

THE
P A C E
P R O J E C T

A STORY OF INNOVATION
IN ADRIATIC SCHOOLS

A booklet designed to be used in the
PACE Project diffusion seminars for teachers
in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Italy.

FOR TEACHERS

ABOUT TEACHERS

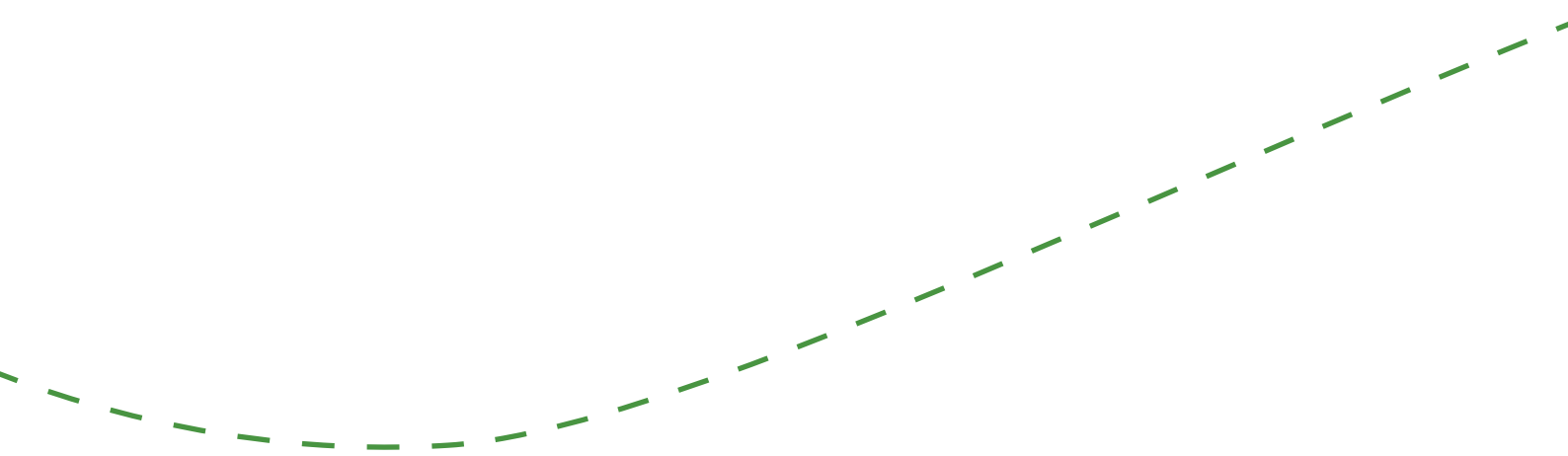
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS

From:

- VISION to REALITY
- NEEDS to SOLUTIONS
- THEORY to PRACTICE
- WORKSHOP to CLASSROOM

The **PACE** PROJECT Vision

To harness the potential of education as an instrument of reconciliation in post conflict societies facing challenges of social and cultural change in the Adriatic region.



small steps towards **BIG IDEAS**



PART ONE

I. ENTER RESEARCHERS

RESEARCHERS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF VENICE (CENEC) ESTABLISH A FOUNDATION FOR NEW EDUCATIONAL FORMS AND PROCESSES BY GAINING AWARENESS OF THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROVISION IN ADRIATIC COUNTRIES AND IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND BEST PRACTICE

A guiding Principle:

involve teachers and students

“Who lives in a system is an expert on it; who acts in a system is able to create a model to think about their practices and produce significant changes if opportunity for reflection is given.”

(Inspired by Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

The method

A “triangulation” operation was used to identify significant ideas by matching several sources of information.

THE STEPS WERE:

- A) State of the Art: changing educational scenarios in the current world [a theoretical sample]
- B) Consultation of the main educational actors (teachers, students, heads of school) via questionnaires, interviews and focus groups
- C) Mapping best practices published on the net

SOME FINDINGS:

“THERE'S A limited VIEW of what school is”

Students say

“Lessons are very theoretical...the emphasis is on information and knowledge which is remembered for tests and then tends to be forgotten...we learn how to absorb information but not how to study...it's important to see clearly the process we are undergoing.”

“Lessons are not connected to the outside world...we don't understand why we are studying specific subjects...there's a narrow perspective - for example, only one version of history.”

“We are used to being passive in lessons... we are expected to take on the teacher's views...we would like to be more encouraged to express our own views...to have more opportunities for discussion.”

“We would like more cooperation amongst students...and greater trust between students and teachers.”

Teachers say

“Too often the structures and curricula...do not correspond to the needs of youth and the society at large.”

