



**Thoughts about
European School system
Curriculum rethinking process**

Mission statement



- The European Schools are official educational establishments controlled jointly by the governments of the Member States of the European Union. In all these countries they are legally regarded as public institutions.
- The mission of the European School system is to provide a broad education of high quality, from nursery level to university-entrance and offer an opportunity for pupils to stay connected with their Mother Tongue while being educated in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural environment, to become open minded citizens.
- Official website: www.eursc.eu

Educational principles

- Basic instruction is given in the official languages of the European Union. This principle allows the primacy of the pupil's mother tongue (L1) to be safeguarded.
- Consequently, each school comprises several language sections. The curricula and syllabuses (except in the case of mother tongue) are the same in all sections.
- The conscience and convictions of individuals are respected. Religious education or education in non-confessional ethics is an integral part of the curriculum.
- Foster the unity of the school and encourage genuine multi-cultural education, there is a strong emphasis on the learning, understanding and use of foreign languages. This is developed in a variety of ways

The article 4 of the Convention

The article 4 of the Convention defines the core curriculum principles of the European School system:

Article 4

The education given in the Schools shall be organized on the following principles:

- 1. the courses of study shall be undertaken in the languages specified in Annex II;*
- 2. that Annex may be amended by the Board of Governors to take account of decisions taken under Articles 2 and 32;*
- 3. in order to encourage the unity of the School, to bring pupils of the different language sections together and to foster mutual understanding, certain subjects shall be taught to joint classes of the same level. Any Community language may be used for these joint classes, insofar as the Board of Governors decides that circumstances justify its use;*
- 4. a particular effort shall be made to give pupils a thorough knowledge of modern languages;*
- 5. the European dimension shall be developed in the curricula;*
- 6. in education and instruction, the conscience and convictions of individuals shall be respected;*
- 7. measures shall be taken to facilitate the reception of children with special educational needs.*

WHY RE-THINKING?

- Last minor reform in 1994
- The development of the education provision in the 28 Member States
- European Parliament resolution on the European Schools system (2011/2036(INI)) has put forward some recommendations on the educational aspects
- Discussion about the mission
- Discussion about pupil repeat rate
- Discussion about the best moment to offer options
- Discussion about the options in upper secondary
- Discussion about use of languages

WHAT HAS HAPPENED

- Creation of the Working Group in 2012
- First decisions implemented in practise in September, 2014
- Independent external evaluation made by an international team led by London Institute of Education; report received in June, 2015

The objectives of the external evaluation

- To determine whether and to what extent the proposals:
 - Meet the principles stated in the Convention;
 - Ensure access to European secondary and tertiary education systems;
 - Fulfil the mandate given by the Board of Governors;
 - Take into account the needs of students faced with the demands of the modern world;
 - Are relevant, coherent, comprehensive, and allow breadth of study for all students in the system;
 - Conform to the accepted and logical principles of curriculum design;
 - Guarantee in the last two years, leading to the European Baccalaureate, a general education around the eight key competences for lifelong learning.

“Our proposals are radical and fundamental, because they are designed to conform to the criteria set out above. This means that they require administrators, teachers, parents and students to change their longstanding thinking and practices.

Any change process within a system needs to be supported and introduced incrementally so as to allow ownership of those changes by all the stakeholders”

- The most important element of a curriculum reform is improving teacher capacity.
- This can be achieved in two ways:
 - recruiting teachers who already have the requisite knowledge base, skills and dispositions, or
 - developing pre- and in-service training programmes to compensate for the lack of knowledge, skills and dispositions required to teach the new programmes.

