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

## Inclusive Inquiry A step-by-step guide for teachers



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# Inclusive Inquiry: A step-by-step guide for teachers

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## Introduction

*'I have never seen my children so involved.'*  
Teacher

*'It makes me want to do more things, yeah, it just makes me want to do more things'.*  
Student researcher

*'I found out that it was very much more important asking the children what they felt and what they thought about different things we were planning.'* Teacher

*'I can be quite shy sometimes and it's a different feeling when you actually feel brave enough to stand up in front of people and say something.'* Student researcher

*'What I really liked was how, afterwards, the children researchers were able to come up with some really fantastic points, some of which that we never even thought of that really made a difference.'* Teacher

These are typical of comments made by children and teachers involved in the three-year project **'Reaching the hard to reach: inclusive responses to diversity through child-teacher dialogue'** (2017-2020). Funded by the European Union, the project 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 Guide

This guide explains how to use **Inclusive Inquiry**, the approach that was developed and evaluated in the project. In practical terms this involves trios of teachers cooperating with their students to find ways of making their lessons inclusive. As the guide explains, it involves three phases, all of which require dialogue between children and teachers. Importantly, this involves some students learning how to use research methods to gather the views of their classmates. The dialogues that this encourages are focused on improvements in learning and teaching. More specifically, differences amongst students and teachers are used to reconsider existing thinking and practices in ways that are intended to encourage experimentation in order to foster more inclusive ways of working. This, in turn, sets out to break down barriers that are limiting the engagement of some learners.

The research carried out within the project suggests that the use of **Inclusive Inquiry can have a significant impact on the engagement of children in lessons**. However, this requires that the approach is used effectively, following the instructions presented in this guide carefully.

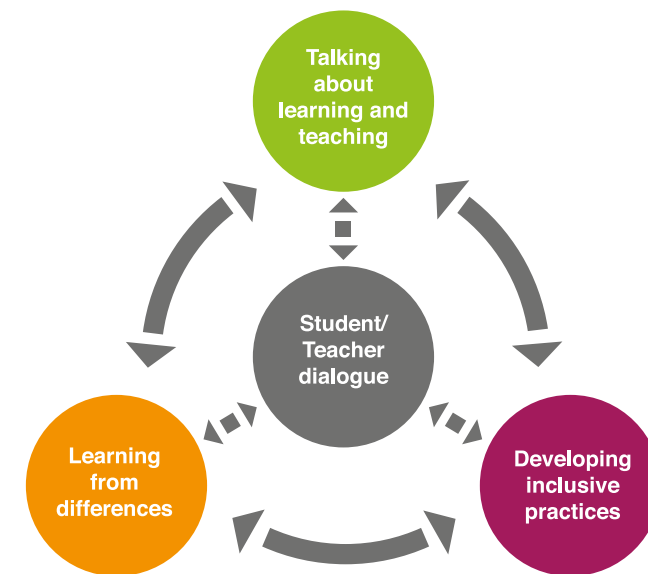
The guide should be read in conjunction to the:

- Preparing Students to be Researchers Manual
- Students' Voices Toolkit
- Accounts of developments in the five country networks
- Guidance Document for Monitoring Students' Engagement; and
- Guidance Document for Monitoring Teachers' Thinking and Practices.

All these documents can be downloaded for free in five languages from the project's website: <https://reachingthehardtoreach.eu/>

## Inclusive Inquiry

Inclusive Inquiry is an approach that can be used in schools for strengthening existing practices. It focuses on finding ways of including all children in lessons, particularly those who are seen as 'hard to reach'. The approach involves a series of interconnected processes, as shown in this diagram:



This guide will help you use Inclusive Inquiry to make your lessons more inclusive. It involves a process of action research consisting of three phases: **Plan**, **Teach** and **Analyse**. They all require dialogue between children and teachers.

The three phases each involve a series of steps explaining the actions that are necessary, as follows:

### Phase 1: Plan

- 1.1 A trio of teachers has been formed to carry out action research
- 1.2 The trio has agreed about which will be their research lesson
- 1.3 The trio has involved a group of student researchers in collecting evidence to support the design of the research lesson
- 1.4 A lesson plan has been developed that sets out to ensure that all members of the class are engaged in all the activities
- 1.5 The three teachers and the student researchers have all contributed to the design of the lesson plan

### Phase 2: Teach

- 2.1 Each teacher has used the lesson plan with their class
- 2.2 On each occasion, the two colleagues and student researchers observed the responses of class members
- 2.3 The views of all students about the lesson were gathered
- 2.4 After each lesson, teachers and student researchers met to review what has happened, focusing on the engagement of all members of the class
- 2.5 The trio refined the lesson plan before it was used by the next member of the trio

## Phase 3: Analyse

**3.1** After the three teachers had used the lesson plan, the trio and student researchers discussed its impact on the engagement of all members of the classes

**3.2** The trio and student researchers drew conclusions regarding what has been learnt about making lessons inclusive

These twelve steps are all essential to the successful use of Inclusive Inquiry. The **Levels of Use Framework** (see Appendix A) should be used by teachers to determine how far they have implemented the approach.

It is important to understand that **Inclusive Inquiry is a demanding and time-consuming approach**, with many potential benefits for schools, teachers and students. It is recommended that the process should be used in a school at least once, following **all** the steps involved. If one of the steps is omitted, then the benefits of the approach are likely to be reduced.