“There's a strong gap between ideas and reality, between the legislative act and the didactic action in the classroom.”

“Time pressures encourage traditional teaching styles.”

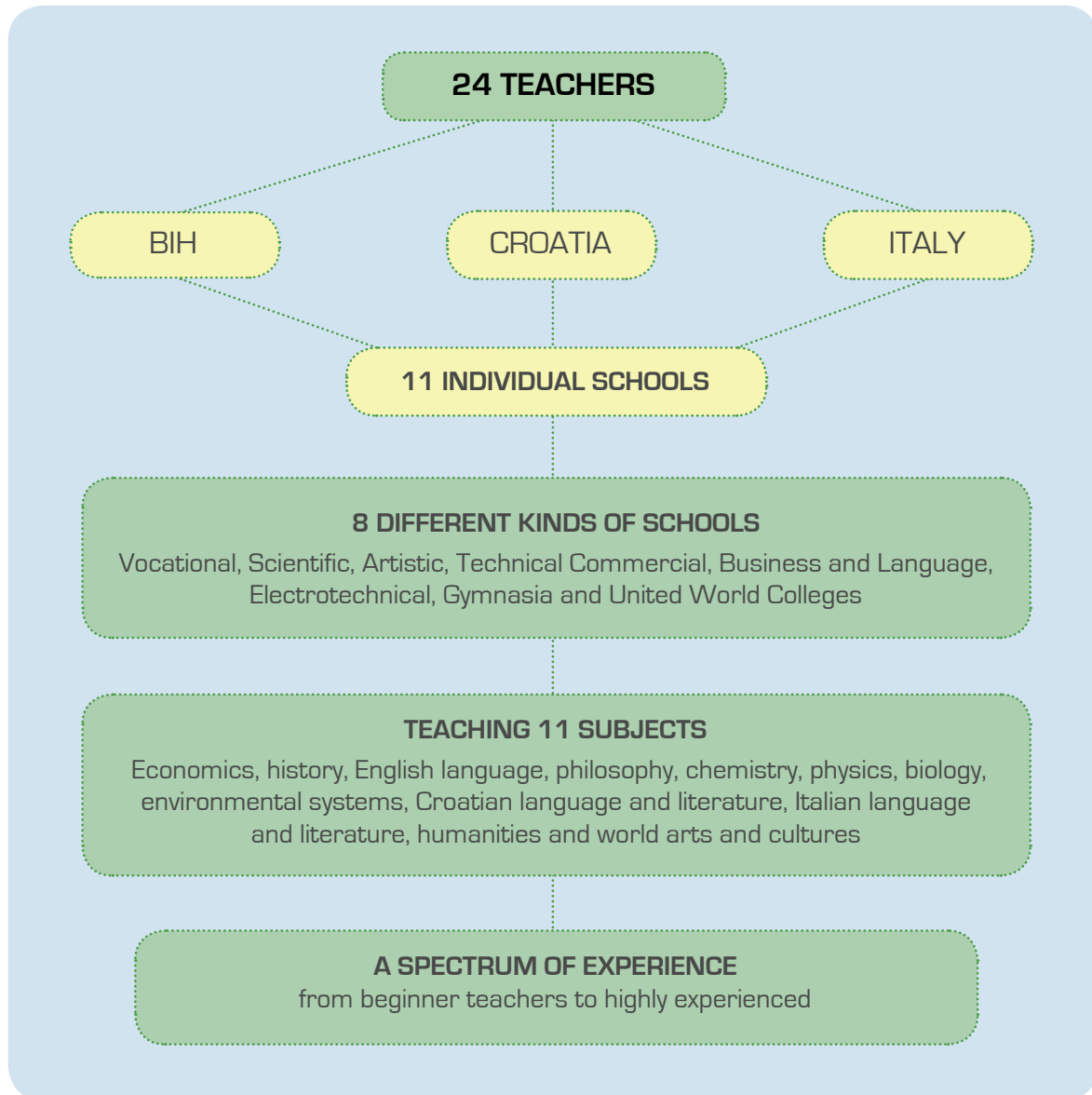
“Teachers have low status.”

“More hands-on experience is necessary.”

“Innovation of programmes and curriculum is desirable.”

II. ENTER TEACHERS: THE MAIN PLAYERS

TO BUILD ON THE WORK OF THE RESEARCHERS





III. TEACHERS ARE EMPOWERED

TO MASTERMIND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE, TO FIND CONCRETE AND EFFECTIVE WAYS OF MEETING NEEDS

Teachers were given the time, space (mental and physical) and responsibility to create solutions and the possibility of testing the validity of their innovation.