Definitions of the key competences 1-3

| | |
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| Communication in the mother tongue | Communication in the mother tongue is the expression and interpretation of concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form, and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way. |
| Communication in foreign languages | Communication in foreign languages broadly shares the dimensions of communication in the mother tongue but particularly emphasises skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. |
| Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology | <p>Mathematical competence is developing and applying mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge.</p> <p>Competence in science refers to the willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions.</p> <p>Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science and technology involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.</p> |

Definitions of the key competences 4-8

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|---|---|
| Digital competence | Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT |
| Learning to learn | Learning to learn is pursuing and persisting in learning, organising one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. |
| Social and civic competences | <p>Social competence covers all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary.</p> <p>Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.</p> |
| Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship | Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's turning of ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation, risk-taking and ethical values, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. |
| Cultural awareness and expression | This refers to the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts. It includes an appreciation of the importance of this creative expression. |

We suggest that, with regards to the eight key competences, the European Schools Working Group on the Reorganisation of the Secondary Studies should:

1. **Clarify and extend the current outline curriculum, particularly in relation to the eight key competences.** These then become eight sets of curriculum standards and from these can be derived specific curriculum standards for the various subject curricula at different levels of the system.
2. **Derive teaching and learning approaches from these curriculum standards,** rather than conflating them.
3. **Derive assessment protocols,** and in particular, the European Baccalaureate, from the curriculum standards, and avoid the problems with assessment-driven curricula.

RECOMMENDATION

Each competency needs to be broken down into knowledge components, skills and dispositions.

These curriculum standards (derived from the eight competences) are not the same as pedagogic approaches (those arrangements in schools we make to allow learning to take place, and this includes formative processes of assessment) or assessment/evaluative protocols (how we evaluate whether those curriculum standards have been met at set points in time).

What this means is that the foundations of any curriculum are those curriculum standards which the European System of schooling has decided are the most appropriate forms of knowledge, skills and dispositions for learning in schools, and not teaching or assessment standards.

Teaching, learning and assessment approaches are derived from these curriculum standards. It is therefore important that the curriculum standard is not compromised in any way by whether it can or cannot be used as a testable construct or teaching approach.

These curriculum standards should be expressed at a level of comprehensibility so that teachers, parents and students are able to access them.

The important point is that curricula at subject level need to be fundamentally revised, in order to support the acquisition of the eight competences!

General recommendations

1. The curriculum as advocated by the European Parliament and Council should be clarified and extended, especially with regards to the key competences.
2. Pedagogies and pedagogic standards are derived from curriculum standards. These curriculum standards (derived in turn from the eight competences) are not the same as pedagogic approaches (those arrangements in schools we make to allow learning to take place, and this includes formative processes of assessment).
3. Assessment/evaluative standards, expressed in the European Baccalaureate (how we evaluate whether those curriculum standards have been met at the end of the programme of learning) are derived from the curriculum standards, which in turn are derived from the eight key competences. What this means is that the foundations of any curriculum are those curriculum standards which the European system of schooling has decided are the most appropriate forms of knowledge, skills and dispositions for learning in schools, and not teaching or assessment approaches. Teaching, learning and assessment approaches derive their credibility from these curriculum standards. It is therefore important that the curriculum standard is not compromised in any way by whether it can or cannot be used as a testable construct or teaching approach.
4. These curriculum standards should be expressed at a level of comprehensibility so that teachers, parents and students are able to access them.
5. Teachers should undergo training programmes (pre-service and in-service) to deliver this new curriculum and its component parts.
6. The European Baccalaureate needs to be adjusted to accommodate these new curricular arrangements and to fit the demands of university and college entry procedures and their programmes of study.

Recommendations 1 - 3

- *The European Schools develop, through a stakeholder inclusive process, a language policy document in order to provide guidance on how the European Schools intend to meet their mission of providing 'a multilingual and multicultural education for nursery, primary and secondary level students'.*
- *To integrate language objectives into curriculum documents for all content subjects whether these subjects are taught through the students' L1, L2 or L3.*
- *To revise secondary level L2 language curricula to ensure they integrate more substantive and meaningful content including cultural content.*

Recommendations 4- 6

- *To revisit assessment policies to ensure they support the language learning mission of the European schools, and in particular the use of assessment as a tool for language learning.*
- *To move the quality of teaching and in particular student learning to the top of the policy and meeting agendas in order to ensure that the multilingual and multicultural European Schools are first and foremost learning powered institutions.*
- *To maintain in large part the status quo regarding choice of languages of instruction, but concomitantly to analyse the consequences of the current and planned requirements pertaining to the language(s) of instruction for student groups who have the same L1, for those who are studying in mixed language groups and for SWALS, so as to ensure that systems are in place to support students as needed.*

