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

Guidance document for monitoring teachers' thinking and practices



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VS Viktor Kaplan	Flakkebjerg Skole	Shirley Junior School	Escola EB1/JI de Santa Bárbara de Nexe	Ceip Carlos Sainz De Los Terreros

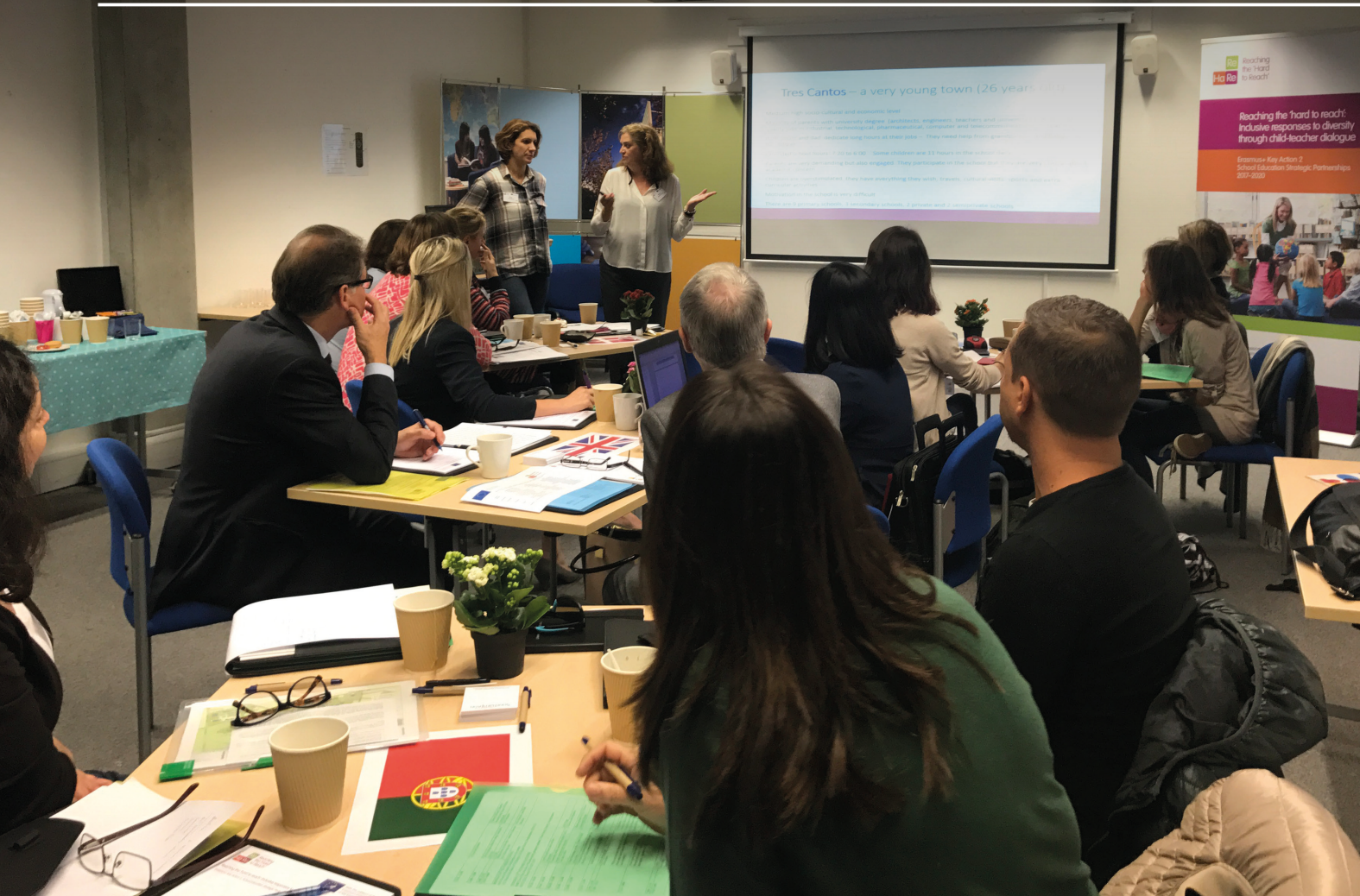
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Monitoring teachers’ thinking and practices: A guidance document

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Introduction

'Reaching the hard to reach: inclusive responses to diversity through child-teacher dialogue', a three-year project (2017-2020) funded by the European Union, involved primary schools and universities in five countries: Austria, Denmark, England, Portugal and Spain.