The evidence suggests that schools having gone through the process once, begin to think differently about their students as well as about their practices. At the same time, relationships between children and teachers change, with positive effects for students' experiences. Therefore, the aim is **not** to use Inclusive Inquiry many times within a school year. Instead, it should be used carefully, at least once. Based on the lessons learnt through the process, schools can then implement long term changes to ensure that all children are included in lessons.

In what follows, examples for each of the steps are presented to illustrate the different ways in which the approach can be used. These examples are drawn from schools across the five countries. Further examples are presented in the 'Accounts of developments in the five country networks' document.



# Phase 1: Plan

## Steps

### 1.1 Join with two other teachers to carry out the action research

Members of the group must agree to work together in developing their practices, including joint planning of a research lesson and mutual observation as the lesson is used by each teacher.

### 1.2 Agree which will be your lesson

In forming the trio, it is helpful if all three members are in a position to teach the same lesson plan. If this is not possible, you may choose to trial a particular teaching approach within different lessons (e.g. cooperative group work; role play), or a topic that can be taught with different age groups.

**Example 1 (Denmark):** In this school, the subject chosen was language. Three teachers from the same grade took part and the lesson they chose focused on the use of verbs.

**Example 2 (England):** The three teachers in this school were from three different year groups and chose to work on the same topic, that of internet safety. They developed one lesson plan that was taught in all three classes, despite the children being of different ages.

**Example 3 (Portugal):** The three teachers were each teaching different grades but chose to focus on the same subject: mathematics. This meant that the level of complexity and the support materials adopted for each class had to be adapted to the age levels of the groups involved.

**Example 4 (Austria):** Similarly, the trio in this school consisted of teachers from three different grades (1, 3 and mixed-age grade) who taught a language topic. As the students in the three classrooms were of different ages, the content of the lesson was slightly adapted to the needs of each grade. The teachers presented either new words at Grade 3 and the mixed-age class, or new letters at Grade 1. However, the basic structure of the research lesson remained the same. In the planning, the main challenge was the different age of the students and the different curriculum in the three classes:

*"Well, it was complicated at the beginning to find something that fits the different grades"*

The teachers agreed that they managed this challenge:

*"We had to find common ground. Well, I think we did well. It was not as if we argued but you could notice that it was challenging to get on the path where all agree: Ok, let's do it like that."*



### 1.3 Involve a group of student researchers in collecting evidence to support the design of the research lesson

Three students from each of the three classes should be involved in the action research. Choose students who are representative of the diversity that exists, including some of those who are seen as 'hard to reach'. Provide training as to how they can collect evidence from their classmates, including using student voice activities. Details about the training and the different ways in which it can be carried out, as well as about the student voice activities, can be found in separate documents. These are: the Preparing Students to be Researchers Manual and the Students' Voices Toolkit. Student researchers should also be helped to analyse the information they collect. It is possible that this process could be repeated a number of times and, therefore, different students (ideally all) will be given the opportunity to take the role of researchers.

**Example 1 (Spain):** In this school, after their training, the group of student researchers decided to interview children from the classes they would be observing, before the lessons, in order to gain understandings about how their classmates view learning and teaching issues. The student researchers developed the following set of questions to use in individual interviews with some of their classmates:

1. Say three things that come to mind when you think of your class...
2. What do you like the most in your class?
3. What do you dislike in your class?
4. Is there anything that you would change in the way your teachers teach?
5. Is there anything you would change on the dynamics of the class with your classmates?
6. Do you get bored in class? Why?
7. Do you understand what it is explained in class?
8. What things would help you have a better understanding of your teachers' explanations?

9. Do you ask for help when you have difficulties? Who?
10. If you were the teacher in your class, what would you do to help your students to learn?
11. What materials will help you to understand the concepts that are taught?

Following these individual interviews, the student researchers identified the main areas that were highlighted through these interviews, in order to share with their teachers. For example, there were some children who were bored during the English lesson and wanted to learn new things because they already knew them. In addition, some students asked for more silence in their class because it was very noisy. Some of the students also wanted more pictorial representations (such as "conceptual maps") of some topics. Amongst the students, the most varied responses were that many were bored with the textbooks, whilst others thought that these were the most helpful material.

**Example 2 (England):** Student researchers collected the views of their classmates during a half hour session with the whole class. For example, in Year 5, one of the student researchers introduced the project to the class: *"It's about finding good ways of learning that everybody would like. We have our own ideas so we can inspire you to have your own ideas about what you like"*. Another student researcher added, *"We need as many ideas as possible from all of you so you all have your own say on what you would like. Here are some ideas of our own: group work, pair work, independent, silence"*. These ideas were presented on pieces of paper, each one in a speech bubble, and were stuck in various places around the class,

During the discussion, the student researchers went around listening to their classmates' ideas. The whole class then discussed the ideas raised by the children. These included: *"To be allowed to have your own choice"*, *"Working outside"*, *"Allowed to have extra breaks"*, *"Allowed to have snacks on each table"*, and *"Being able to sit with whichever partner you want"*.