“The PACE project offers wonderful opportunities for teachers to be empowered to initiate changes in schools, to change the teaching mentality, to increase the participation of students in work inside and outside the classroom and to do a multiplicity of things that our research has shown that teachers and students want”.

(Education Director)

IV. WORKSHOPS WITH A DIFFERENCE:

“TIME, SPACE AND RESPONSIBILITY”

Through collaboration in both plenary sessions and broad subject groups teachers, across countries and diverse school programmes, forged new approaches and created schemes of lessons out of their combined best practice.

Innovation did not mean “wiping the slate clean” but, rather, building on existing strengths and extending the vision of what is possible.

“The workshops are “different”. They break the traditional workshop mould. Preconceptions may not apply. The structure is flexible.

Teachers themselves are the main players, the acknowledged experts, given the opportunity to explore and consider new ways of delivering their curricula.

This requires an open, even risk-taking approach - being willing to “think outside the box” and to use initiative in delivering the workshop goals, with “a little help from friends” in the subject groups.

The emphasis in the workshops will be on the creation of didactic materials by individual teachers. These innovative materials will be uploaded to a virtual working space and piloted in the teachers’ own schools.

Teachers will primarily be uploaders rather than downloaders.

The interaction between teachers in the subject groups will stimulate and support the creation of materials. Implicit in the process is reflection on both the underlying values of the teaching materials and the human qualities we wish to cultivate.”

From the Education Director’s introduction to the first workshop in Rijeka

V. TEACHERS DEFINE AND ADOPT NEW APPROACHES IN WORKSHOPS:

A METHODOLOGY, APPROPRIATE FOR ADRIATIC LEARNERS IN THE 21st CENTURY, CONCEIVED IN TERMS OF:

Core Beliefs (underlying all strategies)

- Knowledge should lead to understanding.
- The personal development of the student is central.
- Independent learning should be encouraged and supported.
- Different kinds of minds (for example, respectful, ethical) and intelligences (for example, emotional, creative) should be respected and fostered¹.
- Students should be given opportunities to think about why and how they learn, about how they know what they know.
- Transparency: the goals of the programme should be clear; the modes of assessment and the assessment criteria should reflect the common strategies and be known to the student.
- Student feedback and views are essential. Students are collaborators.

Common Strategies

- Experiential learning: practical work in tandem with theory.
- Opportunities for learning both inside and outside the classroom. (For example, via small group projects, perhaps with a social service element, designed and organised by students themselves; via field trips; via visits to relevant institutions/sites).
- Subject material with “real life applications” and connections to the world outside the classroom.
- Diversity of teaching methods, resources and aids.
- A participatory approach to class, with students taking responsibility for contributing.
- Students challenged to develop their own, well-founded ideas and express them in their work.
- Collaborative work amongst students and between students and teacher.

¹ Howard Gardner, 2007, “Five Minds for the Future”, Harvard Business School Press, Boston

THEMES (COMPATIBLE WITH EXISTING CURRICULA) CONCEIVED IN TERMS OF “BIG IDEAS” - TO GIVE FOCUS TO THE PROJECT VISION AND CONTEXT FOR EXPERIMENTATION WITH NEW APPROACHES

Big Ideas

1. **Culture and Change:** the human being, cultural identity and cultural interaction (humanities teachers)
2. **Experimental Science:** the human being and the natural world (science teachers)
3. **The Human Being:** what it is, or means, to be a human being in Europe, in a country, in a local region, in a family, as an individual (Language and literature teachers)

A UNIFYING METAPHOR - THE STORY OF THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT - RUNNING THROUGH STRATEGIES AND THEMES GIVING IMAGINATIVE FORCE TO:

- The importance of different points of view, of understanding different perspectives on topics and of broadening own points of view by listening to the views of others.
- The importance of the acquisition of the tools of analytical and critical thinking that enable students to challenge received ideas and go beyond impressions to reach independent, well-founded judgements.

VI. TEACHERS CREATE SCHEMES OF LESSONS FOR MAINSTREAM SUBJECTS USING NEW PACE APPROACHES

In workshops teachers collaborated in using the new approaches to shape the creation of schemes of lessons designed to be delivered through existing school curricula and programmes.