The focus of the project was on what is one of the biggest challenges facing teachers across Europe, that of including all children in lessons, particularly those who might be seen as 'hard to reach'. These might be, for example, migrants, refugees or students with disabilities, as well as others who might be overlooked. The project involved the use of collaborative action research. This required teachers and students to participate actively as research partners alongside colleagues from universities, with the aim of improving classroom practices.

With support from their university partners, five primary schools became 'hubs': that is, centres for developing and disseminating the work of the project. During the first year they trialled a new way of working and helped in refining the processes involved within their own schools. Then, during the second year, they each led the training of trios of teachers from five more primary schools to develop a local network. In the final year of the project, all 30 schools expanded the approach in their schools.

The guidance manual

This document offers advice and guidance about how group interviews and questionnaires can be used to monitor the impact that the Inclusive Inquiry process has on teachers' thinking and practices. In this way, schools will be in a position to determine the extent of the impact of the approach on their teachers.

Part 1

Group Interviews with teachers

The following questions should be asked at the end of the process of Inclusive Inquiry (i.e. at the end of the three rounds of research lessons). A maximum of six persons per group is recommended.

The person leading the interviews can be another teacher who may have had a leading role as being the facilitator for implementing the approach in the school, one of the teachers that implemented the approach, the headteacher, or a critical friend from outside the school. It would be good to keep some notes, so that these can be used afterwards for school development purposes.

The group interviews should focus on the following agenda:

- Describe the process of the research lessons
- What specific changes were made in your lessons as a result of the process?
- Do you feel that the children saw these lessons differently? In which ways?
- What were the challenges that you faced in this process?
- What were the benefits?
- Have your views changed through this process in regards to the value of listening to the views of children about learning and teaching? In which ways?
- Have your practices changed through this process in regards to the value of listening to the views of children about learning and teaching? In which ways?

Additional questions may be asked related to issues that emerge during the conversations.

Part 2

The teachers' questionnaire

The aim of this questionnaire is to determine the impact of Inclusive Inquiry on the thinking and practices of the teachers involved. The questionnaire was developed in relation to the goals of Inclusive Inquiry, also drawing on ideas from the "Teaching Practices, Beliefs and Attitudes" scale (OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey, 2018).

This questionnaire, which should be completed anonymously, contains 51 items. The first section collects socio-demographic data and school/class information (10 items). The second section consists of seven scales: (1) student-centered teaching (12 items); (2) respect and well-being at school (6 items); (3) professional dialogue (4 items); (4) cooperation to improve teaching practice (4 items); (5) standards of cooperative professional learning (7 items); (6) teaching materials in lesson planning (4 items); and (7) activities across different classes (4 items). In responding to these items a single-choice method is used. On the first four scales, one out of five response options can be chosen, anchored in either "strongly disagree" or "strongly agree"; for the fifth, sixth and seventh scale, six response options are offered, ranging from "never" to "weekly".

Regarding quality criteria written instructions for the questionnaire ensure objectivity of evaluation and interpretation of the results. To determine the reliability, data of 121 primary teachers were used to calculate internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha). Internal consistencies of the seven scales are between $\alpha = .86$ and $\alpha = .61$, which can be considered as good to medium reliable. The intercorrelations of the scales show low to medium values (.05 to .48), which indicate a sufficient independence and thus sufficient validity of the scales (Field, 2018).

Instructions

The questionnaire "Teacher's inclusive thinking and practices" takes between 10 to 20 minutes to be completed. Before filling in the questionnaire, participants should be advised that their answers are anonymised.

In order to analyse the data, it is important to note that it is particularly important for teachers to respond to all items and to tick only one response per item.