The teacher then wrote down these ideas on new pieces of papers that were stuck on walls

around the room so that children could vote for their preferences. When the children finished choosing their favourite options, one student researcher summarised the steps they were going to plan next: *"We're going to pick the top three and plan a lesson with Ms B, and there will be some other teachers as well to plan a lesson that's with the top three things everybody has voted"*.

**Example 3 (Denmark):** The student researchers' role was defined as being the children with 'big ears and sharp eyes'. They were expected to participate by gathering views from their classmates and, at the same time, listen more carefully to what peers say and express.

**Example 4 (Portugal):** The teachers decided to use a rather different approach. Before starting the training of the student researchers, each teacher asked all children in their class what had helped them learn, whether they had any difficulty in learning or felt involved in the lesson, in their daily routine. The teacher explained:

*'We did this after working on several subjects: Portuguese, maths, physical education, etc. Then we asked one student to observe his/her own class, checking whether all students were actually involved. All the children in the class took this role. First, it was only observation, no notes taken. Finally, we discussed the topics observed among the whole group. This happened before the selection of the student researchers. The whole class was involved in these activities.'*

This approach of the teachers collecting the views of all students in whole class situations, before the student researchers did so, was employed by some schools in Austria too. However, it is important to stress that **the involvement of student researchers is an essential element of Inclusive Inquiry**.





## 1.4 Develop a lesson plan that will ensure that all members of the class are engaged in all the activities

The overall aim is to design strategies and materials that will help all the students to participate and achieve the goals of the lesson. It is therefore important to discuss the learner differences that exist within the school.

## 1.5 Make sure that all three teachers and the student researchers contribute to the design of the lesson plan

Together, the ideas of all the participants should help in making sure that arrangements are made to encourage the participation and learning of all of the students. Student researchers should report on their classmates' views so that these are taken into account for the design of the lesson. Ideally, the lessons should be designed jointly by the student researchers and teachers, although final decisions regarding the design of the lesson remain the professional responsibility of the teachers.

**Example 1 (Denmark):** Taking into account their ideas about student diversity, the teachers designed a lesson that would create a positive classroom environment and enable children to have a strong sense of belonging. In doing so, they consulted the student researchers. One of them said:

*'We were to decide how the classroom should be arranged – how we should be seated in classroom. The problem was that it was difficult to see what was going on at the blackboard and then it is difficult to learn. For me, a tall person was sitting in front of me – and I was not able to see anything.'*

**Example 2 (Portugal):** The focus of the research lessons was on the reasoning of children whilst solving mathematical problems. It was decided that this required active group work. The idea of working in pairs arose not only from the student researchers but from the

opinions gathered in the interviews they did in the classes. One of the teachers commented:

*"When we thought about the lesson, the idea was to do it in trios. Then the research students said they preferred to work in pairs. We did it in maths communication."*

Another teacher said:

*"The students chose the pairs, planned the first lesson and incorporated their idea of working in pairs. At first, they had no other suggestions."*

**Example 3 (England):** The student researchers and their class teachers gathered in a meeting room for half an hour to plan a lesson together, after collecting the views from all children in the three classes. What the three classes had in common was the idea of students choosing their own partners (who they want to sit next to). One teacher had a suggestion: *"My idea is we have the table in pairs already", and then "the children choose where they sit and they automatically choose their own partners"*.

Having music during the lesson was also suggested by the students. When a teacher asked if the children wanted to turn on the music for the whole lesson, one student replied: *"We can still hear the music, we can turn it down a bit so we can all hear the person speaking in the background"*. Another teacher had an idea: *"So, maybe what we could do, I don't know how you guys feel, maybe when the teachers are doing the first bit, while they're explaining it, maybe we have the music with the volume down so that the children can really concentrate on what they're doing what they need to listen to. And then, when we start them off on their activities, we can put the music up to help them concentrate. Do you think that could work?"*. The children all agreed with this teacher's idea.

Another question was raised about whether they should put the music on while the children were working with their partners. One student researcher said: *"Maybe just quieter, so they can hear each other"*. The teachers thought this was a good idea. After agreeing on how the music would be used during the lessons, the student researchers and the teachers moved on to discuss what and how they were going to teach.

**Example 4 (Austria):** The teachers planned the research lesson having gathered students' views about learning and teaching in whole class sessions, and after discussing with the student researchers as part of their training. The teachers felt that through these ways, they had important information for designing a good lesson, incorporating students' points of view.

**Example 5 (Spain):** The most frequent comments that the student researchers gathered from their classmates were that it helps us learn and participate more in class when:

- the teacher provides examples that help you understand what you are teaching
- the teacher uses schematics, concept maps, or summaries
- we work on projects
- we use videos about what we are learning
- we can interact or work with other colleagues
- the teacher asks us questions and there are incentives
- teacher does fun activities
- we pay attention
- the teacher explains things more often and slowly

It was also noted that students get more interested in class when:

- The teacher asks us questions that we know (adjust to the students' previous knowledge)
- The teacher uses team games that help to value what we know (answer questions about content and then say the results)
- I know I am going to learn
- I am interested in the subject

However, students did not like:

