chinese universities, some go back to monasteries to continue studies.

They will spread democratic ideas and tell about the outside world. They will spread the knowledge of Tibet’s history, religion and current status in exile to those who live in Tibet. They will act like a bridge between Tibetans in exile and Tibetans in Tibet.

II

TEACHER OF ADULTS: TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' LEARNING

LEARNER CENTRED TEACHING STYLE

TEACHING STYLES AND TEACHING METHODS

Teaching is an *art* – and at the same time it is a series of *techniques*.

Teaching methods are the techniques that the teacher uses; they are the tools to be chosen from the tool box. Teaching methods could be lectures, group work, café-method, dialogue, giving home work, checking on homework, giving reinforcement, different kinds of evaluation etc. They are specific.

Teaching styles constitute the art of teaching. They are about the way the teacher conducts herself, her behaviour with the students. They also have to do with the attitude of the teacher. They are more general. Teaching styles can be:

- More or less formal
- More or less friendly
- More or less strict
- More or less humorous
- More or less authoritarian
- More or less democratic
- More or less inspiring

Teaching methods as well as teaching styles have to do with the teacher, but they also have to do with the educational system and the traditions of a specific culture and a specific school. Teaching styles have a close connection with the personality and inclinations of the teacher – and here personality and inclinations are understood as something that can be changed and will be changed over the years – for as we know: nothing is permanent!

LEARNER CENTRED TEACHING STYLE

What is learner centred teaching style? It is not a fixed method or a set of techniques but rather a manifestation of the teacher's focus. It occurs when the teacher is aware that learning can *only* take place in the mind of the individual student. It is not enough that the teacher teaches – this does not ensure that the learners develop new knowledge, useful skills and social attitudes. ***So learner centred style happens when the teacher plans the lessons according to reflections on how to increase the learning of the students.***

LEARNING DEPENDS ON...

There are of course many conditions that are necessary in order to learn something. Especially adult students benefit from certain circumstances. Some of the conditions, which are important for the adult students' learning, are:

- That they are treated with respect as grown up persons
- That they know that the subjects and skills taught can enrich their adult future life
- That they have good relations with the group of fellow students
- That they have positive relations to their teachers
- That the courses involve their life experiences

On the basis of your knowledge of your adult students you can probably mention many other important conditions of genuine learning.

THREE BASIC CONDITIONS²

We can summarise the conditions of learning to three very essential ones. They go for adults as well as for children, but of course they have specific appearances when it comes to adults.

The three basic conditions of learning are

- The learner must work
- The learner must be engaged by the work
- The work has to suit the scope and capacity of the learner

To express the three conditions in one sentence: ***If learning has to occur, the learner must work in an engaged way within his or her possible scope.*** This statement seems quite elementary but it actually has a lot of choices built into it. Therefore let us take a closer look at each of the three conditions of learning.

THE LEARNER MUST WORK

The first condition is that the learner works: a person only learns when he works. This is the same idea as expressed in the educational slogan “learning by doing” – as originally said by John Dewey. But what is work? Is it the same as activity? Not quite. You could say that work is one kind of activity, but not all activities are work.

To be active is just to do something, like dancing, singing, writing, running, reading, cooking, gossiping. To work is a special form of activity. It is only through work that learning takes place, and not through incidental activities.

For an activity to be called work it must lead to a change. Through work, a piece of woven fabric may change into a shirt or a skirt, and pieces of wood change into a chair or a window frame. At the same time work brings changes in the minds of the tailor or the carpenter, an accumulation of new experience. There is an outer and an inner change, taking place at the same time.

When students work, outer changes occur: an essay is written, a book is read, a translation is done, a verse is learned by heart, a discussion is carried out, a project is finished, an exhibition is designed, a picture is painted, a series of photos is put on the wall, an interview with an interesting person is done, a role play is played, or a classroom is decorated.

And simultaneous inner changes take place in their minds: experience, insights, knowledge, know-how, attitudes. For the original experience of the work to bring about new insight, knowledge and know-how, it is important to use the spoken language and talk about it, to have a dialogue with the teacher about the experience, so that the inner changes become conscious to the students. This makes up the difference between a spontaneous experience and an educational experience.

So we don't learn much by mere activity, only by work that brings about inner and outer changes. There is another difference between work and any kind of activity: Work includes an obligation, it is binding. This means that if we want to reach a certain result by our work, we can no longer decide what to do and how to do it. We can find new ways, and discuss and

² According to professor Steen Larsen in his book “The Ultimate Formula”, Copenhagen 2002

decide what methods to use. But at a certain point we are obliged by the laws of the process. So when we work, our activity is led into a certain path.

It is the one who works who will learn. Especially adult students want to see a meaning in what they are doing, a meaning that corresponds to their age and life situation. So for adult learners the distinction between activity and work is essential. They also appreciate the obligation of the activity, as they will distinguish clearly between play and serious work. However this does not mean that educational work has to be monotonous or unpleasant, - on the contrary, as we shall see, when we take a look at the second condition of learning.

THE LEARNER MUST BE ENGAGED BY THE WORK

The students can learn when they are attracted to and interested in the issues they are working with. This has to do with the *feelings* evoked during the learning process. Feelings are powerful actors and we have to include them in our educational thinking. If we are not at all engaged in what is going on we probably can't learn anything.

Does this mean that the students always have to work with issues in which they are already interested? No, that would not be possible, and here we arrive at one of the great paradoxes in educational theory and practice: The learners learn when they are engaged, but they cannot always work with issues they are attracted to. Why not?

One reason is that *any community of human beings wants all its members to have a common ground of knowledge*. Otherwise it would not be a community. Otherwise a people would not be a people. Common concepts and knowledge bind the members of community together. Otherwise: what would there be to link us together? Thus there are certain demands from society – something we have to learn either we are interested or not.

Another paradox is that attraction to an issue demands certain knowledge of that issue. How can we be interested in something that we have no idea about? On the other hand, if the learners only work within the sphere of their present interests, they might never cross the frontier of their knowledge.

So teaching includes that the teacher presents the students to issues, which do not (yet) interest them. This is one of the finest and most challenging arts of teaching: to inspire the students to explore the unknown and to evoke their interest. To motivate them and show them that the new issue could be of great and personal importance to them. To make them understand that almost any subject can be exciting if you work intensively with it.

One of the misunderstandings about learner centred teaching is that the teacher must give *full self-determination* to the students. This could imply to let the learners decide by themselves what to learn, and that would eventually be to let the students down, and to disregard the responsibility of the teacher. Learner centred teaching does not render full self-determination to the learners, but it does give the learners – especially the grown up learners - a chance to *participate* in the decision-making, through dialogue with the teacher about the contents and methods of the lessons.

THE WORK HAS TO SUIT THE SCOPE AND CAPACITY OF THE LEARNER

If a learner continues to work with something that she is already mastering, she will eventually learn nothing new – no change of her mind will take place. If another learner must work with

something beyond his capacity, something he does not grasp at all, he will eventually learn nothing new – no change of his mind will take place. The learning process has a much better chance to succeed if the learner works according to his or her own capacity and learning style.

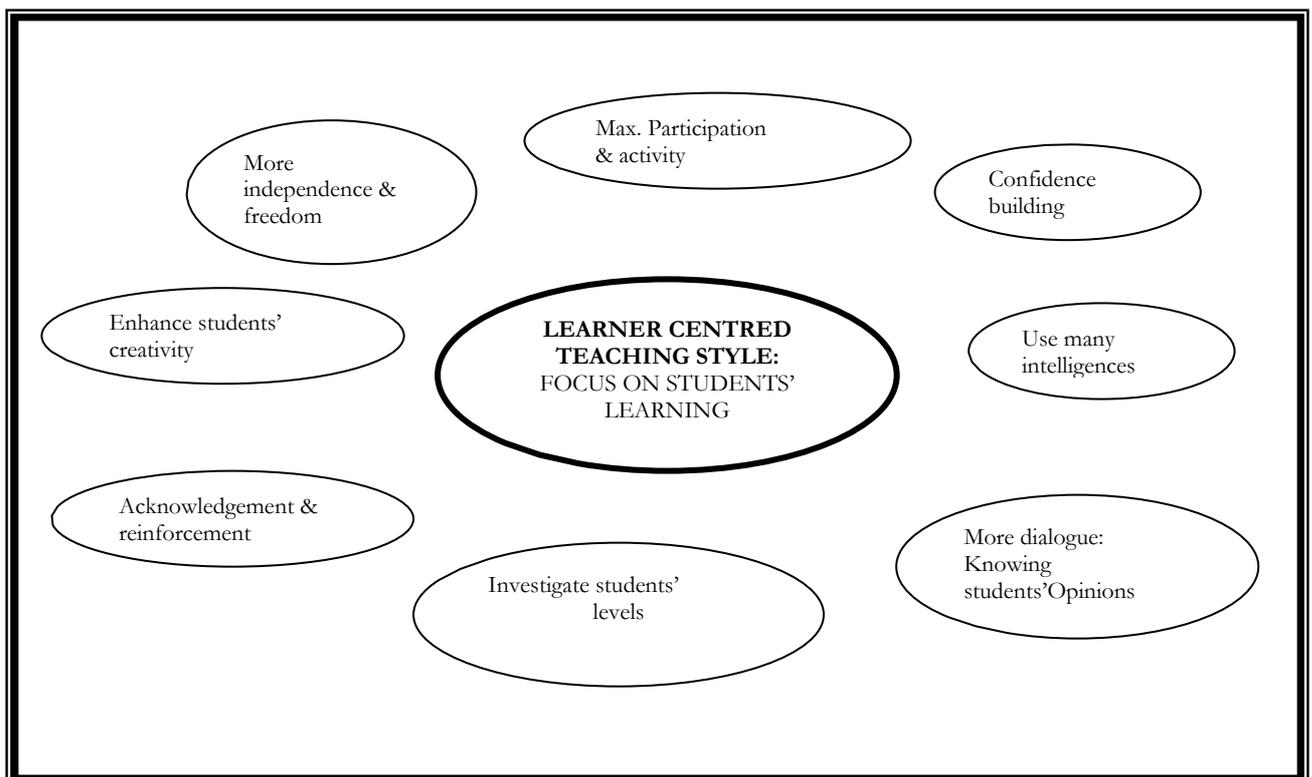
This presents a major challenge to the teacher, especially to the teacher of adults, if the educational and mental backgrounds of the students vary dramatically; when some adult students have college educations, while others have almost no school education at all. What to do?

Class teaching is a method in which the teacher works with all the students of a class at the same time – it is also called collective teaching or the simultaneous method. This approach has some problems, when the distance between the very bright students and the weaker ones is vast – because class teaching tends to be directed towards the average student, leaving the gifted and the less gifted learners in boredom or confusion.

It may seem at first to be an insoluble problem, but there are nevertheless several options to explore:

- the school can divide the students into classes or groups that are relatively homogenous – this is called *differentiation of the students*
- the teacher can combine class teaching with other methods such as *co-operative work*, which will give the students a chance of using different learning styles and of supporting each other
- the teacher can let the students work towards different aims and with different methods and different instructional materials – this is called *teaching differentiation*
- The teachers can discuss and practice *various combinations* of the above methods in order to cope with the problem of the vast variation of students' capacities in a realistic way.

LEARNER CENTRED TEACHING STYLE – A MIND MAP



The mind map above gives some ideas about how to improve the learning of the student through learner centred teaching style.³

To be learner centred is to be aware that the only location, where learning can occur, is in the heads and hearts of the individual learners. ***A teacher is being learner centred, when he or she chooses the students' needs and potentials for learning of as the starting point for teaching***

All these aspects are not absolute demands; on the contrary, they are suggestions. The mind map is rather a check list, which can be used to recall the essence of learner-centeredness, when you prepare your lessons and courses.

Small steps can make a big difference.

CHALLENGES TO BE MET

Whenever a teaching staff has been used to work within the *teacher centred teaching style*, certain fears and doubts may arise, when the teachers decide to change there teaching into a more *learner centred style*. Or you might put it in another way: there are certain challenges to meet. Here comes a list of some of the challenges that the teachers have to deal with.⁴

- *Domination – shyness*. Some students do not participate during lessons, others are dominant – what to do about that?
- *Gaps in levels of ability*. The backgrounds and capacities of the students are extremely different. Some are bright and some are far behind. The bright students will not help the weaker ones. – So how do we make them work together?
- *Reinforcement, acknowledgement*. What to do when a student gives the wrong answer? If we say “wrong” and pass the word to another student, who gives the right answer, we will put the weak student down and cement their positions as winners and losers. – So how to react on wrong answers?
- *Lack of mutual interest*. Students don't listen when other groups are presenting their work – how to create collective awareness?
- *Leadership in groups*. Some persons always take the lead, which creates domination. Or nobody takes the lead, which creates confusion. – How to create clarity about students' roles in group work?
- *Time management*. Learner centred teaching is time consuming and will make it hard to fulfil the syllabus. – How to ensure maximum learning for all students within a given time frame?
- *Number of students per class*. Too many students in the classes make group work almost impossible. This may have to be improved but meanwhile: - can we find ways of group teaching that are workable with smaller as well as bigger numbers of students?
- *Teachers' role*. When students become more active, the teacher may lose his or her main role as the one who is in charge, and thus lose dignity. How to keep the teacher in charge and find a new role?

³The mind map is made by the teachers of TTS in May 2004.

⁴ The list is made by teachers of TTS in May 2004

Questions for recap:

What is the difference between teaching method and teaching style?

Name three conditions for learning to occur

What is meant by “work”?

What is the crux of learner centred teaching?

Question for reflection:

Look at the list “challenges to be met” and find your own answers

MANY INTELLIGENCES AND LEARNING STYLES

Dr. Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard University, USA, developed the theory of many intelligences, or *multiple intelligences* in 1983⁵. It suggests that the traditional notion of intelligence, based on the I.Q. testing, is far too limited. Instead he proposes seven (later eight or more) different intelligences to account for a broader range of human potential in children and adults.

This particular theory differs from many other approaches because it is supported by current research in neurophysiology, psychological testing, and child development, as well as cross-cultural studies and biographical accounts of exceptional scientists, artists, musicians, and other highly skilled individuals.

The intelligences, briefly described, are:

Linguistic: the intelligence of words The capacity to use words effectively, whether orally (e.g. as a storyteller, orator, or politician) or in writing (e.g., as a poet, playwright, editor or journalist).

Logical-mathematical: the intelligence of numbers and reasoning The capacity to use numbers effectively (e.g., as a mathematician, tax accountant, or statistician) and to reason well (e.g., as a scientist, computer programmer, or logician).

Spatial: the intelligence of pictures and images The ability to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately (e.g., as a hunter, scout, or guide) and to perform transformations upon those perceptions (e.g., as an architect, artist, or inventor). This intelligence involves sensitivity to colour, line, shape, form, space, and the relationships that exist between these elements.

Musical: the intelligence of tone, rhythm, and timbre The capacity to perceive (e.g., as a music aficionado) discriminate (e.g., as a music critic), transform (e.g., as a composer), and express (e.g., as a performer) musical forms. This intelligence includes sensitivity to the rhythm, pitch or melody, and timbre or tone of a musical piece.

⁵ In Gardner, Howard. *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic, 1983

Bodily-Kinaesthetic: the intelligence of the whole body and the hands. Expertise in using one's whole body to express ideas and feelings (e.g., as an actor, a mime, an athlete, or a dancer) and facility in using one's hands to produce or transform things (e.g., as a craftsperson, sculptor, mechanic, or surgeon).

Interpersonal: the intelligence of social interactions The ability to perceive and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations, and feelings of other people. This can include sensitivity to facial expressions, voice and gestures: the capacity for differentiation among many different kinds of interpersonal cues; and the ability to respond effectively to those cues in some pragmatic way (e.g., to influence a group of people to follow a certain line of action).

