

Reaching the 'hard to reach': Inclusive responses to diversity through child-teacher dialogue

Newsletter 5

April 2020

Final partnership meeting – change of plans:



In our fifth newsletter you will find information about:

- The final partnership meeting, which was held virtually in March 2020
- Thoughts about the final meeting and draft project outputs
- The next steps in our project

The final partnership meeting was due to be held in Faro, at the University of Algarve, on 12th and 13th March 2020. Our plans had to change at the last minute!

All the preparations about this final partnership meeting were made in advance. All our flights and hotels were booked and we were getting ready to travel to Faro for our last face-to-face meeting.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, it was not possible to go ahead with meeting face-to-face in the end. At very short notice we had to make alternative arrangements and we carried out the meeting virtually for a whole day, on Thursday 12th March 2020.

Some partners were experiencing their first day of lockdown, others were scheduling planning meetings at their schools, preparing for a possible lockdown, and others were still in their

universities or schools, but under very different conditions, expecting a likely lockdown.

This was certainly a shock for all of us and a different meeting compared to the one we had planned. However, we managed to carry out the meeting virtually and agree next plans for the successful completion of the project, during very challenging circumstances.

Virtual meeting

An amended agenda was prepared ahead of the virtual meeting to ensure that all necessary tasks were carried out.

We began by sharing the findings of the third and final collaborative action research cycle (2019 – 2020).

Inclusive Inquiry, the approach that we developed as part of the project, was implemented in a total of thirty schools in the five participating countries.

Specifically, children seen as 'hard to reach' were trained to become researchers and collect their classmates' views to inform the design of inclusive lessons.

Each country made a presentation about the work that had taken place in the final year of the project in each country network of schools and the lessons learnt.

Presentations of the initial findings of the teacher and student questionnaires that were collected during the second cycle of the collaborative action research, were also made during the event.

Drafts of the six booklets to support the use of Inclusive Inquiry were shared. In addition, the draft video was shared with all colleagues, consisting of footage from all countries. Feedback was given in relation to the design and content of the booklets and for the video as well, to allow for final revisions to be made before finalising and translating the booklets in the various languages and finalising the video too.



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Thoughts

Despite the meeting being held online for a whole long day, all colleagues remained engaged throughout the duration of the meeting and carried on with lively discussions about the project's work.

Though this was not the meeting we were all looking forward to, we managed to complete the work that we were planning to do in this final meeting, albeit in a different way.

In this final meeting, a lot of the discussion focused on the national differences between the different countries and the implications that those had on implementing the project's approach.

Particular constraints placed by the various national systems were discussed and suggestions for enabling schools to implement such approaches were identified through the ways that the different schools worked in each of the countries. All these lessons will be included in the booklet that describe the country networks.

It was very disappointing that we did not manage to say goodbye in person to colleagues that we worked with closely with over the previous three years, but we hope that we will manage to collaborate again in the future in new projects.

Next Steps

The fieldwork in the schools had been completed in most of the countries. All countries were getting ready at that stage to organise the final multiplier events. Ideas in relation to the organisation of the events were discussed between the different countries. Thoughts about the possibility of having the events on line were briefly discussed, though the intention was for the events to take place face to face as originally planned, if the pandemic conditions allow.

In the next months, the six project booklets that can be used by schools that wish to implement **Inclusive Inquiry** will be finalised and made available on the project website as soon as they are finalised, despite the possible delays with the final multiplier events.

It was agreed amongst all partners that the earliest the dissemination starts the best for ensuring that the project results reach out a wider range of audiences.

The same would apply for the project's video. Some countries also decided to add subtitles to the project in their own languages. Finally, in the coming months practitioners' and academic publications will be finalised for submission.

The schools also discussed their plans for continuing with the approach in the future years, after the project is completed.

For more information please contact Professor Kiki Messiou:

k.messiou@soton.ac.uk