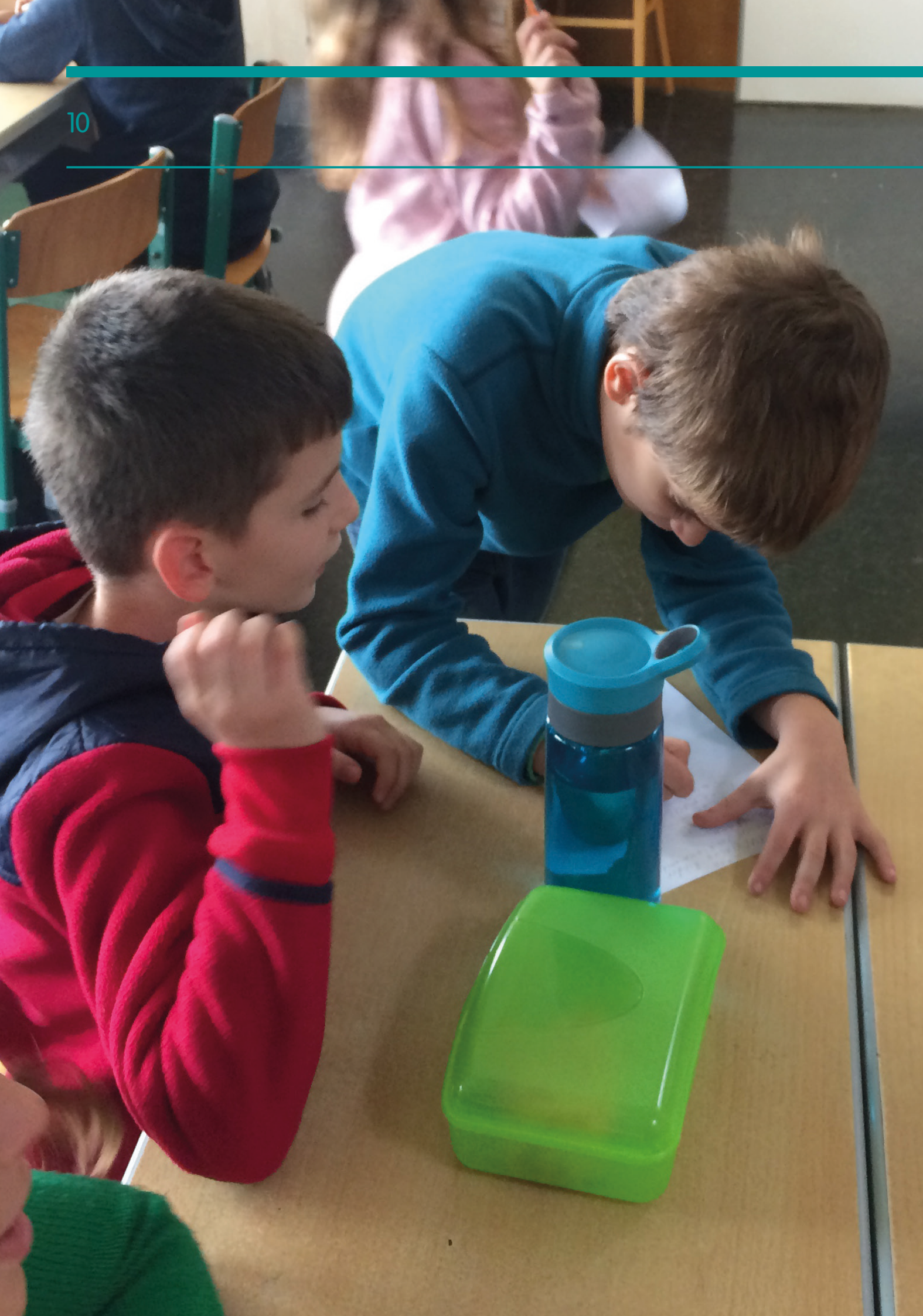
- Certain forms of punishment (e.g. for the whole class)
- When you feel you sit next to the person you don't want to

When planning the first lesson, the student researchers presented these findings to the teachers and, as a result of discussions amongst the students and teachers, two aspects were incorporated in the lesson to facilitate comprehension and participation:

- Incorporating more dynamic activities using different resources, such as the iPad; and
- Using concept maps to consolidate the contents.

The lesson was a natural sciences class and the objective was to work on vertebrate and invertebrate animals. Taking into account the students' suggestions, the class began with an animal video that served to support the teacher's explanations. Three different types of activities were designed using other resources (cards, digital whiteboard and notebook).





## Phase 2: Teach

### 2.1 Use the lesson plan with your class

In using the lesson plan, try to ensure that all members of the class are participating and learning. Where you think it is necessary, make adjustments in the plan as the lesson proceeds. Before the lesson you must inform students that it has been designed taking into account their views and that there will be observers in the classroom.

**Example 1 (Denmark):** The first lesson consisted of the following activities:

1. Welcome and a dialogue about the plan for the lesson.
2. Video on different means of transportation and the children are to say the English words aloud.
3. A game 'mix and match' in which the children are on the floor with cards in their hands. They are supposed to contact one another and say aloud the English word of different means of transportation. When instructed, they have to find the person with the same card.
4. Working with a work sheet and the children are to read aloud and listen to one another. Afterwards, they were asked to comment on the process of collaboration.
5. A play about finding the way to granny's house by taking different means of transportation and pronouncing them on the way.
6. Week schedule. This is a very popular form of learning arrangement amongst the children. The teachers plan the various tasks and then the children can choose for themselves which tasks to do, with whom and when.