Intrapersonal: the intelligence of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge and the ability to act adaptively on the basis of that knowledge. This intelligence includes having an accurate picture of oneself (one's strengths and limitations) awareness of inner moods, intentions, motivations, temperaments, and desires; and the capacity for self-discipline, self-understanding, and self-esteem.

Naturalist Intelligence: refers to the ability to recognise and classify plants, minerals and animals. This intelligence enables human beings to observe and understand patterns in the natural environment. A naturalist can recognise and classify plants and animals. The ability to recognise cultural artefacts may also depend on the naturalist intelligence. Some people are from an early age extremely good at recognising and classifying artefacts.

As Dr. Gardner sees it our (western) schools and culture focus most of their attention on linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligence. We esteem the highly articulate or logical people of our culture. However, Dr. Gardner says that we should also place equal attention on individuals who show gifts in other intelligences.

TO ENHANCE LEARNING BY USING MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCE

The theory of many intelligences and learning styles has grabbed the attention of many educators worldwide and a growing number of schools and education systems are now using its philosophy as a source of inspiration to redesign the way it educates children, young people and adults. The theory of multiple intelligences seems to have strong implications also for adult learning and development.

Many educators are working to connect the theory of multiple intelligences with practical school work. Here follows a scheme that describes the traits of seven intelligences and suggests how to strengthen them for learning.⁶

⁶ From the book "The learning revolution" by Gordon Dryden & Dr. Jeannette Vos

Linguistic: the intelligence of words.

<p><i>Likely traits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sensitive to patterns - orderly - systematic - ability to reason - likes to listen, read and write - spells easily - likes wordgames - may be a good public speaker or writer 	<p><i>How to strengthen for learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tell stories - play memory games with names, places - read and write stories, jokes - do vocabulary skits - use journal writing - interviewing - do puzzles, spelling games, - integrate writing and reading with other subject areas - debate and discussions
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Logical-mathematical: the intelligence of numbers and reasoning

<p><i>Likely traits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - likes abstract thinking - likes being precise - enjoys counting - likes being organised - uses logical structure - enjoy computers - enjoy problem solving and experimenting in logical way - prefers orderly note-taking 	<p><i>How to strengthen for learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - stimulate problem solving - do mathematical games - analyse and interpret data - use reasoning - encourage practical experiments - integrate organisation and maths in other curricular areas - allow things to be done step by step - use deductive thinking - if possible use computers for spreadsheets, calculations
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(Visual-)Spatial: the intelligence of pictures and images

<p><i>Likely traits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thinks in pictures - creates mental images - uses metaphor - likes art: drawing, painting, sculpting etc - easily reads maps, charts and diagrams - remembers with pictures - has good colour sense - uses all senses for imaging 	<p><i>How to strengthen for learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use pictures to learn - draw diagrams, maps - integrate art with other subjects - use mind-mapping - watch films and videos if possible - use stimuli on the wall such as posters and graphics - use mime - change places in room to gain different perspective - highlight with colours
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Musical: the intelligence of tone, rhythm, and timbre

<p><i>Likely traits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- sensitive to pitch, rhythm, timbre- sensitive to emotional power of music- sensitive to complex organisation of music- may be deeply spiritual	<p><i>How to strengthen for learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- play a musical instrument- learn through songs- study with music, write music- integrate music with other subject areas- use music to get relaxed- make pictures with music- learn through raps such as timetables, whole language poems, choral reading
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Bodily-Kinaesthetic: the intelligence of the whole body and the hands

<p><i>Likely traits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- good control of one's body- control of objects- good timing- good reflexes- learns best by moving- likes to engage in physical sports- likes to touch- skilled at handicrafts- likes to act- learns by participating in the learning process- remembers what was done rather than what was said or observed- plays around with objects while listening- fidgety if there are few breaks- mechanically minded	<p><i>How to strengthen for learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- use physical encoding exercises wherein you become object you are learning about- use movement and dancing to learn- act out the learning- use manipulatives in science and math- take lots of "state changes" and breaks- mentally review while you are walking , jogging- use models, machines, handicrafts- use field trips- use classroom games, drama and role-plays- finger snapping, clapping, stamping, jumping, climbing
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Interpersonal: the intelligence of social interactions

<p><i>Likely traits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- negotiates well- relates well, mixes well- able to read other's intentions- enjoys being with people- has many friends- communicates well- enjoys group activities- likes to mediate disputes- likes to co-operate- "reads" social situations well	<p><i>How to strengthen for learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- do learning activities co-operatively- take lots of breaks to socialise- use "pair and share" learning activities- use relationships and communication skills- make learning fun- integrate socialisation into all curricular areas- use interview and "people search" activities where you have to talk to others to get answers- work in teams- tutor others
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Intrapersonal: the intelligence of self-knowledge

<p><i>likely traits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- self knowledge- sensitivity to one's own values- deeply aware of one's own feelings- sensitivity to one's own purpose in life- has a well-developed sense of self- intuitive ability- self motivated- deeply aware of own strengths and weaknesses- rather private person- wants to be different from mainstream	<p><i>How to strengthen for learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- have personal "heart-to heart" talks- use personal growth activities to break learning blocks- debrief activities- take time for inner reflection- do independent study- discuss, reflect or write what you experienced and how you felt- permit freedom to be different from the group- use diary or logbook to record learning- take control of own learning- teach personal affirmations- teach questioning
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Naturalist: The intelligence of observing and knowing nature

<i>Likely traits</i>	<i>How to strengthen for learning</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to recognise plants, minerals, animals and other objects from the natural world - e.g distinguishes between sounds of different birds and animals - enjoys outings in nature - interest in environmental issues - notices changes in environment - observes and remembers natural phenomena - sorts and categorises articles - classifies information - learn characteristics of the natural world easily, and might have the same ability concerning the “man made” environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - include field trips and excursions in teaching activities - study plants, trees, animals and insects from different habitats or parts of the world - grow, taste and learn to recognise food from different cultures - grow vegetables, fruits, herbs and use for cooking - study how animals have affected history and historical trends - study lives of famous naturalists and their impact on history - do a project on environmental issues - make environmental representation of different cultures - write essay or poetry based on nature experience

Questions for recap:

What are the seven intelligences?

How to make use of and strengthen them? Give some examples

Questions for reflection:

Why is it important to know about the intelligences?

Name some possibilities and limitations to adapt your teaching to the different learning styles

THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

FROM TEACHING TO LEARNING IN MODERN SOCIETY.

As a teacher you might think: *Why should I teach the students social skills and other life skills? Why is it not enough to teach them academic skills according to the syllabus?*

In this article we will try to point out some answers to these questions and tell something about the development of education in modern society.

The importance of education is growing with the global competition between nations and companies. There is an increasing need for education due to the challenges of a fast changing and complex world, which is not easy to cope with.

The global orientation of education is now pointing towards **lifelong education**, which means that education not only exists to qualify people to the labour market once in their lifetime, but must be seen as an ongoing process during the total working life, which qualifies people to changes, new methods and new understandings. Teachers' need for in-service training will e.g. increase with the demand of new methods and with changes in curricula due to society's development.

So an increasing amount of funds is worldwide spent on education in order to qualify people to meet new challenges in the global competition and in society in general.

Politicians, administrators and managers are paying for *teaching*, but what they actually want to buy is *learning*. There is no simple and automatic connection between the two. This means that you can not be sure to obtain learning just because you teach.

This dilemma gives rise to some questions:

What is learning?

How does it come about?

How can it be promoted?

Why does teaching not always result in learning?

The same dilemma has fostered a fast development of ideas concerning learning and a discussion about the skills are needed in order to cope with and contribute to modern society

Most of these ideas stress that the necessary learning is not only the contents of the syllabus or curriculum, but various personal qualities and life skills as well.

If you look at job advertisements, or you ask managers of modern companies and enterprises about what kind of skills and qualities they are looking for, you will see that general skills, social skills, life skills and personal qualities have a very high priority.

These skills are essential to handle the complex functions of modern life, and they are needed to improve democratic functions.

In modern society what should be learned in education could be.:

- A complex totality of traditional and up-to-date knowledge
- Orientation and overview
- Professional and every day life skills
- A broad range of personal qualities: Flexibility, openness, independence, responsibility and creativity
- Ability to cope with the diversities of various cultures

All this can be embraced in the word *competencies*, which means the ability to use all aspects of a certain function in well-known or unknown situations.

To capture learning in this sense we shall use a certain way of describing learning, which represents modern western learning theory.⁷ In this understanding learning is *all lasting changes of our capacities, which are not due only to our biological maturation*. That means changes of capacity in broad and various fields such as academic skills, dancing or sports, coping with emotions, handling social relations.

This comprehensive way of describing learning avoids the separation between learning, personal development, socialization and qualification, but sees them as different aspects of learning.

In this thinking learning can take place in any part of society - not only in the educational institutions like schools and universities. At the same time it means that the learning, which does take place in these institutions must be broadened to cover both academic, social and emotional learning.

THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

In this learning theory all learning includes:

- **An external interaction** process between the learner and his or her social, cultural and material environment
- **An internal psychological process** of acquisition and elaboration between cognition and emotions, in which new impulses are connected with results of prior learning.

These two processes are interrelated. They can be illustrated with figure 1.

In this understanding all learning includes **three dimensions**, which influence each other and are highly integrated:

- The **cognitive** dimension of knowledge and skills
- The **emotional** dimension of feelings and motivation
- The **social** dimension of communication and cooperation

They are all embedded in the context of any given society. The three dimensions and their dynamics are shown in the figure 2.

The cognitive dimension concerns the learning contents like knowledge and skills, which builds up the learner's understanding and ability. The endeavour of the learner is to construct

⁷ Danish professor of educational research Knud Illeris, University of Roskilde, in his book 'The three Dimensions of Learning'

meaning and ability to deal with the challenges of practical life and thereby develop an overall functionality.

The emotional and psychodynamic dimension includes mental energy, feelings and motivations. Its ultimate function is to secure the mental balance of the learner, and thereby it simultaneously develops a personal sensibility. This dimension is always initiated by the external interaction with other persons and integrated in the internal process of learning. Therefore all cognitive learning is, so to speak ‘obsessed’ by the emotions at stake - and the emotional learning is always influenced by understanding.

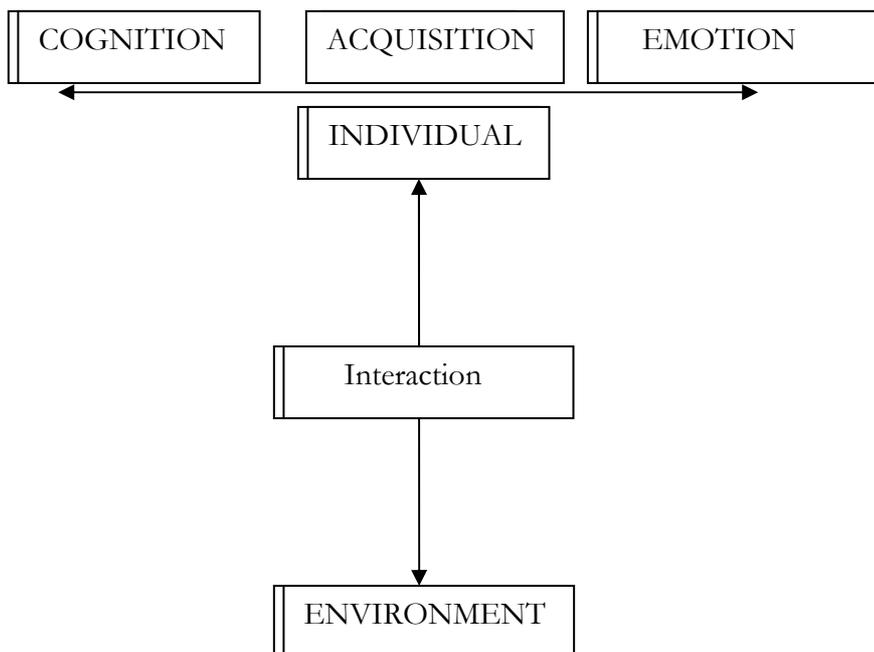


Fig. 1. The fundamental processes of learning

The social dimension concerns external interaction with others such as participation, communication and co-operation. It serves the integration of communities and societies and thereby builds up the social abilities of the learner.

This building up, however, necessarily takes place through the two other dimensions. As learning, furthermore, always takes place in the context of a specific society, which sets the conditions for the learning possibilities, finally all these processes must be seen in the light of the basic life situation of the learner.

AN EXAMPLE FROM EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE

In order to illustrate how this thinking can be understood and used, we shall take an example from every day life at school.

During a lesson in Tibetan or English language a teacher is explaining a complicated grammar problem. The students are supposed to be listening and perhaps asking questions to make sure they have understood the explanation correctly.

The students are however involved in an interaction process concerning a conflict between two students in the class that splits the class into two. But at the same time they are supposed to take in or to learn what the teacher is teaching. The students are supposed to be able to remember, what they have been taught, and under certain conditions be able to reproduce it, apply it and involve it in further learning.

But sometimes and for some students, the learning process does not take place as intended, and mistakes or derailing may occur in many different ways. Perhaps the interaction does not function because of the conflict in the class, but it could as well be because the teacher's explanation is not good enough, or there may be disturbances in the same situation. If so the explanation about the grammar problem will only be picked up partially or incorrectly, and the learning result will be insufficient.

But the students' acquisition process may also be inadequate, for instance because of a lack of concentration, and this will also lead to deterioration in the learning result. Or there may be errors or insufficiencies in the prior learning of some pupils making them unable to understand the teacher's explanation and thereby also to learn what is being taught. Much of this indicates that *acquisition is not only a cognitive matter*. There are other mental functions involved such as the students' attitudes to the intended learning, their interest and mobilization of mental energy –emotional and psychodynamic factors.

In a school situation the focus is usually on the learning contents; in the case chosen it is on the students' understanding of a grammar problem. However, the emotional function is also crucial, i.e. how the situation is experienced, what sort of feelings and motivations are involved, the nature and the strength of the mental energy involved. The value and durability of the learning result are closely related to the emotional dimension of the learning process. Furthermore, both the cognitive and the emotional functions and their interplay are crucially dependent on the interaction process between the learner and the social, cultural and material environment. If the interaction during a language lesson is not adequate and acceptable to the students, the learning will suffer or something quite different may be learned, for instance a negative impression of the teacher, of some other students, of the subject or of the school situation in general.

In this example we have chosen the school situation as the environment where the learning takes place. Referring to the comprehensive definition of learning stressed in the beginning of this article, the learning environment could be anywhere in the society, where changes of capacity takes place: In the cinema or at a museum, talking with a friend, looking at a flower, attending a religious act, visiting a library or reading a book.