This questionnaire allows to capture teachers' estimates, their attitudinal changes as well as changes in their teaching practices over time. This can be done for example within a school year, or before and after the implementation of an intervention (one round of three research lessons) using Inclusive Inquiry.

Analysis

For the analysis each of the seven scales is evaluated separately. For each response option a value is assigned (see Figure 1). These values are summed up for each scale. This sum must be divided by the number of the items per scale (Scale 1: 12 questions, Scale 2: 6 questions, Scale 3: 4 questions, Scale 4: 4 items, Scale 5: 7 items, Scale 6: 4 items, Scale 7: 4 items). This will provide the mean for each scale.

If one or more items of a certain scale have not been answered, the sum should only be divided by the number of items that were answered. For example, if only 10 items from Scale 1 were answered, the sum should be divided by 10.

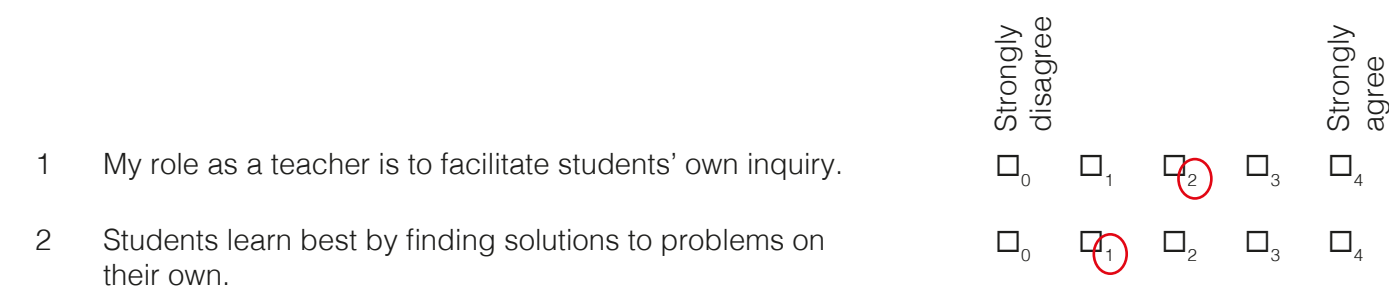


Figure 1: Values per answer

Interpretation

The mean values of the respective scales allow drawing conclusions regarding the teacher's inclusive views and practices. The average value can be between 0 and 4 (Scales 1 to 4) and between 0 and 5 (Scales 5 to 7).

A higher value (Scales 1-4: between 2.5 and 4.0; Scales 5-7: between 3.5 and 5.0) means that the person (who filled in the questionnaire) has strong inclusive views or/and (teaching) practices. Values between 1.0 and 2.4 (Scales 1 to 4) and values between 2.0 and 3.4 (Scales 5 to 7) are considered mediocre. Values below 1.0 on Scales 1 to 4, or values below 2.0 on Scales 5 to 7, indicate less inclusive thinking and practices.

References

- OECD (2018). Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). Paris: Educational Research and Innovation, OECD Publishing.
- Field, A. (2018). Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics. (5. Aufl.). London: SAGE Publications.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

Information about the class you are teaching

1. How many students are at this school? *Please write a number* _____
2. How many teachers work at this school? *Please write a number* _____
3. What is the age range of the children in your class? _____
4. How many students are in this class? *Please write a number* _____

Background Information

These questions concern your education and the time you have spent teaching. In responding to these questions, please mark the appropriate choice(s).

1. What is your gender?

- ☐_0 Female
- ☐_1 Male

2. How old are you?

- ☐_0 Under 25
- ☐_1 25-29
- ☐_2 30-39
- ☐_3 40-49
- ☐_4 50-59
- ☐_5 60+

3. Do you work as a teacher at another school as well as this school?

- ☐_0 No
- ☐_1 Yes

4. What is the highest level of formal education that you have completed?

- ☐_0 Short circle tertiary education
- ☐_1 Bachelor degree or equivalent
- ☐_2 Master degree or equivalent
- ☐_3 Doctoral degree or equivalent