**Example 2 (Spain):** The students were organised in four groups, each made up of five students. Each group had a theme assigned: conductive materials and non-conductive, static electricity, origin of materials and changes of state of matter. The structure of the lesson was as follows: the teacher began recalling what had been done in previous classes (each team had sought information about the assigned topic and set up an experiment with the purpose to explain it to their peers). Afterwards she reported the objective of the class: to present the experiments by each workgroup. To do this, each group presented a brief description of its topic (all members contributed something), and then students moved around the class and the tables to do the experiments that had been prepared by their peers. In each experiment there was always a member of the team to explain it to classmates as they visited all the activities in turn. After watching the experiment of a group, the students had to complete an exercise sheet that had been prepared by the teacher in order to check if they have understood the activity and acquired the adequate knowledge as required by the curriculum of this subject.



**Example 3 (Portugal):** This research lesson was about maths. The trio of teachers chose to explore the same theme (i.e. cube planning), despite the different grades involved (1st and 4th). The common theme in the lesson would be 'student involvement' and the theme was "Domino Squares". The teacher distributed a registration form and 28 domino pieces to each pair of children. To make a square the children could only use four of the 28. And each pair had to solve a math problem: to form a square whose number of pints should be equal on all sides. The students were organised in pairs, most of them sitting one ahead of the other. Since the task was complex it was anticipated that mutual support would aid the participation of all the students.

**Example 4 (England):** Following the children's suggestions about including a range of hands-on activities during a phonics lessons for Year 1 classes (5-6 years olds), the following steps were followed in the first lesson:

- Hands-on activity 1 – Playdough and Whiteboard: After the children read out the words of the lesson as a whole class with the teacher they were then divided in groups. Each group had word cards with the words that they read out earlier. Some groups had to work with playdough to make the words they chose and others to write on whiteboards. The groups then moved to the next activity.

- Hands-on activity 2 – The washing line: Word cards were hung on a washing line outside. Children had to choose a word and read it to their partner. Each child had to take a word back to the class and read it aloud to all.
- Hands-on activity 3 – Making words: Children were asked to sit in groups where sand trays, glitter and earbuds were already set up. They had to write the words that they picked up from the washing line, using sand and glitter and earbuds.
- Hands-on activity 4 – Practice writing sentences: Children had to think of sentences that included the words they wrote in the previous activity, go out with paper and chalk and either work in pairs, groups or individually to write their sentences and then read them aloud to their partners.

**Example 5 (Austria):** This German language lesson was aimed at practising reading comprehension and writing. It started with the teacher reading and discussing a story. After that, the children got different cards with pictures and words according to the story and, working as a group, placed them in the correct order. Then the children got worksheets and could work alone or in pairs. There was also a result sheet so the children could check their answers.



## 2.2 Involve your two colleagues and student researchers in observing the responses of class members

As you teach the lesson, the other two teachers and the student researchers should observe what happens, focusing on the following questions:

- How are the students encouraged to participate and learn in the lesson?
- What factors in the class seem to prevent some students from participating and learning in this lesson?
- How do students contribute to others' participation and learning?

The teacher observers should make written notes of anything they see as being significant in relation to these questions (use the Observation Grid in Appendix B). Student researchers can use the same grid or other ideas explored in more detail in the Preparing Students to be Researchers Manual. The student researchers should **NOT** observe their own classes.

**Example 1 (Portugal):** Teachers used the observation grid, whilst Year 1 student researchers kept brief notes whilst observing, such as:

"Students do not always raise their hands when they want to talk";

"When the students do not know the subject matter, they make many theories"

"The teacher helps when the students need"

"While working in pairs, they do not always agree but that does not hurt"

"Sometimes they speak very loud but are engaged in the task"

Here it is important to remind the student researchers that the focus of the observation should be on what might help children participate, or what might make it difficult for them to participate. Similarly, in a school in Austria, the student researchers kept notes whilst observing focusing on the areas that they introduced in the lesson as a result of all children's suggestions.

**Example 2 (Denmark):** Teachers who were observing the lesson kept notes on the observation grid, whilst the student researchers used a simple tick box schedule focusing on two main areas: 'participates in lesson', or 'doing something else', in relation to specific activities during the lesson.

**Example 3 (England):** Similarly, the student researchers used a grid that they developed specifically for the lesson that they developed, focusing on the activities that they designed collaboratively with their teachers for the lesson. This involved the following areas: pens, different order, word mats, brain break, choosing partners, other things. Children wrote qualitative comments about these areas in relation to what they were noticing.



## 2.3 Collect the views of all students about the lesson

After the lesson, the student researchers who observed in the class should be asked to collect reactions from the children who participated. You will need to help the students to make arrangements for this to happen.

**Example 1 (England):** The student researchers prepared a grid with key questions that they handed out to all the children in the class in order to get their views about the lesson. The questions were specifically about the lesson activities, such as: 'How much did the choice of activity help your learning?' (1-10 scale), 'How much did the choice about who to work with help your learning?' (1-10 scale), and 'Any other comments'.

**Example 2 (Austria):** This trio of teachers followed a slightly different approach. At the end of each lesson, the teachers summed up the content and asked the students about their opinion of the lesson. They did so by asking the whole class how they managed the work and how they liked it. In one of the classes, the daily routine is that the students give feedback about their own learning (e.g. whether they did well in the lesson or not) by explaining why they should or should not receive a smiley (i.e. a reward system next to the blackboard). Since the students are used to this routine, this feedback method was kept.