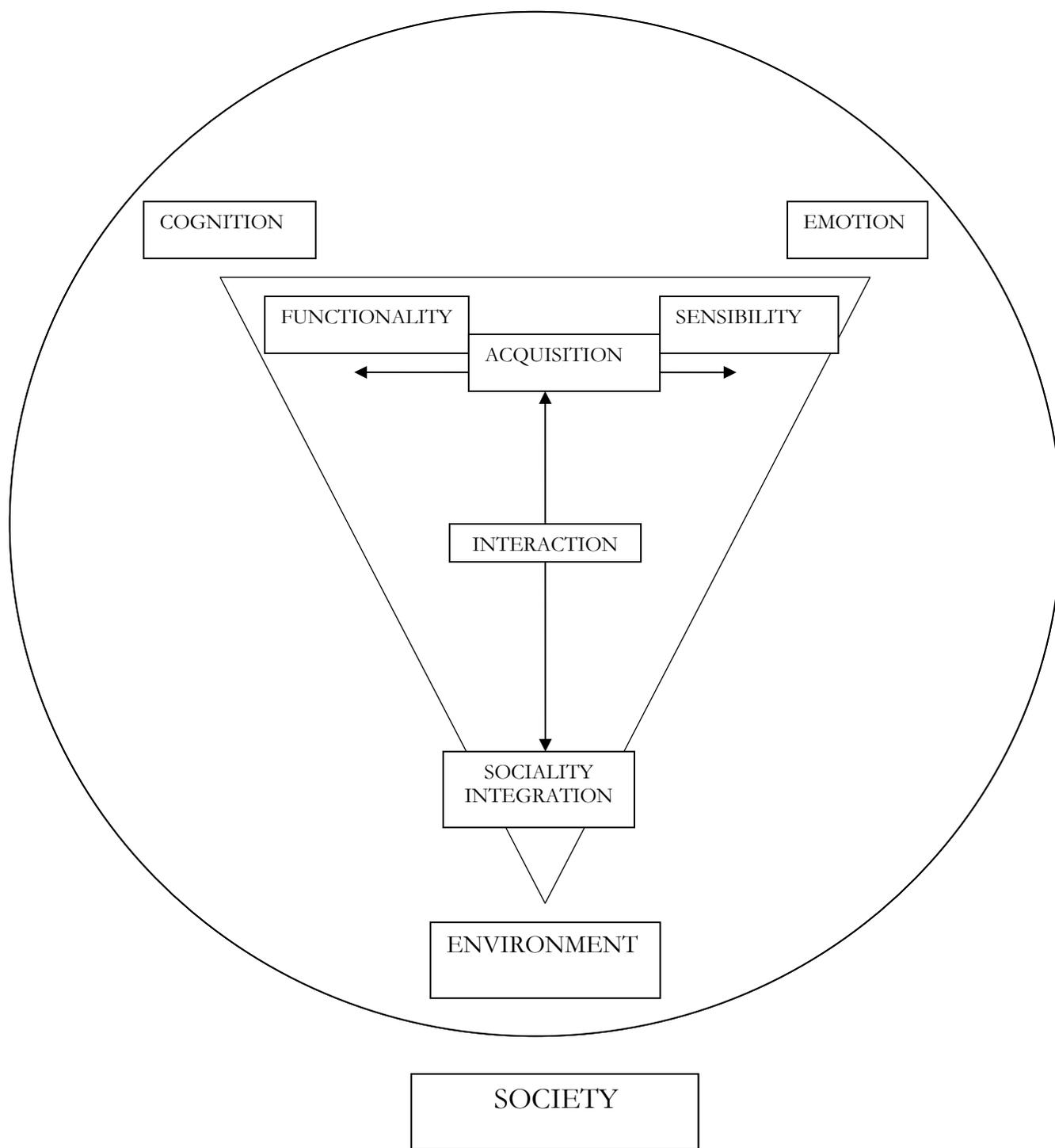


Fig. 2 the processes and dimensions of learning

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

IDEAS AND PRINCIPLES

Cooperative learning⁸ (C.L) is about how to organise lessons. The purpose of organising is to promote the students' learning through cooperation. This concept is used in different countries in many parts of the world. In South Africa after the transition from the apartheid system, cooperative learning has been built into the new curriculum, and is being carried through also in classes with many students.

C.L. is a way to promote academic achievement (cognitive skills), language skills and social development at the same time. C.L. builds on cooperative structures in the classroom. *You can adjust the structures of C.L. into any syllabus.* The structures are not dependent of the content – the structures are content- free. The same structure can be used repeatedly with different subjects and topics.

The idea of C.L. is also to make more students active in producing and practising language at the same time. The amount of time to practice language skills, which is available to the single student, is multiplied several times when working with certain C.L. structures.

From competition to cooperation

The core of C.L. is to turn from *competitive* structures to *cooperative* structures because it can foster better learning for the adult students. Often problems like the following are mentioned from teachers: *Good students who boost because they achieve well – this creates feeling of low confidence or losers for other students. This again can lead to low expectations for some students' achievement.*

Besides low confidence, the feeling of being a loser may arise defence-mechanisms like refusal: *"This subject is not interesting"*, and projection: *"The teacher is not doing a good job"*. A situation like this creates an uncomfortable atmosphere of negative co-dependency with "winners" and "losers" among the students.

Co-dependency

The idea of C.L. is to build *positive* co-dependency into the structure of any lesson. The cooperative structures are meant to increase the ability as well as the accountability of each student. When the students depend on each other to perform well, the abilities of each student will develop. A simple example could be one of organising a dancing performance: Talented students may lead and instruct the not so talented students, who will have to exercise a lot in order to achieve the common goal.

The teacher is in charge

The role of the teacher in C.L. is important, and it is different from the more traditional teacher role. The teacher will teach the students how to work in a cooperative structure and supervise the process to make sure that the students work properly towards the aims. *The teacher is in charge.* The basic work of learning how to use the different co-operative structures is very important and should be given the necessary time. Once the students master the use of different structures, group processes will be time-saving and effective.

⁸ This description is inspired by Spencer Kagan: The structural approach to Cooperative Learning.

Different structures - different aims

There are different structures, which are useful for distinct objectives within the syllabus i.e.:

- Mastery – e.g. basic skills (grammar), check for comprehension
- Concept development
- Communication building
- Teambuilding
- Class building

You may consider a possible connection between Co-operative Learning structures and “Many intelligences”. The structures do produce greater engagement by involving the range of intelligences. Co-operative learning gives each learner better opportunities to learn according to individual patterns of intelligence and learning styles. So by the use of various C-L structures - you are likely to promote development of many intelligences

COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES – HOW TO DO

Below you can see some C.L. structures. It is important, however, to stress three basic considerations of great importance when you implement cooperative structures in your lesson planning:

Three considerations

1. What kind of cognitive development does this structure foster?
2. What kind of social development does it foster?
3. Where in the lesson plan does it fit in?

STRUCTURE	DESCRIPTION	FUNCTIONS (Academic and social)
Think-Pair-Share	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students think to themselves on at topic (reflection) 2. Students pair up with another student to discuss or interview 3. Students share their thoughts with the group or class 4. Teacher makes the closure 	Getting new thoughts Elaborating thoughts Reflection on new ideas Participation Involvement
Numbered heads together	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher has students number off within each group, each student has a number: 1,2,3,4,5 2. Teacher asks a question 3. Teacher tells students to ‘put their heads together’ to make sure that all in the team know the answer 4. The teacher calls a number (1,2,3,4,5). Students with that number can stand to respond 5. The teacher makes the closure 	Checking for knowledge Checking for comprehension Short recap Students helping each other to know the right answer Students helping each other in the group fulfilling the common task

Facilitated group dialog with defined roles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Divide the class into groups of 4-8 students 2. Make the group decide on the roles: Facilitator, reporter, timekeeper etc. 3. The teacher asks a question or gives the topic to be discussed. The teacher gives the time frame 4. The facilitators initiate the group work 5. Presentation in class by the reporters 6. The teacher clarifies and gives feedback 	<p>Expressing ideas and opinions Making use of all resources in the group Creating stories Exploring the diversity of a topic</p> <p>Organising group work Taking leadership Respecting leadership Training different group roles Common respect for group roles Individual responsibility for the group process Respecting different views and opinions</p>
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Rounds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole class or groups 2. The teacher defines topic or question 3. Each student in turn shares his or her experience, opinion and thoughts 4. The teacher makes the closure 	<p>Expressing ideas and opinions Creating stories</p> <p>Equal participation Getting acquainted with classmates</p>
Corners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher writes three or more view points on charts and places them in different corners of the classroom 2. Each student moves to a corner of one of the view points 3. Students share within corners: 'Why did I choose this corner?' 4. The teacher calls for ideas from each corner 5. The teacher is in charge of the dialogue between corners and makes the closure 	<p>Taking a stand Expressing personal and moral values Knowing and respecting different points of view Exchanging different views Problem solving</p> <p>Meeting classmates</p>

<p>Aquarium</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whole class or group 2. Arrange a circle of 5 to 12 students on chairs or blankets in the centre of the room. Have one or two chairs free to sit in 3. The rest of the students are sitting around the circle 4. The teacher gives the topic and the students in the circle (the aquarium) share their views and knowledge about the topic 5. After that you can open up for participation from the students sitting around. They can sit in on the free chairs and put questions, give comments or propose suggestions 6. As a teacher you must decide and define the roles for both the students in the inner circle and the ones sitting around 7. The teacher makes the closure and the evaluation of the process 	<p>Expressing special knowledge or personal views</p> <p>Investigate a topic of academic or personal character</p> <p>Students with a specific knowledge share it in the aquarium</p> <p>A specific academic problem or an experience is shared</p> <p>Expressing yourself in a group</p> <p>Sharing knowledge and experiences for common use</p> <p>Using the resources of the class</p> <p>Listening and deciding to contribute</p> <p>Awareness of and making up your mind on certain topic</p>
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Co-operative Structures “Partners” and “Jigsaw”

Structure	Description	Functions (Academic and social)
Partners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students form pairs within their group 2. Students work in pairs to create or master content 3. They consult with partners from other groups 4. They then share their products or understanding with other partner pair in their group 	Mastery and presentation of new material Concept development Presentation and communication skills
Jigsaw	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the home group /or base support group each student in gets a topic/ piece of material to study⁹ 2. Preparation pairs: Each student meets with a person from another home group, who has the same topic / piece of material to become an <u>“expert”</u> Finally they plan how to teach the material to others 3. Upon returning to their home group, each one in turn teaches their expertise to the other group members. Everybody learns the material being taught by the other members of this group 4. Students are all assessed on all aspects of the topics/ all materials given to the home group 5. Teacher makes the closure 	Acquisition and presentation of new material Checking for comprehension Conceptual Development Sharing Information Students helping each other to remember new things and become experts in a topic Mastery Informed debate Planning presentation Presentation and communication skills

COOPERATIVE LEARNING – ‘GROUP ROLES’

Motto: Everybody can do something - nobody can do everything.

When we use different cooperative structures it is necessary to define the different roles before the group work begins. The three roles mentioned below are the most common roles used in cooperative structures:

Facilitator:

- makes the group process work accordingly to the decided task.
- makes sure that everybody in the group understands the question and the task.

⁹ Teacher distributes a set of materials to each group. The set needs to be divisible into the number of members of the group (2, 3 or 4 parts). Give each member one piece of the set of materials

- makes sure that everybody in the group is allowed and encouraged to speak
- makes sure that all resources of the group come forward
- can ask the time-keeper for help
- can call the teacher for help if necessary
- invites the reporter to re-cap the important points from the discussion.

Time-keeper:

- takes care of the decided time-schedule
- reminds the facilitator and the group-members of time

Reporter:

- takes notes according to decisions in the group on how to report back. Sometimes all different points from group-members are important - sometimes only conclusions should be reported.
- can work on her own for some time, and then ask for permission to check notes with the group
- can ask the facilitator to clarify difficult points in the report
- should not take over the leadership

Questions for recap:

What are the main ideas of co-operative learning

What are the three considerations to make, before you choose a co-operative structure?

Questions for reflection:

Do you find that CL can influence learning? If so, how?

Does CL make life easier or heavier for the teacher? Why?

EVALUATION

WHAT IT IS: To identify the value of an activity, process or course of events. To find out what is better and worse, more or less useful.

WHY EVALUATE:

- For teachers to learn how their teaching worked, and how useful and enjoyable the students found it
- For teachers to have a firm basis for improving planning
- For students to remember and consolidate their learning
- For students to reflect on their learning and to make future strategies
- For students to have more influence on their learning programmes
- For students to take more responsibility of their own learning
- For students and teachers to be empowered

WHY, IN SUMMARY: The main purpose is **learning and improving**, by the teacher and the students. For adult students evaluations is especially important, because it promotes their possibilities of having a say on their own work situation.

QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE EVALUATION: When the teacher finds out, *how many* of the students liked or disliked a lesson, we call it quantitative. What you really know after evaluation is *the number* of participants who were satisfied or dissatisfied. That can be useful to know, but it is more useful to know *why* they were satisfied or dissatisfied. This we call qualitative evaluation. Somebody may be dissatisfied because the issues were too difficult, or too unclearly explained, or they were tired, or they do not find the lesson relevant to their situation. All this is important information for the teacher, especially for the teacher of adults.

SOME SUGGESTIONS, SOME METHODS

Mood Meter: Put up a chart near the door and let the students mark it every day. They can mark a) how they liked the lessons, or b) how well they learned.

Feedback At The End Of The Programme: A few students are selected or volunteer, to pass feedback and suggestions to the teacher after the day, or the week. They may wear badges so that the other students remember to pass on feedback and tell their opinions to them.

Next Day Feedback: One, two or three students start each day with a review of the day before. Each day can have a different team, and each team can choose their own style. Set a time limit and encourage creative performances.

Verbal Evaluation: Can be done in rounds with the whole class. For shy classes you can let the students chat in pairs before the round. It can also be done by groups with spokespersons, who can either speak from a panel or form a little circle, where they present the evaluation and discuss it, while all the others listen.

Questionnaire With Scoring: Each student gets a written form, where they can score from 1-5 on each activity of the process. Remember that they should know if they score for *useful*, *enjoyable* or *interesting*. Leave space for "other comments"

Write A Letter To The Teacher: After a period of teaching (one month, 3 months, 6 months) you ask the students to write a letter and tell you frankly how they liked the teaching: What learning did they especially appreciate, what did they miss, how did they feel, what did they enjoy and what was tiresome? Their letters can be with or without name.

Cards

Hand out cards for the students and tell them to write one comment on each card.:

- In big groups, limit the amount of cards
- There might be e.g. blue cards for negative, red for positive and green for suggesting comments
- Work individually, in small groups or pairs
- Sort the cards on the floor or put them up on a wall for display
- Ask about some of the cards

Stand To Score

- Ask the students to stand between two poles (negative / positive) to show their score
- Ask students why they have chosen their position
- Go through the programme, standing for each part

Step Forward Or Back

- All stand in a line
- Each activity is named
- You could ask: how much did you learn from....How much did you enjoy...
- They step forward for positive, backwards for negative
- They can take long or short steps
- Somebody counts who many are stepping forwards, backwards or standing still
- A less active variant is thumbs up, down and wiggling for so so
- You can ask some students to explain their steps

Action Reflection Learning Strategy

Group Discussion with these questions:

- Action: What was the activity? What happened? Who did what?
- Reflection: What do we think about it? What did and what didn't we like? Why? What was interesting, confusing, disturbing etc.?
- Learning: What was the outcome? What did we learn?
- Strategy: How can we use it in the future? What could follow? Which strategy can we come up with?

Good evaluation questions:

- *What did you find most useful? Why?*
- *What did you find least useful? Why?*
- *What did you learn?*
- *How will you use what you learned?*
- *What was difficult?*

- *How to improve the lessons?*
- *What was enjoyable? Why?*
- *What would you like more of?*
- *What would you like less of?*
- *What was an important learning for you?*

All these questions are *qualitative*, since they ask into the quality of the teaching.

What to do if feedback is negative?

- Try not to fight back or defend yourself
- Ask the students open, friendly questions, *can you tell me more about what you mean? how would you like it to be? what do you need?*
- Remember that you are asking in order to learn and improve your teaching
- The more you know, the more you are able to cope with it

**THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS TO EVALUATE
ADD YOUR OWN IDEAS!!**

Questions for recap:

What is evaluation?
Why use evaluation?

Questions for reflection:

When would you use evaluation? What kind and for what reasons?
How can evaluations influence your work?

FEEDBACK

The purpose of feedback is to give person who has performed in front of others a qualified and challenging response.

In adult education you can use feedback

- *among colleagues*, when you have been observing each other's teaching
- *from teacher to student* after performance, as an assessment
- *from student to student* – you can teach your students how to give friendly and precise feedback.

The term feedback can be understood as *giving something back* to the person. It is a human need to create something, which is important to others, and it is a human need to be acknowledged. Acknowledgement gives the feeling of belonging and being taken seriously as part of the group, tribe or society. It also promotes the self-esteem of a person.