SCHEMES OF LESSONS (presented thematically):

Culture and Change:

cultural identity and cultural interaction (humanities teachers)

WORLD WAR I (1914 -1918) AND THE INTERACTION OF CULTURES (History)
CORRUPTION, GLOBALIZATION & THE PROSPECTS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE (Economics)
INTERCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF UNEMPLOYMENT (Economics)
INTERCULTURAL PERCEPTIONS: BENIN AND EUROPEAN CONTACT, A CASE STUDY (World Arts and Cultures)
THE MIND AND THE SENSES: MEDITATION ON AN ELEPHANT (Humanities)
WHO'S WHO IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY (Philosophy)
THE MIND AND THE SENSES: PAINTING, MUSIC, POETRY, NOVEL (Humanities)
WOMEN AND STEREOTYPES (Philosophy)

***Experimental Science: the human being and the natural world
(science teachers)***

SECOND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS AND ENTROPY (Physics)

ISOMERISM (Chemistry)

CHEMISTRY OF LIFE (Biology)

CLIMATE CHANGE (Environmental Science)

A SYSTEMS APPROACH (Environmental Science)

NEWTON'S LAWS (Physics)

The Human Being:

***What it means to be a human being in Europe, in a country, in a local region,
in a family and as an individual (Language and literature teachers)***

A MODULE ON DUTY: UNDERSTANDING DUTY IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

(Foreign Languages and Mother Tongue Literature)

MODULE ON HUMAN RIGHTS: A REFLECTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THEIR
IMPORTANCE (Foreign Languages and Mother Tongue Literature)



VII. ENTER TECHNOLOGY: TEACHERS AND LESSONS GO VIRTUAL

A Virtual Working “Space”
was created:

- for lesson materials
- to provide channels of communication
(for example discussion threads, news posts)
with the aim of fostering an on-line community)

“The Space aspires to create a fraternity of teachers, to replicate the day-to-day “terrestrial” inspiration, support and empathy we look for in colleagues close at hand. The space also exists to keep to the forefront the aims and objectives of the project and to store information you may need in addition to teaching materials. Beyond this, it ought to make it possible (and easy) for you to work with other colleagues on the modification and development of exemplar materials and to exchange experiences on the progress of the pilot, its frustrations and rewards!”

(Education Director)

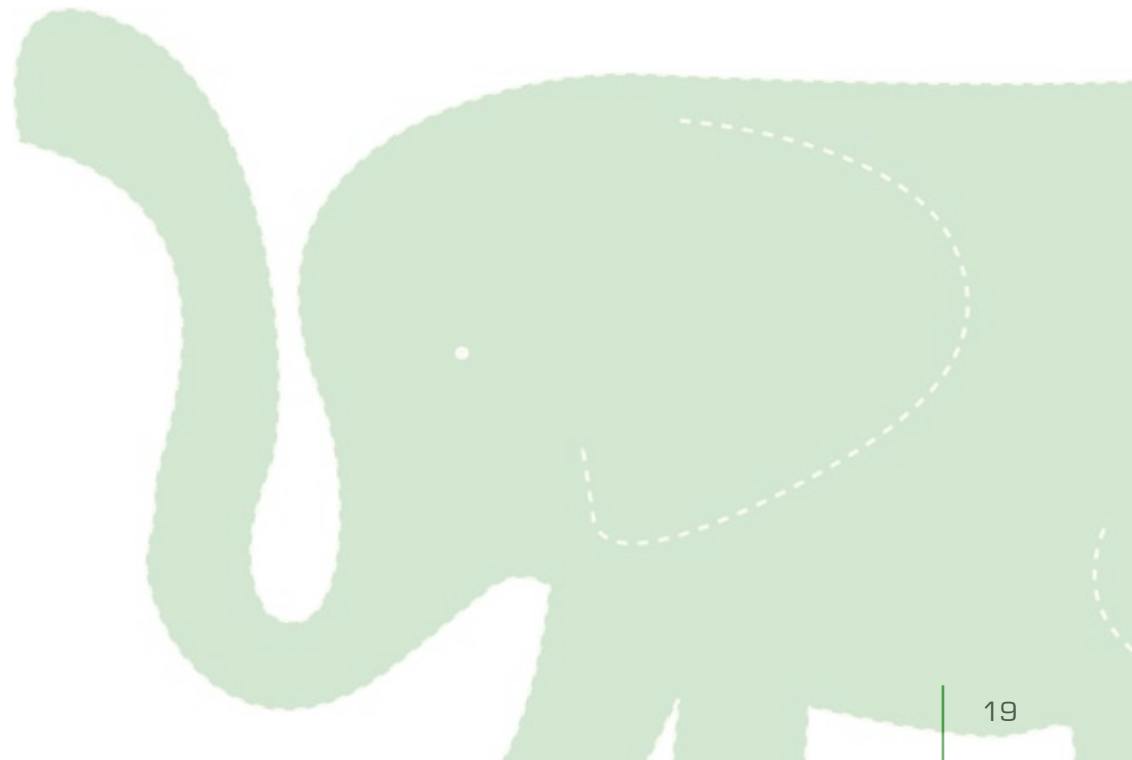
VIII. ENTER STUDENTS (800 of them!)