**Example 3 (Denmark):** Similarly, in this school the teachers asked at the end of the lesson to show what they thought about the lesson using "thumbs up" or "thumbs down", or "thumbs in the middle". On this occasion, most children had thumbs up. Such methods, of course, are likely to be influenced by the fact that everyone can see what each student thought. Also, the fact that it is the teachers that are gathering students' views, as opposed to student researchers, might influence students' responses in their efforts to please the teacher who taught the lesson.

**Example 4 (England):** The student researchers divided the class in smaller groups and gathered students' views about the lesson, based on a set of questions that they had prepared in advance. Each group of student researchers was supported by one of the teachers who observed the lesson, since the children were very young (five years olds). The teacher who taught the lesson left the room at the time to allow children the space to express their views more openly.

**Example 5 (Spain):** At the end of the lesson the student researchers conducted interviews with students who participated in the lesson using the following questions:

- Did you like the class?
- Have you understood what was worked on in class today?
- Were you interested in today's class?
- What could be improved so that you can attend, be more interested and learn more?

## 2.4 After the research lesson, meet with your two colleagues and the student researchers who observed the lesson to review what has happened, focusing on the engagement of all members of the class

Drawing on the observation notes and the views of students, you should assess the extent to which all of the students participated and achieved the goals of the lesson. Remember to consider any adjustments made by the teacher during the lesson. Here the aim is to consider ideas that will be helpful in refining the lesson plan before it is used again.

**Example 1 (Austria):** This was a 90-minute language lesson, consisting of three parts:

1. Introduction of the new words/letters (mainly focused on the teacher, trying to involve students and to create a class dialogue)
2. Working at different stations on the new content (students' free choice of station to work on)
3. Summing up the new content (teacher guided: collecting students' impressions)

At the end of the first lesson, discussions took place between teachers and the student researchers who had observed the lesson. They all agreed that the first part took a long time and that the students got impatient, since the introduction of the words took too long.

During the focus-group interviews, student researchers commented:

*"Yes, [this part] took too long"*

*"Some students, understood it [what they had to do] a bit later"*

During the reflection after the lesson, a teacher commented:

*"I also think that the introduction was too long, because the children were very restless. So, with the children I noticed that they did not listen anymore".*

**Example 2 (Denmark):** The teachers worked together for a lesson on various means of transport. Looking at their observation notes, the student researchers noticed that the time spent on the worksheet, where children were asked to work in pairs and to say different means of transportation aloud, was the part of the lesson when most children were less likely to participate. This led the teachers to reflect on actions they needed to address this issue.

**Example 3 (Spain):** The student researchers noted how children who were sitting at the back of the class were not paying a lot of attention, compared to those who were at the front. Again, this led the teachers to review their approach.

**Example 4 (Portugal):** Student researchers and teachers who observed the lesson shared some aspects written down in the observation grids and spoke of the factors that seemed to prevent some students to participate and learn, such as the length of the story and the time it took to read. They also mentioned some contributions of students:

- When a student had a doubt in carrying out the task, first he/she would ask to his/her peers and then to the teacher;
- They helped each other in the accomplishment of the tasks: to read, to order, to glue the strips.

**Example 5 (England):** One of the suggestions was that of children choosing the partner to work with themselves, instead of the teacher doing this. Though this was their suggestion, after observing the first lesson they realised that such a practice might not be so straightforward:

*George: I saw that a few people looked, it took a bit longer to get a partner.*

*Teacher 1: I saw people who looked a bit lost, who didn't know who to go with and they were left on the carpet. What could have helped that situation?*

*Teresa: Maybe just sit next to the person you actually want to be with?*

*Teacher 1: I agree with you, but I thought that most people just grabbed their partner really quickly, went off and got on with their work, and it was lovely, lovely, lovely. Then I felt a bit sad because there were a couple of people who just stood there looking bit lonely and I'm not sure that helped their learning so. Anything that we can do? What do you think Mr T.? Miss B?*



## 2.5 Refine the lesson plan before it is used by the next member of your trio

Working with your colleagues and the student researchers, reflect on what emerged from your review of the lesson in order to make any changes that will help to make the lesson plan more inclusive.

**Example 1 (Austria):** There were four changes from the first to the second lesson:

1. Shortening of the teachers' introduction at the beginning of the lesson (from 35 minutes to 15 minutes).
2. The quantity of words introduced in this part was also reduced.
3. The introduction of the stations lasted seven minutes. A positive impact of this change was recognisable in the following two lessons (i.e. students were less impatient).
4. After observing the impact of students cooperating in the first lesson, it was decided that cooperation between the students should be accentuated.

In the second lesson, the teacher explicitly stated that students should work together and help each other. Students formed pairs or groups of three and supported each other. Children were given more time to speak their mind about the activities during the lesson.

Concerning the last part of the lesson, the adaptation made was to ask the students' opinions on the tasks of the lesson ("Which stations did/didn't you like?" "What other stations should be introduced next time?"). This was then incorporated in lesson 2 and lasted 5 minutes.