To perform means to create something out of ones abilities, and to do one's best, and therefore one will often feel vulnerable. So the person who asks for feedback needs our time, full attention and the best of our respect.

That leads to certain suggestions for feedback.

For the person who receives feedback:

- Be aware that feedback is not a discussion, you are asking for advice, so avoid defending your performance, and try to learn as much as you can.
- Be concrete about what you wish to have feedback on and why.
- Tell what you feel went well and about your doubts.

For the person who gives feedback

- The purpose is that the other person becomes clearer, so listen openly and keep your own ideas in the background.
- If you are not familiar with the subject presented, you can put questions for understanding, but not too many!
- When you acknowledge the other,
- Tell what you liked about the performance, what was new to you, what was inspiring to you
- Ask questions to understand the issue and to understand why the performer chose to do what she/he did.
- Now you can put forward critical questions: Please be precise and base your statements on personal observations
- Use open dialogue and keep focus on the person, who wishes to understand and find new solutions
- Bring forward your own ideas if you have any, but only as contributions to be received or not received

If you use these steps you have promoted a good communication. The person whom you gave feedback will leave the situation more aware and inventive regarding his/her possibilities. Even though criticism was part of your feedback, the person is not let down or left with a feeling of being of no us, but has hopefully found new ways and ideas for future actions.

This happened because you respected the person's need for creation and acknowledgement. It goes for all of us that when we have been told, on this thorough level, that we are capable to create and that we are part of the group, then it is much easier to listen to criticism.

If this is not the case criticism is experienced as an attack and the first reaction is defence. When we defend ourselves we are not able to hear or learn anything new.

Questions for recap:

What is feedback?

Where in adult education can it be used: from whom to whom?

Questions for reflection:

How would you introduce feedback in your classes? Which reasons would you give, and where would you start?

ASSESSMENT

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

In teaching and learning there are many elements to evaluate:

- whether the aims and contents of the specific lessons were suitable,
- if methods, activities and materials were useful,
- if planning and time schedule were convenient,
- how well teacher- and students performed etc.

You can focus on processes as well as products. Evaluation is a tool for learning - for teachers as well as students. It is a way to become aware of “what happens”, and of how students can use “what happens” in their learning process - and how teachers can use it to plan and adjust teaching.

Assessment is a special kind of evaluation with a special focus: what have the students actually learned?

Assessment of - and with - students

When it comes to assessment of there are different options, and the teacher has to consider the purpose of assessment as well as the methods. In fact the purpose and the methods must be coherent. Preferably the assessment method considered, must at the same time suit the outcomes that the learners are expected to achieve (the aims and goals set) and the learning activities chosen for the purpose.

To give oral or written feedback is one way of assessing students, to give marks another. Both can be relevant, but they often serve quite different purposes even though marking or grading will sometimes follow feedback. When it comes to testing and final exams, marking is traditionally the chosen tool even though you will also find exams where feedback as well as marking are used.

In some literature you will find the concepts “formative assessment” and summative assessment”. The first is about the kind of assessment that aims at *forming*, adjusting or correcting the next part of the teaching and learning process. You may talk about assessment for development and focus on a process still running. It is very often but not always an internal matter between teacher and students. The latter is more about *summing up* when a process has come to an end, - in order to approve, control students’ ability (e.g. at an exam). Often the purpose is to give information also to authorities about efficiency and standard of the education in question. This kind of assessment can be expressed in the form of marks, as mentioned above, but also concluding comments, a certificate, diploma or kinds of statements.

There is an everyday way of remembering the difference.

“When the cook tastes the soup, that’s formative; when the guests taste the soup, that’s summative.”

You might say that for the individual student feedback is more informative than marks, because in feedback you describe and explain in words, what you think, like and dislike about the student's performance and give ideas for improvement, whereas a mark only gives the conclusion of your thinking.

Marking, even if conscientious, often fails to offer guidance on how work can be improved. On the other hand everybody knows that comments and words are very subjective and connected to the views and presumptions of the person who expresses them. There are situations, where a more objective and maybe even scientific registration and documentation of performance is relevant, and when it is possible to measure the extent to which aims and goals are achieved. Here you may sometimes prefer the assessment expressed in simple terms, points or marks.

However there are more ways of going about than this.

The main purpose of assessment for teachers, who prefer a learner centred teaching style, is normally to help the students improve their learning,– to support their achievement of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

To be able to assess the individual student's actual outcomes of the learning process you must have some knowledge. You must collect data and provide information about students' understandings and on the students' qualifications, skills, and you must observe their performance and development.

There are various tools for gathering information on which assessment can later be based, e.g. questionnaires, interviews, logbook notes or essays, assignments, tests, students' oral presentations, practical assignments, narratives, stories, students' peer or self assessment sheets, or student- to-student feedback.

Some of these will be mentioned briefly below

In the learner centred and co-operative classroom with adult students it is obvious that students must continuously be allowed to reflect on and have a say about assessing their own learning. Adult students can be very active participants in assessment. They can participate in finding reasons for good or poorer performances and results and they can find interest in setting goals to suit the scope and capacity of the individual learner.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Some examples:

Questionnaires

The questions asked by the teacher (or maybe fellow student) might focus on different things:

- subject matter outcomes,
- emotional experiences,
- social skills, attitudes towards work etc.

One part of a questionnaire may consist of as well boxes to place a mark off in as closed questions, which have only one answer. These can help both student and teacher to check for

understanding and to establish basic, factual information. However, more open – ended questions, which can be answered in more than one way, make students reflect more and think differently about things. This may encourage them to give answers that give a clearer picture of their learning process, way of thinking, skills and knowledge. If questionnaires are followed by a conversation it is possible to explore the area of learning and outcomes even further.

Written assignments and logbooks

Students are given open questions or headlines as a starting points or inspiration for evaluation and assessment expressed in the students' own words, drawings or other illustrations. The more open assignment may be in the form of narratives, essays, creative writing or notes in a logbook. Advantages are that the contents and form of answers are to a high extent decided by the individual writer.. A logbook is a process-oriented form of evaluation and self-assessment where students reflect on the teaching as well as their own learning. A logbook can also be used as a tool for communication between student and teacher who may have a continuous written dialogue in the logbook..

Interviews and oral presentation

Students may fill in questionnaires or assessment papers as a take off for an interview or a dialogue with each other or with the teacher, - or students present work that they have researched orally to teacher /class. This allows students to tell what they actually know. It assesses both the work completed and the ability to communicate what has been learned.

Self-assessment (individually, in pairs or groups)

Students are asked to assess themselves against the given aims or outcomes, e.g.” My essay / our pair or group performance was good because...”. Students begin to recognise the qualities and limitations of their work. When they are involved in the process and understand it they are more likely to learn from it.

In a group self-assessment paper about co-operative work, you could for instance ask group members:

Did the group....

Listen to each other?

Talk about the task?

Co-operate?

Suggest good ideas?

Encourage each other?

And make everybody put ticks in Yes /no boxes

Afterwards you may add more open- ended questions like...

What went well?

What could we do better?

Etc.

An assessment sheet may also give space for assessing every student in regard to task skills and social skills like this:

Task skills

Student

	A	B	C	D
Gives ideas				
Asks questions				
Stays on task				
Follow directions				
Check others' understanding				
Gets group back on task				

Social skills Student

	A	B	C	D
Encourages others				
Explains ideas				
Discusses				
Listens well				
Acknowledges others				

Portfolio assessment

These are files, folders or boxes that contain a collection of the work the student has done over a period of time. The file / folder / box should include the student's best work as well as initial plans, drafts, self-evaluation, and feedback from peers and teachers. When best it is a collection that exhibits the students' efforts, progress and achievements in one or more learning areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit and evidence of student self-reflection.

Advantages: It allows for assessment over a period of time. Students are not assessed on a once-off performance. It includes self-assessment. Sometimes it also includes logbook reflections. Like some of the other tools mentioned above, a portfolio can be a very useful issue for conversations between teacher and student and in student-to-student dialogues.

III

TEACHER OF ADULTS: SOCIAL SKILLS FOR DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

DEMOCRACY, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Democracy is a way of organising communities and an ideal of how to live together. In this article we will explore the links between social skills and democracy in the classroom and in society. In order to do that it is best to have a common understanding of, what democracy means, because there are many ideas of the meaning of democracy.

Here come some answers from the teachers at Tibetan Transit School:

Democracy is...

- ❖ The root of peace between high, middle and low level of society.
- ❖ The kingdom in which the politicians are the kings.
- ❖ Co-operative work.
- ❖ People's power. The government of the people. Stability of the country.
- ❖ The platform to show individual skills and ability.
- ❖ The institution based on rights, freedom and wishes of the people.
- ❖ A country in which there is equality, freedom and responsibility for the people.
- ❖ A system of government in which there is no automatic control of power.
- ❖ A land of nobody: by the people and for the people.
- ❖ A trunk without branches, leaves and flowers.
- ❖ Existence of equal rights, equal power and freedom
- ❖ A government by the maximum number of people.
- ❖ Control of power by the people. Formed by the people and practised by the people.
- ❖ A right to live your life peacefully in this complicated world.

DEMOCRACY IN SOCIETY

Democracy literally means people's rule, and our definition is simple: *Democracy is People's Rule; in a democracy the citizens have a decisive political influence; they are free and have equal rights.*

It is often stated that democracy was invented in ancient Athens, Greece, Europe. But if we stick to our fundamental definition, people's rule with free citizens and equal rights is likely to have existed and developed in many forms and in many parts of the world, at many times through history. Democracy is not necessarily a Western device, although it is often explained in that way.

In some theories specific *structures* are stressed as the core of democracy. There should be a strict separation of the three powers, the three pillars of democracy:

- the legislative power - an elected parliament deciding the laws of society,
- the judicial power – independent courts passing judgments
- the executive power – government, officials, police etc.

And there should be other structures: secret voting, choice between several political parties etc. There are many different arrangements of these structures in the nations of the world, which call themselves democratic, many versions of democracy.

In other theories democracy is seen as *a way of living together*. Democracy is sometimes defined as a society in which political problems are solved through dialogue, without violence. In this understanding conflict resolution, co-operation and communication, which are social skills,

become very important for the development and defence of democracy. You could say that they become democratic skills.

The two ways of looking at democracy do not need to be contradictory, *democratic structure* or *democratic ways of relating to each other*. Both are necessary and none of them can stay isolated.

It is said that the level of democracy in a society can be judged by the way the majority treats the minority. If there has been a vote and the majority has “won”, the minority has to accept and obey the decision. But this does not mean that the minority should give up its convictions, views and values. The minority has not only the right of free thought but also the right of expressing these views and to try to convince others about their advantage, in order to later have the decision changed. Otherwise democracy could turn into a *rule of majority*. But it is the *people’s rule*, and the people also include minorities. So it is crucial that the majority always continues its dialogue with the minorities.

Democracies are very different, and no democracy is perfect. In Scandinavia democracy is old, well tried and popular. Often there will be a voluntary turn-out of 80-90 % on election days. Democracy is a part of tradition, and people would probably react fiercely, if it clearly was under attack. But Scandinavian democracy is not perfect when it comes to the condition that *the citizens have a decisive political influence*. The citizens do have political influence, but so do other groups, which are beyond democratic control: the vast transnational companies. They in fact decide so many things that influence our lives and our children’s future:

- the farmers of the 3. World countries are pressured by multinationals to engage in only cultivating one or few products like coffee, soy beans etc. This is called monoculture and can deteriorate the environment and future livelihood of the people
- it is reported that the glaciers of Himalaya are melting, which will harm environment. This was not decided by anybody but is probably a result of CO₂ emission, which is dependent on financial interests
- great wars often are sometimes initiated from a business point of view, big industries like weapons industry or oil industry having a say
- in the Tibet-China issue the Danish population e.g. would probably have a more pro-Tibet attitude than the government – but financial concerns decide the line

All this does not mean that people – even in stable democracies - are powerless. There are ways of exerting influence by

- choosing carefully on which political party list to put one’s vote
- keeping one self informed, attend meetings, read papers and books
- using one’s right to free speech by talking, writing articles and letters to the editor, attending demo’s, etc
- joining an NGO in order to strengthen it, so that it can engage in serious negotiations with authorities and multinational companies

Democracy is an eternal process, which means that it is in a process of constant development and change. It stands and falls with the participation of the people. And in order to participate people must have knowledge and also democratic and social skills. Education therefore is a key to democracy.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

In order for democracy to function and develop, it needs citizens, who are educated. Or you could say in order for the citizens to *have a decisive political influence; be free and have equal rights* they need a certain measure of education. This does not mean that everybody should have an academic education, but that everybody should

- know about their own society, the basic laws, democracy – how to exert influence - the world, environment, human rights.
- be able to read and write, to calculate (math)s, maybe have computer skills and be able to speak a foreign language in these globalised times
- be able to think critically, to analyse, make decisions, solve conflicts, co-operate

But this does not mean that there should be a high level of education in the population, *before* democracy can start. Democracy and education can be practiced at the same time. There is no need to let democracy wait until all citizens are highly educated. If somebody in power says “these people are really too simpleminded to understand democracy” – he might not really be enthusiastic of giving the people a say. Here it is useful to remember that people’s rule is a very old way of organising, even in tribal societies. It is not necessarily something very sophisticated, which will have to wait until everybody reaches a high standard of education. It is also useful to remember the wisdom of a very old fact: *learning by doing* is often the best way to learn.

It must be said though, that practicing democracy in the classroom can be difficult and even risky, if the school as such is not democratic, and if the idea of democracy at school is not accepted by the authorities.

DEMOCRACY IN THE CLASSROOM

The classroom is a powerful place to promote democracy, and the teacher is more important than anybody, even politicians:

- In the classroom different people meet, rich& poor, classes, religions, ethnic groups – later they are split up.
- The classroom is the place where everybody can get hold of the knowledge and skills that they and democracy need
- Democracy can be taught and practised every day through teaching methods, co-operative structures, training of decision making, treating minorities respectfully.

The classroom is not a state or a nation, where you elect a government, it is a learning community. Therefore teachers and students are equal as human beings, equal in human dignity. But they don’t have equal rights, as the teacher is in charge. You could call the classroom democratic when:

- The teacher seeks to create a well functioning community there
- The students and teachers have well defined and clear rights and obligations
- The students exercise more and more influence - especially adult students

The democratic classroom has two aims

- To fulfil the students’ needs: better learning, socially and academically, and more well-being
- To fulfil society’s needs: a new generation to take over and develop democracy

DEMOCRATIC TEACHER

In the middle of last century crucial educational experiments took place in the US, designed by Kurt Lewin and others¹⁰. Even today after so many years these experiments are still mentioned in books on social psychology, and they are still used at educational colleges and universities.

Their *objective* was to examine how the style of the formal leader influences the climate in a group and the work performance of the students.

The *participants* were 11-years old boys at a recreation centre. They were to build model aeroplanes together and were exposed to three different kinds of grown up leadership: authoritarian, laissez-faire (passive) and democratic.

The boys were divided into fairly equal groups as to ability and age, and they did not know that they were participating in an experiment. The adult co-workers played the different leader roles. They took turns so that everybody tried all three roles, and all the boys tried out the different leader styles. All leaders were instructed to behave in a friendly way, but otherwise they had to act in three separate and very specific ways.

Authoritarian leader style: The leader was dominating, deciding everything. He dictated all activities, step by step, without motivating the boys or giving them explanations; so the boys did not know the plans of the leader and did not work towards common goals. He alone had the responsibility, and he kept distance to the group and criticised mistakes in a personal way “*you did wrong*”.

Laissez-faire leader style: The leader was passive, and he did not interfere with the work, so the boys had freedom to do as they liked. He would pass out materials and information when asked, but he did not take part in discussions, did not organise or stimulate the group and gave no comments or assessment at all.