5. How long have you been working as a teacher?

- ☐_0 This is my first year
- ☐_1 1-2 years
- ☐_2 3-5 years
- ☐_3 6-10 years
- ☐_4 11-15 years
- ☐_5 16-20 years
- ☐_6 more than 20 years

6. How long have you been working as a teacher at this school?

- ☐_0 This is my first year
- ☐_1 1-2 years
- ☐_2 3-5 years
- ☐_3 6-10 years
- ☐_4 11-15 years
- ☐_5 16-20 years
- ☐_6 more than 20 years

We would like to ask about your personal beliefs on teaching and learning. Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with each of the following statements. *Please mark one in each row.*

Inclusive Thinking: Student-Centred Teaching		Strongly disagree					Strongly agree				
1	My role as a teacher is to facilitate students’ own inquiry.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
2	Students learn best by finding solutions to problems on their own.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
3	It is important to know the views of children on their learning process.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
4	Children know best how they can improve their own learning. It is important to respect their views.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
5	Children have many different ways of learning. It is important to know what facilitates their learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
6	Working with children means to take their needs into account.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
7	In a classroom the respect for others’ views is essential, especially regarding different cultures.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
8	For supporting the learning process of children, it is necessary to know exactly what their needs are.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
9	The views of children are important, especially in diverse classrooms.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
10	The views of children are important in each classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
11	In a classroom the respect for others’ views is essential.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					
12	Knowing the views of children helps me to better understand their difficulties and needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4					

Inclusive Practices Part 1

We would like to ask about what happens in this school? Please indicate how much you disagree or agree with each of the following statements. Please mark one in each row.

Respect and Well-being at School		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
1	In this school, teachers and students usually get on well with each other	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
2	Teachers treat one another with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
3	Students and teachers treat each other with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
4	Most teachers in this school believe that students' well-being is important.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
5	Most teachers in this school are interested in what students have to say.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
6	I feel comfortable with sharing my failures with my colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4

Professional Dialogue		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
1	Team dialogue is valued among the team because we find that we come to common understandings when we voice our points of view.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
2	As a team, we engage in professional dialogue.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
3	As a team, we frequently innovate classroom practice and then measure its effectiveness with formative assessments.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
4	Struggling students are frequently discussed, and ways to re-teach them are implemented.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4

Cooperation to Improve Teaching Practice		Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
1	I share my knowledge and expertise with other teachers to solve problems of teaching and learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
2	Participating in the collaboration activities has improved my practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
3	Sharing personal teaching practices among colleagues increases student learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4
4	I seek out other teachers' expertise to help me solve problems of teaching and learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4

Inclusive Practices Part 2

How often do you do the following in this school? Please mark one choice in each row.

Standards of Cooperative Professional Learning		Never	> than once per year	once per year	3 - 4 times per year	Monthly	Weekly
1	Attend team conferences for the age group I teach.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
2	Ensure common standards in evaluations for assessing student progress.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
3	Engage in discussion about the learning development of specific students.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
4	Take part in professional learning activities (e.g. team supervision).	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
5	Work with other teachers in my school to ensure common standards for assessing student progress.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
6	Take part in collaborative professional learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
7	Spontaneously come together with other teachers to solve problems of teaching and learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5

Teaching Materials and Lesson Plan		Never	> than once per year	once per year	3 - 4 times per year	Monthly	Weekly
1	Attend staff meetings to discuss the vision and mission of the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
2	Develop a school curriculum or part of it.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
3	Discuss and decide on the selection of teaching media (e.g. textbooks, exercise books).	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
4	Exchange teaching materials with colleagues.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5

Activities Across Different Classes		Never	> than once per year	once per year	3 - 4 times per year	Monthly	Weekly
1	Teach jointly as a team in the same class.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
2	Observe other teachers' classes and provide feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
3	Engage in joint activities across different classes and age groups (e.g. projects).	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5
4	Discuss and coordinate homework practice across subjects.	<input type="checkbox"/> _0	<input type="checkbox"/> _1	<input type="checkbox"/> _2	<input type="checkbox"/> _3	<input type="checkbox"/> _4	<input type="checkbox"/> _5



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