Following the second research lesson, additional changes were made:

1. An additional station was added, that of rope skipping, where students had to say the syllables of one word while skipping (each syllable was one jump). They had to do this for all the words learnt during the lesson. This activity was created based on students' feedback that they would like to have more stations where they could move about.
2. Students could choose freely where to sit. Teachers discussed this beforehand and were not sure if this would work out or result in a slightly chaotic situation in the classroom. Students, however, dealt really well with this freedom and they accepted the change immediately.

**Example 2 (England):** This topic lesson was focused on rainforests and deforestation. The joint planning between teachers and children led to the decision to include a drama activity as the main activity, where the students were going to wear costumes to act out the scenes that they were going to prepare in groups. At the end of the first lesson the following changes were made:

1. Children worked in bigger groups (five children in each group, as opposed to four in lesson one).
2. The timing of getting the outfits to wear according to the role each child had. This happened after they practised in their groups, whereas in the first lesson they put their costumes on them before they started practising.
3. All groups were asked to write a script to practise before acting out in front of the class.

During lesson three, the groups of children were even smaller, since they noticed that having five children meant that some children ended up not taking part actively in the acting. In addition, in lesson three they had the teacher modelling how to write a script using the information script that all groups were given to help them with the script writing.

**Example 3 (Spain):** The main changes made from one lesson to another focused on:

- a) providing a greater role for students in the teaching and learning process, as they have increasingly been considered as a resource for class development;
- b) expansion of the formats for presenting information and evaluating learning, including dynamic activities more in keeping with the interests expressed by the students;

c) variation in learning contexts, taking advantage of the different spaces of the school (garden, library, etc.), according to what one wants to work on,

d) variation in the heterogeneous groupings of students according to what they want to work on.

**Example 4 (Denmark):** It was decided that time outside should be allowed for physical activities and that the teachers should decide about working with new partners.







## Phase 3: Analyse

### 3.1 Once all three teachers have used the lesson plan, discuss its impact on the engagement of all members of the classes

This should involve discussions with the student researchers in order to ensure that their ideas are taken into account. It is important to take note of different views that exist. These may stimulate new possibilities for making lessons more inclusive.

**Example 1 (Spain):** The student researchers and teachers identified the changes in the lesson and how they linked with students' proposals: active methodology, work in groups, with opportunities for all students to participate. It was also noted that a clear structure in the lesson, with a start, a time for the development of activities and another for the closure, reflection and some kind of evaluation, helped in enabling all children to participate. In addition, it was felt that the collective reflection at the end of each lesson helped the next teacher to identify issues that needed to be addressed during the next trial of the research lesson; e.g. to facilitate students to have a reference/script for the task to be carried out, in order to ensure the participation of all students in the activity, rather than leaving the students completely free to develop the task they have to prepare.

The students explained how much they had liked being researchers, what they had learned and requested, and that it would be nice if all the students could have the opportunity to participate in an activity like this as researchers. One of the teachers thanked them for the opportunity to (re)think her teaching and how to improve it:

*"Thank you....for your comments; they help me a lot because they are voices of the children (students in the same range). As a teacher we see you from one point of view, from a particular perspective....Collecting your opinions is as useful as or even more than the one of an adult ...Now as a teacher I recognise that it is very important to listen to you, to move and be into your own reality..."*

**Example 2 (England):** At the end of the process, teachers commented on how they thought that the lessons enabled all children to participate by introducing the following ideas: the use of word mats, television playing on the background, fruit on the tables, having a gerbil in the class and having games outside. At the same time, it was quite impressive how children who were seen as 'hard to reach' were so engaged during this process. For example:

*"I've never seen C. does this much writing. If I asked him to write in an actual lesson he would maybe write a sentence but a lot of it the words with the letters would be huge in his page. He'd scribbled lots out. So, for him to do this much in that lesson is amazing. The point even when the children were feeding back right at the end and we had groups of ten. He was actually writing down some of their ideas. So, he continued writing the whole time which for him is huge. And then at the end he said as he walked out I've just written C.'s ideas so you know it's mine. And so right up until the end writing which for him is massive."*



**Example 3 (Denmark):** During lessons two and three the teachers had agreed on focusing on children whom they see as 'hard to reach' during lessons. That is, the two teacher observers have a focus on how the different activities during class affected the specific children. When reflecting with the teachers after the lesson and after the analysis and reflections with the children researchers, they agreed that it had been a good lesson for those children. In particular, they had participated in learning activities as every child in the class. To them, it seemed that the children seen as 'hard to reach' had benefited from more physical activity and for variations in working partners in lessons. For example:

*Researcher: "What about you. You participated in class. How did you find to work with a new partner and 'the luffer' (time outside)? Did you play football in the 'luffer'?"*

*Child: "Yes".*

*Researcher: "When you came back again, were you able to remember, what you were supposed to do?"*

*Child: Yes. I was to write a history. In addition, I said more than before. I said that the physical teacher was good at playing football.*

This child is very quiet and not self-confident. He points at the benefits for him when the teaching includes a 'luffer' and physical activities in general. It inspires him to be more active during the collaborative work and to contribute in the group work.

In the reflection by the teachers on collaborating with children researchers, they concluded that the children who the teachers saw as 'hard to reach' had benefited from being a part of the student researcher team. In particular, they had developed and gained more self-confidence.