Democratic leader style: The leader supported and facilitated the boys’ own and common decision-making about the work, he stimulated them and made the objectives clear to them. The group had to organise it self and find its own form, but the leader helped them discuss matters. His assessments were objective and to the point “it would be better to...”

Results: The boys’ *Achievements* were lowest under laissez-faire leadership, most speedy in the authoritarian and of highest quality in the democratically led group.

The climate was discontent and full of conflicts under laissez-faire leadership, whereas there was much helpfulness, well-being and calmness in the democratic setting. In the authoritarian led groups there were two climates: one aggressive with many conflicts and a lot of bullying and making scapegoats, and another climate with apathy and indifference.

¹⁰ Lippitt, R. and Ralph K. White: An Experimental study of leadership and grouplife. In swansson: Readings in Social Psychology, New York, 1952

I-feeling and we-feeling was observed by counting words like – *I, me, my* and *we, us, our*, and the difference was obvious. The amount of we-words was by far the highest in the democratic setting.

Self-dependence: When the leader was absent (he was sometimes called out on purpose), the zest and achievement changed:

- In the authoritarian led group : the boys worked less than half than before
- In the democratically led group: the boys worked nearly in the same way as when the leader was present, so there was almost no difference
- The In Laissez-faire Group: The boys *doubled* their achievements, because the boys started to organise themselves, as soon as the leader was out of the door, and new unofficial leaders popped up among the boys.

These experiments have been most thought provoking and they have had great influence because they show, that the most important factor to decide the climate in and the achievements of a group is the leader's – or the teacher's style of leadership. What social skills the students develop seems to be dramatically influenced by the way, the teacher behaves towards them.

Questions for recap:

What does democracy mean? – in nations and in the classroom.

What is the difference between authoritarian, democratic and laissez-faire leadership?

How did the three styles influenced 1)achievements of the boys, 2) climate in the groups+

Questions for reflection:

How could you promote a democratic classroom – give some examples

Could your students gradually gain more influence on their work situation at school and in class? How?

SOCIAL SKILLS IN GROUP AND SOCIETY

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

To be **socially competent** is to be able to relate to others, to a group, and to the society in which you live. Social competence forms the ties from the individual to other individuals as well as to the group and society.¹¹ This understanding builds on a deep rooted view on human beings:

As human beings, belonging is a fundamental condition of human life. We are dependent on each other to live a human life. This creates the *co-dependency* implemented in cooperative learning. In Buddhist thinking the concept of *interdependency* will have much more to say about this basis of human and social life.

Social competence has three aspects:

- **Relational:** The relational aspect is the interaction with and relations to other individuals, i.e. fellow students, colleagues, friends, family, people on the street. They are the personal relations in zone 2 of the didactic sketch.
- **Group:** The group aspect is the ability of the individual to melt into a group, to contribute to the group, and to adjust with the norms and behaviour of this group. This goes for working relations, teams, and other groups in zone 2.
- **Society:** Social competence also contains the expectations from society for a specific and appropriate kind of behaviour from the individuals in a given social and cultural environment.

Conflict can arise in all these settings from misunderstandings or discrepancy in interests. Social skills can help minimizing destructive conflict escalation mechanisms, since the individuals and group members will have tools of constructive communication and cooperation.

CHANGES CREATE NEW POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES

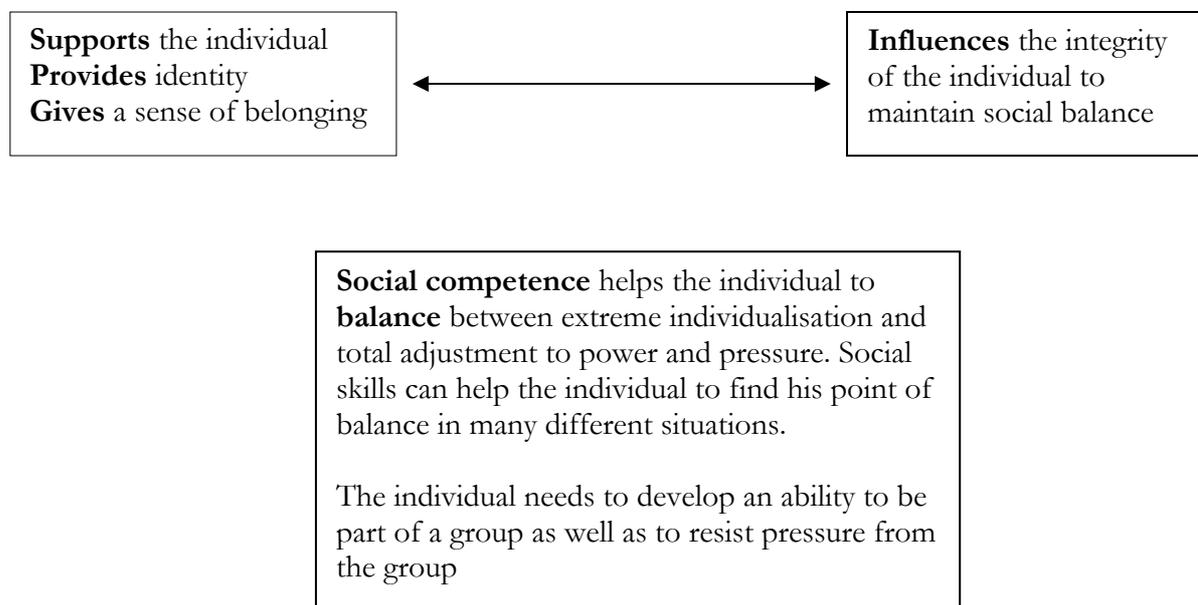
When societies undergo changes, the expected social competences may change as well. The ways of social behaviour and interaction from yesterday might not be appropriate today, and adjustments are needed. This may happen in a development towards democracy, or when new types of jobs emerge. The overall processes of globalisation will also influence most societies and cultures during these years. And the students as well as their teachers are also *world citizens* with global responsibilities (i.e. regarding environment problems). The consequences of changes in society may create social anxiety and a feeling of insecurity in individuals.

¹¹ The concept of social competence in this passage refers to the work of Anders Persson, Associate Professor of sociology at Lund University, Sweden.

THE GROUP ASPECT

An example of group influence: When a new student arrives at Tibetan Transit School he meets different group settings and challenges. Though being a Tibetan and thus being a part of Tibetan society and culture, each student has his own background and feelings. Each one faces problems and has individual choices to make in group relations: How to make friends at the school? How to act properly in dormitory and classroom? Which groups of interest to join? Will I be accepted as a member of this group? A group offers identity and support to the student, and at the same time the group puts restrictions on the student: If a person acts against the norms of the group, he may no longer be accepted and may even be frozen out.

Given these circumstances you can say that the **group:**



The uniqueness of each society and culture

The point of balance described above may differ from one society or culture to another. This means that the specific social skills needed for a Tibetan student are different from the social skills needed for an adult student in western countries.

Democracy is a topic on the future agenda for many peoples in the world. A development of a society towards democracy increases the amount of choices for the individual to make. The social competences seem to become very important for any member of society in this development.

AN EXAMPLE: The adult students of TTS are engaged in very different social relations. They have social relations with fellow students and teachers as well as with relatives in India and family members inside Tibet. The students have relations in region groups and dormitory groups. All these kind of relations are placed in zone 2 according to the didactic sketch. Being a Tibetan refugee in India sets a scene of various societal relations for the individual student. From zone 1 the student is influenced and has to cope with at least four different settings and societies:

- Tibetan society in exile
- Society in Tibet
- The Indian society
- The Global society

Finally, the situation of being a young adult is crucial for the students of TTS. How can the teachers help their students to cope in these different social settings? Social skills can ease the relationship between the person and society. Which social skills do the students need to develop? And what does it mean to be social competent?

Questions for recap:

What are the three aspects of social competence?

What does the group do to the individual?

Questions for reflection:

How are social skills important?

- 1) in society
- 2) in the classroom?

CO-OPERATION, COMMUNICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

THE ICEBERG PRINCIPLE

When teachers ask students to work in groups, specific problems often arise:

Some students dominate and some don't participate

The students discuss without a certain plan or aim

The roles are not clearly defined - the leadership is unclear

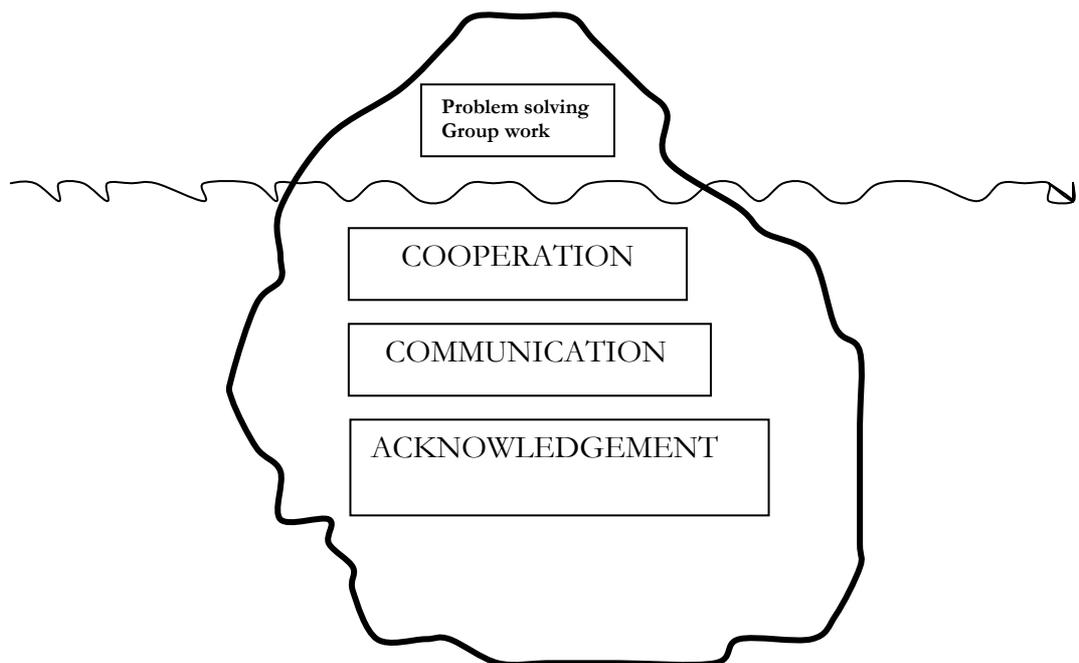
The students don't listen to each other

These and similar shortages of group-work are common and may lead to frustrations and falling apart of the group. As a result, students may find group work time-consuming and ineffective. And even worse, they may fail to experience that their own learning increases as a result of a sharing and collecting of group members' different resources.

These shortages do not occur due to bad will or lack of cooperation in group work, but due to lack of skills. We must understand that group work needs to be learned just like you learn a language or mathematics. The core skills of group work are built up by underlying skills that can be trained and must be learned, before group work becomes fully efficient.

This means that training of the 'Iceberg skills' described below is necessary to get full value of group work and cooperative structures. The students need the guidance of the teacher in this process.

The Iceberg Principle:



The Iceberg Principle shows some fundamental skills and attitudes needed for problem solving and group work. These can be grouped under three main headings: **acknowledgement, communication and cooperation**. The visual image of the iceberg illustrates this. All we see of the iceberg is the tip – the problem solving and group work, but hidden below the surface are the deepest base of acknowledgement and recognition, then on top of that communication, and nearest to the surface cooperation. A common task can not be resolved without cooperation; cooperation depends on communication; and people only communicate effectively when they feel acknowledged and have self confidence.

Problem solving and group work is the visible tip of the iceberg.

Problem solving involves:

- Choice making
- Decision making
- Conflict resolution

Cooperation

Cooperation includes:

- Sharing opinions, views, feelings and things with each other
- Negotiating
- Giving and receiving support
- Creating a positive environment – team spirit - enjoyment
- Taking the lead - leadership
- Giving and receiving without being asked
- Accountability
- Co-dependency
- Conflict opening – i.e. ‘I do not agree’ or ‘I think there is a bad atmosphere in the group, so I would like us to talk about it’
- Being aware of others and own needs

Communication

Communication includes:

- Attention
- Awareness
- Compassion
- Listening actively
- Speaking out
- Turn taking
- Expressing feelings and needs
- Awareness on body language

Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement includes:

- To give acknowledgement to others
- To receive acknowledgement from others
- To Acknowledge yourself

Questions for recap: which are the three elements that are necessary for problem solving, and what does each of them include?

Questions for reflection: give an example of a school situation in which all three elements are active.

EXERCISES OF CO-OPERATION, COMMUNICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

EXERCISES TO PRACTISE ‘COMMUNICATION’:

- **‘Tibetan Whispering’**

Description:

- The whole group sits in a circle
- One participant tells a short story of two or three sentences into the ear of the neighbour to the left
- The neighbour tells the story to his neighbour and so on until it ends with the neighbour sitting next to the person that started the story.
- Listen to the story from the last person and speak it out loudly.
- What has happened and what can we learn from that?
- Evaluation and learning points.

What can be learned by the exercise?

Learning points collected by TTS teachers:

- *What breaks communication?*
- *Listening skills.*
- *Memorising*

- **‘Listening Check’**

Description:

- The whole group sits in a circle
- The teacher gives a personal topic. Each participant tells his opinion in turn, i.e. ‘What did you like best about teacher’s day?’
- When the round is finished pass on a talking pen in the circle
- The teacher turns his bag and time to time says stop
- The other participants now have to remember what the particular person with the pen said before
- Continue and repeat the same setting 5 – 6 times
- You can also vary your questions i.e. ‘who said something about ...?’
- Evaluation and learning points

What can be learned by the exercise?

Learning points collected by TTS teachers:

- *Concentration*
- *Listening skills*
- *Memorising*
- *Awareness*

- *Perception training*
 - *Respect for group members*
 - *Show feelings*
-

- **‘Active Listening’**

Description:

- Divide the whole group into pairs
- Give a personal topic for the pair to share with each other using active listening – first one then the other – i.e. ‘What is the story behind your name – why did you get it?’
- The pairs couple up with another pair
- In the groups of four the listening partner repeats the story told by his partner. This goes for all group members.
- Evaluation and learning points

What can be learned by the exercise?

Learning points collected by TTS teachers

- Giving and receiving
 - Active listening
 - New information
 - Show feelings – sensitivity
-

EXERCISES TO PRACTISE ‘COOPERATION’

- **‘Cooperative pictures’**

Description:

Work in groups of 7 on tables or floor

One person in each group acts as observer – let the observer sign in by himself

Distribute the 6 envelopes with the mixed pieces of the jigsaw pictures

Tell the students not to open the envelopes before sign is given – it’s a group competition.

The rules of the exercise are given by the teacher:

- do it in silence
- give pieces away to help others
- do not ask for pieces yourself, or signal that you need them
- do not take pieces from other people

The exercise is complete when everyone has a completed picture.

Discuss the process

- the observer describes what happened during the group process

What can be learned by the exercise?

Learning points collected by TTS teachers

- Think about others
- To see the needs of others
- Your own work is important, but the others’ work is equally important

- Awareness of the result of the whole group
 - If one has the resources to help others, they should do so, but not interfere in their work
 - Co-dependency and interdependence
 - Not being stubborn
 - The importance of helping others
 - Be observant of the whole group
 - To help others and expect help
 - If you work cooperatively you get a quick result
 - Be calm
 - Cooperation gives good results
 - Learn by giving
 - In real life you can ask for help
-

- **‘Group Paper’**

Description:

Six persons in each group

The teacher hands out a sheet of paper for each group.

The teacher instructs the group according to the following:

- all six persons have to touch the paper without touching the floor
- its not allowed to make use of chairs, tables or other requisites
- the group members may touch each other

Next step:

Hand out a sheet of paper half size.