ALL THE LESSON MATERIALS WERE PILOTED IN A VARIETY OF SCHOOLS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, CROATIA AND ITALY, SUPPORTED AND MONITORED BY THE EDUCATION DIRECTOR AND PROJECT MANAGERS

Although the schemes of lessons were written in English, the lessons were piloted in Bosnian, Croatian, English, Italian and Serbian.

Monitoring involved class observation, meetings with teachers, students and head teachers.

During this process lesson materials were revised and underwent further development.



IX. TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND HEAD TEACHERS GIVE A POSITIVE VERDICT ON THE NEW APPROACHES

In Part III you can find full details of feedback on the methodology and lesson schemes, the pros and cons regarding:

Experiential Learning

Participation / Collaboration

Fostering Independence

Real Life Applications

Diverse Methods

And further information on:

The Effect of PACE Methods on Relationships with Students and the Personal Development of the Student

PACE Methods and Professional Development of Teachers

Views on the Schemes of Work and on Workload

Negative Perspectives

Comments by Individual Students

Feedback from Head Teachers

Conclusion by the Monitors of the PACE Project

THE STORY GOES ON . . . YOU ENTER

“Final” Versions of the PACE
Project Lesson Plans are ready
for metamorphosis

The schemes of lessons are not intended to be ready-made programmes, final products to be taken off the virtual shelf, dusted and used instantly. What you will be able to see on the virtual “space” are descriptions of what teachers invented for their own classes and what actually worked for them. These teachers are prepared to share their ideas, their resources and their personal exploration of themes. They are also prepared to share examples of their “materials in action” - through examples of student work whether in the form of powerpoint, posters, writing, painting and so on. These materials are offered as inspiration and as illustrations of what can actually be achieved in a wide variety of schools when teachers are interested in trying to do things differently.

It is not envisaged that these materials are in a “final” form, but rather that every user will create something new out of them, with a view to fostering critical thinking skills, the ability to challenge received ideas and the capacity to understand different perspectives, in this way preparing students to face social and cultural change in the 21st Century.

WHERE YOU COME IN

These materials are for “ordinary” secondary school teachers who:

- are interested in innovation, in responding to the needs of students in a rapidly changing world;
- are seeking professional development;
- are interested in experimenting with the PACE methodology;
- would like to reinvent or revitalise their lessons using PACE beliefs and strategies;
- are prepared to take ownership of the PACE teaching materials by customising them to meet the needs of their own students and school programmes;
- would like to join a virtual community of teachers across borders by uploading examples of their own use of the PACE themes and methodology and by initiating or contributing to debate via discussion threads.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE

...to have access to the complete set of lessons and all the support and complementary materials...

Log on to the PACE website www.educooperation.eu



In “TASTE OF THE SPACE”, Part II, you may find extracts from examples across a range of subjects.

BUT NOTE!!!

This paper publication is but a poor relation of the “Space” with its wealth of materials, offering not only complete schemes of lessons but also worksheets, power points by teachers and students, videos, examples of students’ work and other evidence of the materials in action.

WAYS OF USING THE MATERIALS

Experiment with one or two strategies to start with. Begin the “journey” travelled by PACE teachers.

Think about which strategies are most suitable as a starting point.

Take a section of an exemplar and try using both the approach and the materials.

Take whatever is of interest to you, whatever inspires you and adapt it to your own teaching situation.

Use the materials to revitalise, repackage or supplement what you already do.

Try to get a school colleague to join you in using PACE approaches and materials.

TAKE SMALL STEPS TO BIG IDEAS

WILL YOU BE ON YOUR OWN?

● Support is Available!

PACE teachers in your region are ready to act as mentors.

Regional PACE project managers can be contacted. Names and contact addresses are provided.

Engage in dialogue with the international community of teachers on the “Space”.

RECOGNITION IN THE FORM OF ACCREDITATION BY THE UNIVERSITY OF VENICE

The achievement of teachers who participated in the PACE project has been recognised in the form of accreditation by the University of Venice. This may also be available to new subscribers who participate in the diffusion of the project approaches and post their own schemes of lessons on the teachers’ space.

The text was produced by Sandy Thomas, Education Director of the PACE Project, in collaboration with Margherita Gentile from the University of Venice.