**Example 4 (Austria):** The teachers discussed how tasks that allowed students to be active during the lessons enabled all children's participation. The use of visual materials was found to be helpful, as well as allowing students to help one another if they have questions. The

teachers also explained that the exchange between teachers, and also between teachers and children, is very important:

*Teacher 3: Yes, it is like this: the more diverse the lessons are, the more facets they have, the more children are addressed.*

*Teacher 1: Including the children's opinion has also been an encouragement to do that as well.*

*Teacher 2: Yes, bravely asking the question more often: "How did you like the lesson?" It's easy to ask during the lesson: "What did we learn today?"*

*Teacher 1: Or, "What did you personally learn?"*

*Teacher 2: So, it's important to ask these questions and also, how can I accept the sincerity of the answers without getting any justification or stress as an educator, that's a bit of learning.*

**Example 5 (Portugal):** Noticing how students who were struggling with learning naturally accept and even ask help from peers, this became a deliberate practice for the following lesson. As one of the teachers said:

*Sometimes, when working in a group, students explain better than the teacher can. They use a language of their own. It has happened to me that I had difficulty explaining a subject to a student. I asked for the help of another student and let the two work together. After a while, I hear a WOW! in the classroom. They had found the solution. This made me question what words the child used that I did not.*

### 3.2 Draw conclusions regarding what has been learnt about making lessons inclusive

The purpose of this concluding discussion is to bring together the views of all three teachers and the student researchers in determining the findings of the action research. It would be good to agree a short, written summary of these conclusions. These should be shared with all class members and other teachers.

**Example 1 (England):** The main ideas that the teachers identified in collaboration with the student researchers were to:

- Give students more choice of activities;
- Allow students to make their choices about who to work with; and
- Use a 'no hands up' approach, where children are asked not to put their hands up when the teacher asks a question. Instead, the teacher chooses who is going to answer the question. This allows for more participation from the children.

**Example 2 (Austria):** The main ideas that emerged about making lessons more inclusive were:

- Encouraging the students to work in pairs or cooperate in some other way.
- Keeping some sort of routine in the lesson was important. The mixture of already known tasks and new tasks was crucial during the lessons.
- Choosing between tasks.

**Example 3 (Denmark):** The discussions focused on student researchers particularly and the impact that the process had for them in terms of their participation in the lessons. The teachers noticed the participation in learning activities of every child. One student researcher commented about his own participation in the lesson:

*Yes. I was to write a history. In addition, I said more than before. I said that the physical teacher was good at playing football.*

The teachers added that this child is very quiet and not self-confident but as he points out he was able to participate in this lesson. This led the teachers to reflect that involving children as researchers enabled them to participate more in lessons.

**Example 4 (Spain):** The following ideas were identified for making lessons more inclusive:

- Give explanations more often or in different ways to make sure all students understand, using different resources (diagrams, visual information, auditory). However, it is necessary to keep in mind that some students will understand everything from the first time.
- Consider the student diversity of the classroom when planning activities. Design activities that everyone can do, considering the different rhythms, interests and ways of participating in the class.
- Use strategies that facilitate the understanding and integration of what has been learned, such as using diagrams.
- Allow students to collaborate. It is important to use strategies in which students help each other, for example, working in pairs, where both students benefit. This means organising pairs well so that are heterogeneous.
- It is important to teach them to work in pairs and in groups. Working in pairs or groups can be positive, but make sure everyone understands what they have to do and make sure everyone contributes.



The levels of use framework

The levels of use framework will enable trios of teachers to determine how far they have implemented the steps that make up Inclusive Inquiry. In this way, members of a trio can identify areas that need further attention.

Inclusive Inquiry requires a series of interconnected steps defined below. Through discussion, trios of teachers should occasionally rate the level of use for each individual step, using the following criteria:

- A. A start has been made
- B. There is partial implementation
- C. Fully in place

The aim is to move to the situation where each of the steps is fully in place.

Reviewing the steps

Each member of the trio should rate each step (A, B, C) to indicate what best fits their current assessment of the actions taken to introduce Inclusive Inquiry. They can then compare their views with their two colleagues in order to determine areas that need further strengthening.

Phase 1: Plan Rating

1.1	A trio of teachers has been formed to carry out action research	
1.2	The trio has agreed about which will be their research lesson	
1.3	The trio has involved a group of student researchers in collecting evidence to support the design of the research lesson	
1.4	A lesson plan has been developed that sets out to ensure that all members of the class are engaged in all the activities	
1.5	The three teachers and the student researchers have all contributed to the design of the lesson plan	

Phase 2: Teach Rating

2.1	Each teacher has used the lesson plan with their class	
2.2	On each occasion, the two colleagues and student researchers observed the responses of class members	
2.3	The views of all students about the lesson were gathered	
2.4	After each lesson, teachers and student researchers met to review what has happened, focusing on the engagement of all members of the class	
2.5	The trio refined the lesson plan before it was used by the next member of the trio	

Phase 3: Analyse Rating

3.1	After completing all three lesson plans, the trio and student researchers discussed their impact on the engagement of all members of the classes	
3.2	The trio and student researchers drew conclusions regarding what was been learned about making lessons inclusive	

Observations Grid

How are the students encouraged to participate and learn in the lesson?

What factors in the class seem to prevent some students from participating and learning in this lesson?

How do students contribute to others' participation and learning?





# Notes







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