Repeat the exercise

The paper can be minimised several times.

What can be learned by the exercise?

- The group has more ideas than the individuals
- Sharing ideas gives more ideas
- Awareness of all group members
- Creativity

EXERCISE TO PRACTISE ‘ACKNOWLEDGEMENT’

- **‘Acknowledge your colleague’**

Description:

Turn to your neighbour and acknowledge him/her for specific points of value from his/her participation in this part of the programme.

What can be learned by the exercise?

- Awareness of other group member’s participation
- Give and receive acknowledgement
- Express feelings and personal views

CO-OPERATIVE TEACHERS AND DEMOCRATIC SKILLS

Co-operative structures are useful for teachers, who wish to master and implement learner centred methods in the classroom, and they are useful in co-operation and interaction with other teachers as well. Being a professional teacher means a continuous development of your own academic and social skills.

Co-operative colleagues can share various ideas and views. It may happen during breaks or at arranged meetings in formal or informal pairs and groups. To be useful colleagues is to help each other and share on equal terms the considerations, doubts, changes and incidents that occur

Topics for teacher to teacher dialogue or debate could be many. They may concern teaching/learning matters for specific classes or year groups, or they may be of common interest for teachers of adults, for instance:

- Planning teaching and evaluation of lessons, which are especially suited for adults
- Production of educational plans
- Ways of teaching specific subjects and parts of syllabus
- General didactic issues such as higher purpose of education, wider goals for the adult students' future
- The level of academic development and social interaction in a class
- Choice of suitable activities, materials and teaching aids
- Possibilities of innovative work
- How to challenge the individual adult student

Mutual support or teacher co-operation may also be focused on management issues such as

- co-ordination of practical tasks for students or teachers themselves
- how to organise the creation of action plans and time schedules
- how to share responsibility and accountability, and who should be in charge of what

The co-operative structures introduced in this book may offer ways of dealing with the above mentioned topics whether it be for instance, Partners, Think-pair share, Rounds or Facilitated group dialogue with defined roles.

For reflection on ethical, didactic and at the same time pedagogical questions some of these structures might be equally relevant, or you may find that Corners or Aquarium are more suitable for dialogue about questions like

- to what extent can students influence contents of lessons and be accountable for their own learning process
- how to approach teacher to student conversations or counselling
- how to handle criticism expressed by students, or
- how to cope with conflicts
- rights and duties of the adult learner

Since the students often see their teachers as role models it is important to practice co-operative skills with each other and sometimes use the staff room as a laboratory for own

experiential and experimental learning. “Learning by doing” and action, reflection, learning, strategy go for teachers as well as for students.

Being able to teach in a more democratic way in the classroom implies trying to enhance one’s own democratic skills. These “democratic social skills” can be practised and developed in groups of teachers with special assignments and tasks in the school community, in the gatherings of all staff members or in relation to the higher authorities concerning organisation and management of the school.

Appropriate methods for qualified problem solving, decision making and negotiation might be the most evident democratic skills to develop, but it is important to be aware of all the fundamental cognitive and social skills and attitudes that are necessary to promote a dialogic teamwork and democratic staff room.

HOW TO ENHANCE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL DEMOCRACY

When it comes to administrative matters, there are different options for exercising influence and ways of participating in the continuous organisational development of a school community.

First of all it is important to reflect and brainstorm on what would be possible and useful areas of development.

Next step could be the formation of idea and development groups according to fields of interest, who really practise the above mentioned skills and use co-operative structures at their meetings.

Further group reflection and dialogue might try to answer the following questions:

- What kind of knowledge, social skills and administrative expertise is in fact necessary to make a school like ours function well?
- Where can our knowledge, skills and experience be useful in the general development of this school?
- How can we, as teachers contribute to a good school administration and management?
- How can we make this evident to our authorities?
- What do we want to achieve or change i.e. what are our specific aims?

Having answered these questions it may be time to formulate and later present (oral and written) wishes, suggestions or recommendations for common debate among all teachers.

Finally, when all the teachers have considered advantages and disadvantages, argued and come to an agreement, then wishes, suggestions or recommendations can be forwarded to higher authorities.

For the authorities the challenge will be to consider:

- How can the school benefit from what the teachers suggest?
- How can the recommendations improve conditions for teaching and learning?
- How can we make use of administrative and co-operative skills among the teachers?

DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES MEAN WORK

“The learner must work”. This phrase was used earlier in connection with basic conditions for students’ learning. The same goes for teachers who are interested in school development and want to promote democracy. To gain insight in various new issues, to come up with new ideas, to find arguments and express views, to prepare dialogue and debate, to negotiate and end up with suggestions and recommendations is work. Some will say that democracy is time consuming and takes a lot of meetings. However democratic ways will likely enhance commitment, creativity, interest and better solutions. Besides, meetings can also be of high quality, especially if you conduct and facilitate them mindfully.

GROUPS

A large group of people on this planet are Buddhists.

In India there is a large group of Tibetan refugees.

At TTS there is a large group of newcomers from Tibet.

Class III is a group of newcomers studying English.

Four students, who form a study groups

GROUP is a concept that can be used on many levels. In this paper we will confine the meaning of the word group to small units like a class, a study group, teachers as such or a grouping of people who get together out of interest like football teams etc.

The idea of this article is to inspire you to see your classes, study groups or your own teachers' team from a different perspective, the group-perspective.

The idea is to see the group as a living organism, just like a human being, alive, independent, dependent, carrier of possibilities and limitations, receptive to impulses both from within and from the outer world. It means that a group can be a strong organism, a weak organism, powerful or fragile, but most of, **it is all alive.**

Every group has a purpose; we see the purpose as the glue that keeps the group together. The purpose could be to study English, play football, teach etc.; the idea is that all members of the group share this purpose. Without a purpose there is no group.

Group-feeling is the heartbeat of the group; without heartbeat there is no life. Group-feeling is established when every member in the group feels safe and eager to participate.

At the beginning it is often the group leader or the teacher who, gently, helps the shy ones to talk and, also gently, tells the very outspoken ones to give way to the more silent members.

Formal groups are groups that are organized from a higher level of authority. These could be:

- Classes, you have to be in a class in order to learn and stay at the school.
- Study groups, which are part of the school system as a whole
- Cleaning teams
- Cooking teams
- Teacher staff

What is common for these groups is that they are included in rules and regulations and without these groups the unity of a school would fall apart

Informal groups are groups that are not dictated from above, but come to life more spontaneously. They could be:

- Foot ball teams
- Poetry reading or writing groups
- Political groups
- Learn- to-cook groups

The list could continue, but what is common for these groups is that they are volunteer based.

The formal leader In formal school groups it is most often the teacher. In informal groups it is the person, whom all members have agreed upon as the leader.

The informal leader is a person, who by her behaviour takes on the leadership, even though the group has selected another person as leader. Informal leadership can be visible or invisible, but in both cases it is an issue that the group has to take seriously and act upon. Maybe this informal leader is a better choice and maybe not.

The life of a group. You can say the life of a group is similar to the life of a human being, it goes through various phases of life. For a group the phases can be:

1. **phase: confusion**
2. **phase: fight**
3. **phase: union**

1. phase, confusion is when the group is very newly established, and the members are not in accordance with each other and with the purpose. The group-feeling is not yet established, and therefore the individual takes up more space. In this phase you will often find a high level of confusion, and the teacher will have to answer the same questions many times. It is well to remember that it is not necessarily because the members are stupid or lack interest, but simply because the group is new and trying to establish itself.

2. phase, fight is often a turbulent time for the group. The members have now understood the purpose of the group, but the group-feeling is still lacking. There can be heavy discussions on how to go about, what is important and what is less important. In this phase you will often find an ocean of ideas and opinions, but you will see that the members are no longer asking questions in all different directions. The group has found a focus and is trying to harmonise their views on the purpose. It is important that you as the group leader or teacher gives the needed time for these discussions and at the same time try to lead the discussions in a direction towards a common understanding of the group's purpose. In this phase the group leader or the teacher can be of great help by introducing *reflection, discussions in rounds* so that all members can be heard, and *summarising*, drawing out the essence of the discussions, and presenting it to the group.

3. phase, union is the period of the group's life, when it can really work according to the purpose. Now the group-feeling is established and the purpose is clear to all members. There is focus as well as enthusiasm to work towards refining, elaborating and exploring the purpose. Here the role of the group leader or the teacher is to be a guide. There will of course be many discussions, but hopefully they will be directed towards polishing and perfecting the purpose and the issues that constitute the group's main focus.

GROUP DYNAMICS

In the following we will describe some points for you to observe, regarding the dynamics of a group. The art of the group leader or the teacher is to decide when to interfere and when to let the group live and find its own ways.

Control we here understand as the elements that blocks the flow and creativity of the group and the members as individuals. In general you can say that the **“yes, but people”** tend to block, but of course common sense also has a part to play in the group.

Guidance we understand as giving life to all ideas in the beginning of a discussion. When we have enough of ideas, we can start to analyse and select the ideas that are useful for the common purpose of the group. It is obvious to see that the **"why not people"** are of great use in this phase.

Development we see as giving meaning to all ideas, to have the courage to find new angles, new methods or take new steps into unknown land. Development is often combined with risk. A Danish writer once said, "If we didn't take risks we would still be crawling round in the trees like monkeys, but fortunately somebody had the courage". When all this is said we still find common sense or reality a part of development.

Confusion is when you let all ideas have the same importance and enlarge your work out into realms, which have nothing to do with your purpose, and most of all when you close your eyes to common sense and forget reality.

When it comes to *control / guidance* and *development / confusion*, it often feels like walking on a razor's edge, and it takes a lot of practice to find the right answer. A group process is a living thing and can't be put into schemes or formulas. At least one can say, you will never be able to look it up in a book, it always depends on your own intuition and experience.

Questions for recap

Which are the three phases of a group's life?

In relation to lead a group work - what is the difference between development and confusion?

What is the difference between a formal and an informal leader?

Questions for reflection

What is the power of the person who is silent and withdrawn?

What, except for the above-mentioned, develops a group?

How does a group take in new members?

IV

TEACHER OF ADULTS: TO BE A USEFUL COLLEAGUE

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

Professional support is a special conversation between two persons about an issue or problem related to their profession. The aim is to support the person in doubt, to inspire and to improve the professional level in general. This kind of conversation is about professional issues in **difficult** situations, **challenging** situations, and when you have new **ideas** you would like to try.

The idea behind professional support is the same as the idea behind a learner centred approach, namely that learning develops in the mind of the learner and cannot be transported directly from the head of the teacher to the head of the learner. Likewise, professional support is not to give solutions to a colleague who is in doubt, but to arrange questions in such a way that the colleague finds ways into his own creativity and then finds new solutions. We call the person who is in doubt the "*focus person*", and the person who is trying to help "*the supporter*"

An example: you have a class in English, you are well prepared for the lessons and you are experienced as an English teacher. It is however difficult for you to make the students pay attention, only a few listen to you and you feel frustrated and do not know what to do. You have been touring around in your own mind without success, and now you are in a dead end street, don't know how to get out of the unpleasant situation. Finally you decide to seek help from a colleague.

Professional support is always confidential. This means that the supporter never can tell other people about what has been said during the professional support conversation. Never. This is essential because the feeling of safety and confidence is a necessity for the focus person in order to be able to disclose his or her problems.

The focus-person

- Is the one who gets the attention and who needs empathy
- Gets a possibility to have a new view of himself / herself and the situation
- Gets the needed time
- Decides the issue of the conversation
- Has the right to avoid answering
- Is the owner of the problem
- Is the one who wishes to become wiser

The supporter

- He or she prepares
- Gives full attention to the focus-person
- Practices active listening
- Uses his or her intuition and creativity
- Puts introductory questions
- Then explorative questions
- And then finishing questions

He or she prepares means that you as a supporter have to decide if you feel able to support your fellow teacher right now. Maybe you are busy and want to make a later appointment, or maybe you are stressed and not in a position to be helpful at the moment, in which case you might suggest that the focus-person better asks another teacher.

He or she practices active listening means that you give all your attention to the focus-person. You keep a natural eye contact without staring. You show an open and natural body language, indicating that you are interested and attentive. You indicate that you are listening, maybe nodding and repeating a few sentences. You most of all keep your own associations, feelings and advice to yourself and remember that the floor is not yours, but belongs to the focus-person.

He or she puts introductory questions. The introductory questions are to give the focus-person a realistic focus on the situation. Questions like "tell me the most important events", "Has it happened before and when" or "what worries you the most". Answers to these questions will be your starting point to continue. If the focus-person presents you to a series of problems, you must help her/ him to select the most important for the coming conversation.

Explorative questions will go more into the details of the situation, "can you tell more about" or "what happened then" or "who were your allies", "who were your opponents" and any more questions that help the focus-person to see more shades of the situation. When you, the supporter, feel that you have worked enough with the situation and the focus-person starts to repeat you can move to a final round of questions.

Finishing questions are questions that help to round up the session you have just had, they are also a mild kind of evaluation: Here you help the focus-person to summarise the ideas and new steps he or she would like to try out. And finally your questions have to lead into the future. They could be like: "what did you gain from our conversation" "what kind of new ideas did you come to think about", and for the future, "what will your first step be tomorrow when you meet the class" "do you need more help, either from me or from somebody else".

In order to increase the self-confidence of the focus-person, it is crucial that you the supporter keep your advice or solutions to yourself. The more the focus-person has realised what to do by him/herself, helped by your questions, the stronger and more secure and empowered he or she will be. The solutions that are created by the focus-person also tend to be more sustainable than solutions given by somebody else.

On the other hand, the focus-person might enjoy and benefit from some concrete and new ideas. If the dialogue between focus-person and supporter turns out well, and if the focus-person is interested, then you can put forward your ideas and suggestions.

The main thing is that your ideas and suggestions should be put forward as questions, not as fixed pieces of advice. An example could be, "have you ever thought about getting a volunteer guest teacher?" or "could you ask the students how they would prefer to go about the mentioned subject"?

What you have just read here is not a recipe for a perfect dinner; it is hopefully some ideas to make your general level of supporting more effective. This process can be done in many ways; the most important element is to help a fellow teacher to become clearer in difficult situations. What happens is that the two of you explore the difficult situation together. It should never turn into an interrogation, but should be an inspiration to examine and invent new ways, not to get blocked by difficulties, but to see difficult situations as stepping stones for new ideas.

Questions for recap

What does it mean that the focus person is “owner of the problem”?
Why is confidentiality a must?
What is the nature of the finishing questions?
What is active listening?

Questions for reflection

How would you like your supporter to be, if you wish to tell about a new and daring idea for your teaching?
And how should your supporter help you, if you had a serious problem, which you feel somewhat ashamed of?
Is there a difference between the two situations that call for different types of support?

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR THE SUPPORTER, by the teachers of TTS**don't**

- ✓ Give support when you really don't have the time
- ✓ Make fun of the focus person
- ✓ Blow the focus person's secret – gossip,
- ✓ Confuse the focus person
- ✓ Deteriorate the situation of the focus person
- ✓ Give premature advice
- ✓ Loose your concentration
- ✓ Put unrelated questions
- ✓ Have a too fast or too slow rhythm
- ✓

do

- have an altruistic attitude, a good motivation, because the focus person trusts you
- Fulfil the hope of the focus person, who came full of hope
- Listen with full attention
- Show concern, emotion, care and interest
- Have good position and natural eye contact
- Give advices, but lots of options
- Be trustworthy
- Be patient
- Give and uphold confidentiality
- Involve yourself in the problem of the other
- Pay equal attention to big and small problems
- Show various ways out of the problem
- Guide with love and compassion
- Face the problem and keep the secret
- Try to help not only by word but through action as well

V

**TEACHER OF ADULTS:
TO COUNSEL STUDENTS**

OBSERVATION

If you are walking in a beautiful landscape you may have decided to see, experience and be in the nature in order to get a peaceful and delightful day. If you were an ornithologist – a bird watcher – you might take exactly the same walk, but now with a more focused purpose, namely to observe birds.

To observe means to look with an aim and a focus. Observation is also an educational and psychological tool, by which you can get a specific kind of knowledge. In this article we distinguish between two ways of observing:

1. *From a psychological point of view* observation becomes a professional method that can lead to a professional solution to a problem. A professional solution is based on long observations, analysis, conclusions and decision of which action to take. Very little builds on your own likes and dislikes. Observation from a psychological point of view can be a way to understand and find new approaches to a student with more than ordinary difficulties.
2. *From an ordinary point of view* our observations are much less reflected, and there is a short Distance between observation and action. There is no proper analysis and the conclusions Are often based on our own likes and dislikes.

<i>PSYCHOLOGICAL POINT OF VIEW</i>	<i>ORDINARY POINT OF VIEW</i>
Observation over a period of time	Little or no reflection
Collecting a maximum of knowledge	Prejudice and interpretation
Analyse all facts	Short distance from situation to action
Conclusion based on analyses	Actions based on single situations, likes and dislikes
Take action based on conclusion	Actions are decided by the person in power (the teacher)
Actions are planned in co-operation between teacher and student	

EXAMPLE: observation of a student

Thupten has studied at Transit School for six months. He is a newcomer and had a rather rough trip from Tibet to India, but he is reluctant to tell detail about his trip. He is a nice young man, interested in studying and has many contacts among the other students, but he has only one real friend, who came from the same village as him.

Thupten's behaviour is difficult to understand, because suddenly he can be either aggressive, mostly towards his fellow students, or he becomes very introvert and nobody can have contact with him.

Over a period of a month we have observed his behaviour and found the following: On Mondays he is in a very high spirit and friendly with everyone and studies in a concentrated way. His friendliness and concentration diminish as the week proceeds and often, but not always, when we reach Saturday his other sides occur.

In the beginning we confronted him with his aggressive behaviour and the rules of the school, and were met with two reactions: 1) He promised to change his behaviour, follow the rules and stop being aggressive, and 2) just a few times he became very angry and left the room.

His aggressive behaviour is the most outstanding. Only few times we observed his introvert sides and when asked about his silence he became even more silent. One time a teacher managed to make him talk a little and his reaction to the talk with the teacher showed that Thupten was very sad, but not able to talk about his sadness.

We, the teachers, decided to give Thupten more time and at the same time to keep an eye on him, especially when he was in his introvert mood. The breakthrough came, when one of the teachers, during Thupten's introvert moments, started to tell his own story about crossing the border between Tibet and Nepal, and the hardship of the trip. Thupten started to cry and told about his trip and how a friend of his in the group had expired due to exhaustion. Thupten felt very guilty of not having been able to help.

We realised that Thupten's aggression often was a sign of his own exhaustion, because on Mondays he had accumulated energy from being alone for the whole of the Sunday. But as the week proceeded he did not have energy to hold back his inner state of grief. And in order to defend himself from the sad experience his only strategy was to be aggressive and, by doing so again he was left alone so he could maintain his inner stability.

We concluded that Thupten was in a very stressful inner state, and that he needed help. We decided that the teacher, with whom Thupten had talked so openly, should be more connected to Thupten. We also decided that since he is an adult, nothing should be kept secret from him. So we suggested to Thupten that he could have special time with this particular teacher, an hour a week. Thupten said yes and was in the beginning reluctant to talk, but as time (now a month) passed, Thupten talked more and more. We told Thupten that his talks with the teacher were confidential, and none of the other teachers would come to know about their talks, a promise that was kept all the way through.

Questions for recap:

How does psychological observation differ from ordinary observation?
What are the characteristics of the way, the teachers treated Thupten's case?

Questions for reflection:

Think of a student of yours, who shows psychological problems – With whom would you co-operate? How would you go about observation and taking action?

PSYCHOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES

- some key notes

Most western schools of psychology agree upon these basics:

- everybody strives for harmony
- everybody develops strategies for reaching harmony
- some strategies are out of tune with the surrounding culture’s social rules, and some are out of tune with basic human behaviours

First priority is about inner harmony, expressing oneself and protecting oneself

Second priority is about harmony with others, the surrounding society: To be influenced by the group and to influence the group, and avoid to be excluded from the group.

The root of psychological and social development is the very important issue of maternal care in the very beginning of a person’s life.

The core feelings that all other feelings can be related to are:

Anger - Fear – Sorrow- Joy

Basic abilities for being in the world, which are placed deep in our soul, or the reptile brain, are:

- ability of fight
- ability of flight
- ability of trust
- ability to experience time
-

AN OVERVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTION AND DYSFUNCTION

Trauma	Deep psychological dysfunction	Psychological instability	Psychological insecurity	Social differences
Basic abilities damaged Ability of fight, flight, trust and time absent. It could be one, two or all.	Basic abilities intact. Due to childhood experience or present chock, strategies are out of tune with group and society. Often in conflict with the person’s own perceptions of normal life too	Basic abilities intact. Strategies in tune with group and society. Due to early or present situations and experience, a severe level of instability occurs.	Basic abilities intact. Strategies in tune with inner and outer life. Psychological instabilities few or absent. Social dysfunction often based on how the persons needs are meet.	All functions of previous columns function well. The person may have different perceptions or understandings of how to behave in group and society. This is not psychological dysfunction, but the person needs help to adjust to new situation

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CONTEMPLATIONS BEFORE COUNSELLING

There is something totally unique deep within every person...

This person has a history...

This person had successes and failures in interaction with others...

There is something within this person, which is a hindrance for talents and creativity to unfold...

There is something, which prevents contact from other people to reach this person's emotions...

Questions for recap:

What are the differences between a functional and a dysfunctional student?

Name some characteristics of dysfunction

Questions for reflection:

Based on the scheme above give an example of a case in which you can act as a counsellor for the student

And give an example of a case, in which you find that the student needs a more professional help

PERSONAL COUNSELLING

There are various schools of psychology, some being very analytic in their approach to clients. Their main tool is to let the person talk only from free association (psychoanalysis). This method is by other schools seen merely as a one-way communication.

Other schools are more focused on co-operation and two-way communication. Here the approach is characterised by the statement: “Every person is an expert on his own life, and the solution to a problem is imbedded in the problem itself”. By careful counselling the story of the client is uncovered and the causes and the solutions to the problem found.

The difference between professional support and personal counselling.

Professional support is a conversation initiated by the person, whom we call the problem holder, for instance a teacher who has tried some new and experimental method in the classroom and would like to discuss it with a colleague, or a teacher who faces difficulties with a class or a student. Thus professional support is a conversation between two colleagues about a professional issue.

Personal counselling is a conversation which often will take place after a period of observation, which leads to the decision to invite a person, most often a student, to have a counselling session. That means that personal counselling is often initiated by a teacher, who has observed a student with various difficulties, over time. The teacher’s interview technique is of importance and professional curiosity is a necessity, but nosiness is a big hindrance.

APPROACH

The approach is meant to be a frame you can work within, in order to make yourself and the person-in-need feel secure. It has four areas in which you can contain your interview questions.

- ❖ Go out into the world
- ❖ Go to the situation you have in mind
- ❖ Go into direct contact
- ❖ Go into the future

Go out into the world

Investigate how the person-in-need experiences his surroundings; this can be the near ones as well as the more distant ones. The aim is to make the person-in-need relax and find out how the person relates to reality. The more you and the person-in-need share reality, the more you can take for granted that the person is capable to receive counselling. Be aware of variation in culture and tradition.

Go into the situation you have in mind

Based on your observations we will take for granted that there are reasons for you to talk with the person-in-need, maybe some problem areas. Let the person tell about the situations and

then state your own observations. To what extent do your observations and the person's story resemble each other, and where do they differ? Investigate the differences.

Go into direct contact

Investigate that, which takes place right now and here in the person's contact with you (the counsellor), and what kind of feelings, impulses and thoughts arises in the person-in-need. For you, the counsellor, observe to which level the person can handle direct contact: Does he accept to be in contact or does he avoid contact. If you feel that the situation is safe for the person-in-need, ask openly to how the person feels right now. If you feel that the level of safety is fragile, don't ask, but just keep your observation in mind.

Go into the future

This you can do mainly in the last part of the counselling. The main idea is to find a strategy for the person-in-need. A strategy is often a long process; it may be that the person needs several appointments. It is very crucial for the person to end the counselling by having some positive ideas and possibilities of how to make the coming days more hopeful, and also to see that there is a way out of the painful situation he or she find themselves in.

Reading these 4 areas you might think that we have left out one important point, namely the past. It might well be so, but the reason for leaving out the past is to make a distinction between psychological treatment and personal counselling. In psychological treatment we see the person-in-need as a patient with a deep psychological dysfunction or psychological disease. In personal counselling we see the person-in-need as someone, who needs special care and attention, and we believe that this special counselling will be enough for the person to find strength and new inspiration to go on in life.

Again "going back to the past" is neither wrong nor forbidden. It will come naturally in any counselling to talk about the past, t in counselling it has the character of information, and in therapy it is often the most important issue.

The counsellor's preparation

- ❖ What are my interpretations of the person and the situation?
- ❖ What are my feelings: am I angry, irritated, afraid?
- ❖ What do I know as facts; shyness, passivity, anger, activity? - be specific.
- ❖ What has the person previously been interested in, what has she talked about or reacted to?
- ❖ What is my intuition?
- ❖ Am I prepared to respect resistance, defences and denials?
- ❖ How long time can I spend?
- ❖ How do I invite the person to the counselling?
- ❖ How can I start?

PRACTICAL COUNSELLING, A CASE STORY

The following story is written in the way that whatever is spoken by the teacher and by the two persons-in-need is written in ordinary letters, and the reflections of the teacher is written in *italics*.

CASE STORY: DOLMA

Dolma is a young woman of 24 years, who has been at the TTS for almost a year. She is in many ways an ordinary newcomer; she is academically at the middle level in her class, and she is neither outspoken nor silent. For the first six months her teachers have seen her as a normal student who is able to study as well as socialise with her fellow students.

Three months ago she was very sick for three weeks with high fever, but the doctor could not find any specific reason so she was diagnosed with 'severe cold'. After her recovery her mood has been very unstable. She often appears very shy, and a few times she has answered back in an unfriendly, sometimes aggressive way.

You (the teacher) have been talking with a colleague about Dolma, and both of you have been observing Dolma over the last two months. There is no specific pattern in Dolma's behaviour, and the only thing both of you agree upon is the emotional instability. You decide to offer Dolma one or more personal sessions of counselling.

T: welcome Dolma, I have invited you for this conversation because I have seen some changes in you since you recovered from your severe cold two months ago. Do you see or feel any changes yourself?

D: no madam, I do not think so.

T: I see...*I am sure there are changes, I wonder if she denies the fact or if she feels too nervous to talk about it, I better stay in the outer world for a while*

T: well Dolma, tell me a little about how you feel here at TTS and what you think about the school and the learning that takes place here.

D: I like it here, it is a nice school, you are feeding us well and we learn a lot.

T: do you like the new buildings we have, I can tell you that just two years ago we all lived in tin sheds and it was very cold during winter.

D: Yes the buildings are very fine, I like the dormitories, and they are much better than those in Tibet.

T: I believe they are...*now she is starting to talk, it seems that her nervousness is diminishing, I will stay in the open until I get more contact to her...*

T: how was the school in Tibet by the way

D: oh it was not a school, it was an old factory building and there were no windows, the wind was blowing right through the room

T: Yes I have heard many stories of schools like that, it must have been hard during winter...*I feel that when we are talking about Tibet than she is more free and talkative, but I sense a look of sadness in her eyes...*

T: Dolma do you often think about your class mates in Tibet?

D: not so much, but I think of my mother

T: tell me what you think.... *Now I see water coming to her eyes, I better be careful and let her lead the conversation*

D: It makes me sad to think about her, and also about my sisters, they work so hard and hardly make any money, and here I am doing nothing and getting everything for free.

T: *I must try to separate these two issues and make a realistic approach....* you are studying very hard, you have to see that as your work, and the food and the shelter you get are in a way your salary

D: maybe you are right, but I feel so powerless sitting here, and it makes me so angry sometimes.

T: tell me a little more about your powerlessness.... *Now her shyness is gone and she admits that she is angry, this is a much more active stand, I will let her lead the session a little further.*

D: I feel powerless because no matter what I do it does not help, I sometimes sit and cry in the fields or I throw stones in the river, but all the same, my family and friends are still in Tibet and in the same conditions (Dolma starts crying)

T: *now she is ready to change area, I will be much more specific and see if she will follow me.....* Dolma, you have been here at TTS for almost a year, and the first six months were very satisfying to you. Then you got the cold, and since then you have been much more emotional, I think it would help you to open your heart and tell me what happened

D: Yes....it is true, just before I got the cold I got a letter from my mother telling that my younger sister is sick and they have no money for either medicine or hospital and that makes me feel so sad and helpless, I don't know what to do

T: tell me more about your family situation Dolma.

(Dolma tells a lot about her family and is alternating between sadness, anger and hopelessness)

T: *now she really is in deep contact with her feelings and I am sure it is helpful for her. I don't want her to get lost in emotions; I have to bring her into contact with here and now in order for her to get a platform to act from....*

T: Dolma tell me how do you feel right now while talking to me; look at me, how do you feel right now?

D: (is a little hesitant) I don't know what to say, it is nice to talk to somebody, I don't usually so do, but I don't think it helps my family sitting here crying and talking to you

T: *now there is direct contact between us, so now I have to act very carefully and respectfully and try to help her to separate the outer situation and her feeling of hopelessness....*T: Dolma, I totally agree that talking to me and letting your emotions out does not by medicine for your sister, but it is important for every human being to share both happy and sad feelings. If feelings are locked within they

seem to block our views and make us powerless, so first thing is to accept whatever feelings you might have in order to feel at ease.... *Here I have to make a link to her behaviour the last two months to make her realise her reactions and to let her find a way out.....*

T: Dolma it might be that your cold and your passivity and sometimes aggressive behaviour in class is your reaction to a most stressful inner situation, and that is totally understandable.... *I must acknowledge her strong feelings and make her understand that it is only natural, but also to make her understand that it does not help her to isolate herself in that way....* I think it has been much useful for you to open your heart and let your worries and feelings out, and now I think we have to talk about how I or TTS can be of any help to you both in the coming days and in the future.... *Now I have giving her a chance to ask for help, and I must be very specific about how I or TTS realistically can be of any help.*

D: Right now I don't know what to say, it has been very nice to talk to you, but about the future I don't know

T: *I think she needs time; it is very new for her to share feelings, maybe she is a bit overwhelmed, I think she needs to talk to me again*

T: I think Dolma that you have taken a big step today, and maybe you need a few days to think this situation over by your self, I suggest that we meet again in let's say three days, and then maybe we can talk more about what you can do. I hope that you can be proud of your self for what you have done today, sharing troublesome feelings and situations, I see as a sign of strength in you.

CRISIS

WHAT IS A CRISIS?

A crisis is a period of time, when a person is out of balance, psychologically, emotionally or physically. In many cases a person is hit on all three levels.

Crisis can hit a single person, a family or a group. When we talk about larger groups, regions or nations, we no longer talk about crisis as understood in this context, but sometimes you will see that there are similarities.

In this paper a crisis is defined as *a condition of stress when our emotional and psychological resources are overextended, which often makes us feel physically weak as well.*

When our personal resources are overextended, our inner equilibrium is seriously disturbed, and we find everyday situations very difficult to cope with, we lose our normal orientation and often we find our selves in emotional and psychological bewilderment and in physical pain.

WHICH OCCURRENCES CAN LEAD TO CRISES?

- SEPARATIONS such as divorce, separation from family, hospitalizing, imprisonment, flight or death.
- VIOLENCE such as war, catastrophes, accidents or serious diseases.
- MOVING away as refugees and immigrant workers do, or moving to a new place in general
- NEW ROLES such as getting married, parenthood, change of work, promotion or the contrary, old age and pension
- THE NORMAL STREAM OF LIFE such as puberty, pregnancy, menopause and old age.

THE FOUR STAGES OF CRISIS.

- SHOCK AND DENIAL, the person has been exposed to threatening events; the person is confused and reacts in ways he, she and the surroundings cannot recognize. In many cases the first reaction is to deny what has happened. It is difficult for the person to get a clear picture of the situation. They often have reactions of passivity or over-activity, panic or bodily reactions, cry or laugh without reasons or "go-back" - behave like children.
- REACTION, the danger is over, the person starts to realise what has taken place; confusion diminishes and pain or sorrow takes over. The person can still suffer from strong reactions like anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares or general weakness, but since the situation is no longer denied, the person is now aware that all his/her reactions are related to the crisis. One can say that the person now "owns his situation" which gives a relief, and now there is space to allow the feeling of sorrow. The person is able to talk about the situation in a more realistic way, which enhances the healing process.
- ADAPTATION, the person is now more used to the new situation, is able to work on his/her inner levels and to understand him/herself better, psychologically and emotionally. So the person is able to accept a more true and realistic picture of the future. A person, who has worked deeply with his or her emotions will often realise

that although the pain and confusion was terrible, it has also given new strength and new perspectives to future life. The person is now able to cope with everyday situations and the new life.

- NEW ORIENTATION, the crisis is over; and the person has gained new experience and maybe a new platform in life. The crisis is no longer a bleeding wound, but a healed scar in the soul. The crisis does not have to be denied, but can be seen as a part of the past. It does not throw dark shadows into the future; it has become part of life. The person, who has gone through these phase, will often be seen as a new and stronger person, by others and especially by him or herself.

WHAT CAN THE COUNSELLOR DO?

First of all you have to be aware what you are looking for. A person who gets the highest score at an exam or is deeply in love might react "abnormally". He or she might laugh, sing and dance and only pay attention to their own happiness. This is not a crisis. A person who is in a crisis is first of all **not happy**; it is a person who is suffering and in stress and behaves "strangely".

The first clue is that the persons behave differently from what they use to. If a person who normally is introvert now suddenly is very outer-directed, maybe aggressive or loud speaking, it could be a signal for your attention. The reversed situation is the same.

There is not a list of specific behaviours you can check, so you have to observe the person over a period, and based on your observations you may come to the conclusion that something is wrong or strange in the person's behaviour.

A good guideline is to know the above-mentioned stages of crises.

WHAT IS NEEDED FROM YOUR HAND?

Let's say that you have noticed that a student has a radical change in behaviour. Maybe you have talked the situation over with a colleague, who also knows the student and maybe has the same reflections as you have. You have to find a proper way to approach the student. Patience, care and empathy are absolutely very important; if you are irritated or angry, you should wait or maybe another teacher should talk to the student.

THE SHOCK PHASE

Your first sentence could be

"I have noticed that you have changed over the last days or weeks, I would like to talk with you, is that OK?"

If the student says yes then you can go on.

If the student says no, again you have to use your empathy and maybe say "To me it looks as if you are in pain and sorrow, and nobody should be carrying such strong feelings alone, are you sure you don't want to talk ?" In most cases the student would accept your offer, but if not you have to wait a little and find a suitable situation for your next approach. It could be next time the student starts to cry or show aggressiveness.

In the shock phase you **never ask, " how do you feel?"** because that is exactly what the student does not know, he or she is confused and not able to answer this kind of questions.

All that is needed from you is that you listen, listen, listen, showing empathy. Don't minimize anything, don't correct anything, and first of all don't say, "It is not so bad, you will be fine, don't worry".

Reasons: the student is not able to listen and not able to understand logical reasoning, the only thing of importance is that the student feels safe to unload all the inner chaos and stored up feelings and fears.

THE REACTION PHASE

Here the shock has diminished and the student starts to realize that the "danger" is over. It often means that fear is gone or on departure. The student can relax a bit and there will be space for grief and sorrow. Here you could say: "It is good to see that your fear has lessened and that you allow your tears and sorrow to surface, it is a sign of health to have feelings"

It is still important to follow the student and not interfere with the student's process of healing, but support the student by assuring him/her that the confusion is over and that showing emotions is healthy and that there is a way out, and that you acknowledge the small steps forward.

ADAPTATION PHASE

Here the student has gained an overview of the situation, the confusion is gone and the sorrow and grief are declining. With small steps you can now start to talk about the future. To talk about the future also means to talk about strategies. Questions like, "how will you go about with your studies" or "whom do you have to contact" or "how will you plan the near future".

The main thing is that you follow the student close on close hold, don't ever take over the initiative. The whole idea is to help the student to build up his or her own security and future. What you want is to help the student to get hold of life again, so don't act as his crutches; it will only prolong the students healing process.

NEW ORIENTATION

Here you can help the student to realise the whole process he or she went through. Help to make the student realise his or her strength, and to make the student realise that he or she has learned a lot from life and will be better fit for the future and the unpredictable turns of life.

Questions for recap:

What is a crisis?

What are the four stages of crisis?

Questions for reflection: How will *you* deal with a student in crisis? Your ideas are probably different from the suggestions above, because you represent a specific culture.

CONSCIOUSNESS

At a very basic level one can say that consciousness is all that we are aware of and know. I know my name, my family, my likes and dislikes. I know a lot about the world I live in, and I know a lot more. It would be very interesting to make a complete list of all that I know, but maybe it is not possible.

I get a lot of information from my eyes, I see, from my ears, I hear, from my nose, I smell, from my mouth, I taste, and from my skin, I feel, and I am able to make combinations from all these sources of information.

Then I have a brain, still to a large extent an undiscovered area of the human body, but in my brain there is a part called the cognitive centre, which is situated in the neo cortex. The cognitive centre is, among other things, the place where a lot of intellectual information can combine to give meaning to me so I can orientate myself in my inner world and in the outer world.

Unconsciousness

Again at a basic level we can say that unconsciousness is all that I am not aware of knowing. There are two main reasons for this *not knowing what I know*.

The first one is that it is not necessary for my daily function. An example could be when I see a tree. In my brain is stored a lot of information about trees, how they grow, their weight, their roots, and so on. Only if this information is relevant for me at the moment, it will surface from the unconscious to my conscious mind.

The second reason is more complicated. Some knowledge has a painful origin, often related to the early part of our life. An example of early experiences could be that in daily routine with other people, I am very shy. One among many reasons might be that when I was a little child, I was punished for speaking out. This punishment was so painful to me that I *decided* never to speak again. But as time goes and I grow up to be an adult, I have to communicate with other people. Maybe the old experience of being punished is still active in my unconsciousness – but I am not aware of this incident any more, and the result is that I feel shy. But since psychology is complicated, it is not right to conclude that every person, who is shy, has been punished for speaking out in their childhood, for every person has his or hers own history and strategies (ways of coping).

An example from adulthood could be that a person has been exposed to a very tragic experience, an accident or life threatening experience like rape, war or torture. The experience itself is stored in the memory and the person knows the headline of the incident. A soldier knows that he has been part in the war, but some gruesome incidents may have been so painful physically and psychologically, that the soldier has *forgotten* the horrible experience. The result can be that when a person with such an experience in store in the unconsciousness faces everyday bad luck, he reacts very strongly and out of proportions.

To summarise we can say that

- consciousness includes the issues of inner and outer life that we are aware of, and
- unconsciousness is the place where we store issues we don't need for the time being or experiences we do not want to remember.

Consciousness and unconsciousness are like two independent countries, but there is a kind of a bridge in-between. This bridge is the place we could call semi consciousness. Semi consciousness is where information from both areas flows forward and back.

The soldier knows that he has been in the war, but does not want to think about it, so he pushes it back (in his semi consciousness), but the very painful incidents is not in the semi consciousness, but back in the unconsciousness.

For issues to travel from unconsciousness to consciousness there seems to be three routes, one is just occurring by itself, one is the result of a shock and one is the result of a therapeutic process.

CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS LEVEL IN THE CLASSROOM

Eagerness to learn mostly exists on the conscious level based on the hope for a better life and a means for self-realisation

Resistance to learn mostly exists on the unconscious level; most people have a concept of being in the world and new ideas threaten this concept of being in the world

Personal lack of ability to learn mostly comes from the unconscious level; there are elements from past experiences that block concentration and ability to receive new ideas

At the conscious level of the classroom are all the actions and interactions that take place, all the issues and circumstances that everybody can talk about and act upon. At the unconscious level of the classroom are all the personally unknown issues both in the students and among them, and in the teacher and the relation between the teacher and the students.

AN EXAMPLE

The English class has been studying at Transit School for one year. The students are interested in the subject, but the interaction between teacher and students is only sparse, and some students are less than medium motivated. The class contains 25 students. There is a variety of backgrounds. Some students have had only few years of schooling in Tibet; three have not been to school. Half of the students have come to India to get better education, some had to leave Tibet for political reasons, and a few have been political prisoners.

A SIMPLE WAY OF LOOKING AT THIS EXAMPLE

The **conscious level** is what the whole class has agreed to, namely to study English. Here we also find the eager and motivation to learn and grow, and to be challenged. If only the conscious level existed, every classroom would be a paradise, but in reality the unconscious level is there as well.

The **unconscious level** is the storeroom, where many of our disbeliefs, failures and negative experiences are kept. Here we also find our resistance to take in new ideas and our disability to do so. In general, the conscious and the unconscious levels both exist in the individual and in a group. The more confidence there is in the classroom, the more the conscious level manifests itself, and the weight of the unconscious will diminish.

Questions for recap: what is meant by conscious, unconscious, and semi-conscious?

Question for reflection: How do you see the existence of conscious and unconscious levels in your classroom?

APPENDIX 1

THE CVs OF THE AUTHORS

Else Hammerich

Founder of Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution 1994, director 1994-98, trainer and mediator of DCCR.

Project leader with Bjarne Vestergaard of the Dharamsala project on democratic processes and conflict management and the trainers training for the TCCR, 1998-2002

Education: Bachelor and Master of Education

Experience: Ass. Professor of education and didactics at Blaagaard Teacher Training College, from 1971 - 94. Educational research. Member of European Parliament 1979-89.

Lotte Christy

Project manager, The Crime Prevention Council in Denmark

Master of Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Trainer and mediator and former director of DCCR

Trained teacher, specialist teacher in child psychiatry

Manager of the project 'promoting the social climate in schools' including in-service training for 200 teachers and headmasters

Co-founder of International Association of Educators for Peace

1994-98 member of Danish National Committee for UNESCO

Marianne Munis

Headmaster of the experimental school at The National Innovative Centre for General Education, Copenhagen,

Primary task: To develop new educational approaches and ideas with regard to curriculum design and teaching methods

Experienced in teacher training courses, facilitating workshops and seminars on pedagogical issues

Bjarne Vestergaard

Trainer and mediator of DCCR

Project leader with Else Hammerich of the Dharamsala project on democratic processes and conflict management, and the trainers training for the TCCR, 1998-2002.

1980-96 private practice as counsellor of psychology – plus education and supervision of psychologists

Bo Ørsnes

Educational advisor and instructor in DCCR

Master of Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Education: teacher, school management, management, family counselling, supervisor, conflict management, mediation

Experience: teacher in special need education 1974-76, headmaster of the Danish-Argentine School in Argentina 1976-79, headmaster of the school in Charlotttegården, Copenhagen 1982-97, educational advisor in Danish Ministry of Education 1997-2001.

APPENDIX 2: THE PROJECT

The Tibetan Transit School Project

In-service training for TTS teachers

Adult education, democratic processes and conflict management

A partnership project between Tibetan Transit School (TTS)¹² and Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution (DCCR)¹³

Purpose

- that the TTS teachers get an in-service training, which will strengthen their abilities to teach adults,
- that the students' education is improved in order to enrich their resources, strengthen their self-confidence and thus prepare their future life – in exile or in Tibet,
- that a group of TTS teachers get a special training that enables them to transfer their skills of adult education to new TTS teachers and other teachers of the exile community.

Background

About 2000 Tibetans escape to Nepal and India over the Himalayas every year, including many children and youngsters. Walking, mainly during winter makes the escape extremely dangerous, and the refugees have to walk by night for safety reasons. Nevertheless many children and young people risk the dangers, because they have the needs to:

- get an education in general
- get a Buddhist education
- receive the blessing of H.H. the Dalai Lama
- Some of the refugees flee, because they have been involved in political resistance and thus are endangered.

Every year 2-300 young people arrive at the TTS, where they can stay for five years. Some of these have fled for political reasons, and some have had disciplinary problems at school. Many are traumatised due to the dangers of the escape and the separation from their families and everything that composed their lives.

It is a huge task and a considerable problem for the Tibetan community in exile to absorb the many refugees and to provide housing, livelihood and education for them. That is why the education at TTS is of huge importance, not just for the newcomers, but also for the solidarity and democracy of the whole Tibetan exile community.

¹² For more information on Tibetan Centre for Conflict resolution:

¹³ For more information on Danish Centre for Conflict Resolution: www.konfliktloesning.dk

About 70% of the students go back to Tibet and the Dalai Lama has encouraged them to go back to help improve their compatriots' knowledge and conditions, through their newly gained capabilities.

For many years, the school was housed in tin shelters, which were too cold in winter, and too hot in summer. DANIDA has now sponsored great parts of the new and quite fine school buildings, which are highly appreciated by the staff and students of the TTS.

Focus group interviews

In focus group interviews conducted in March 2003, the TTS teachers made up a list of problems that they face, and their wishes for the in-service education. These statements have been essential for the planning of the project and the training:

- a. At the arrival, the students are in mental and physical pain. They are not adjusted to the surroundings, the food and the climate in India. They are traumatized and their health is in poor condition.
- b. During the last time of their stay at the school, the students are worried about the future that awaits them. They lose their spirits, energy, interest and self-confidence.
- c. How can we deal with the students' psychological problems: Their loneliness, sorrow, worries and trauma?
- d. Methods for teaching the 18-30 year old. How can we meet the needs of a 30 year old? They are adults and want to make their own decisions. The textbooks we have are meant for children. How can we teach them about the modern world outside, about politics and international affairs? How can we develop curricula for them? How can we teach when we do not have books?
- e. The students have very different educational backgrounds; some of them hardly have any. How can we differentiate our teaching?
- f. How can we give the grown-ups a meaningful education and help them make a better future for themselves?
- g. We lack modern didactic methods in language teaching.
- h. It is difficult to criticize people of one's own age. It is hard to maintain discipline and make them respect regulations.
- i. How can we uphold our self-confidence in the classroom? How can we make the students interested in the subjects we teach?

Activities

- There will be *six intensive training periods*. Four of the periods will be carried out by Danish teachers, and one period by an Indian and a Tibetan expert of modern language education. In one period, TCCR (Tibetan Center for Conflict Resolution) will do the training of conflict management.
- *Between the training periods* the teachers will systematically test their new tools under the supervision of the principal of TTS Yonten Norbu.
- *During the last DCCR training period*, plans of action will be prepared, interviews of focus groups will be carried out and network groups will be formed, and internal evaluation will be carried out.
- *Educating a task force for transmitting adult education*. During the last training period 8-10 TTS teachers will be trained and qualified to pass on their knowledge of adult education to new TTS teachers and other teachers.

- Most of the training will be held as *evening classes*. There will however be *residential courses*, of which one is only for female teachers.
- *Language Teaching and Conflict management*. An Indian and a Tibetan expert will undertake the didactics of modern language education. A training of conflict management will be carried out by the TCCR - Tibetan Centre for Conflict Resolution.
- *A textbook on adult education will be produced* along with the training, in English as well as in Tibetan language.