The European Framework of Reference in the syllabus of the European Schools

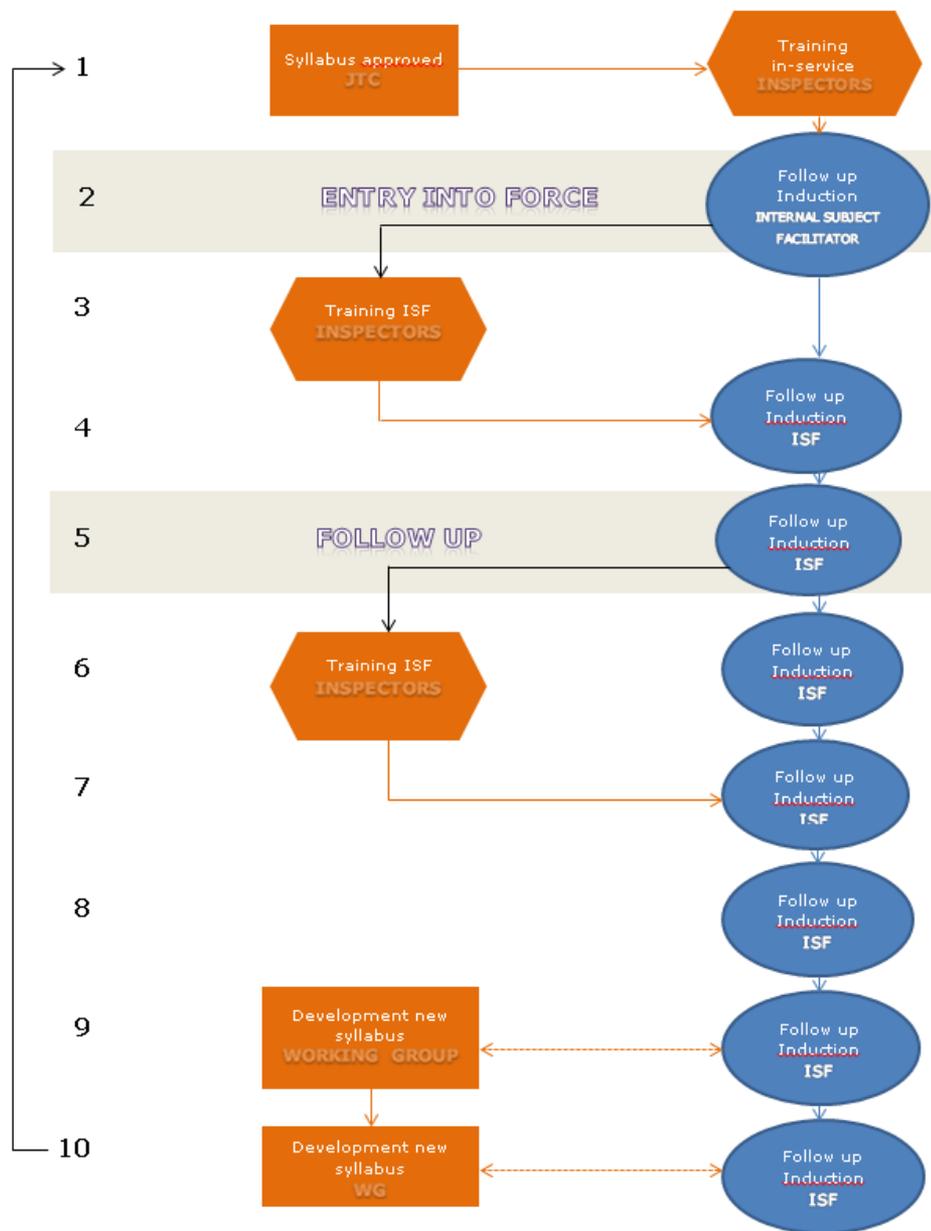
BASIC PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN DIFFERENT CYCLES

| | Early education | Primary | Secondary 3 | Secondary 5 | Secondary 7 |
|-----|-----------------|---------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| L2 | 0 | A2 | B1 | B2 | C1 |
| L3 | 0 | 0 | A1+ | A2+ | B1+ |
| L4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | A1 | A2+ |
| ONL | A 1.1 oral | A 1.2 | A2 | B1 | B2 |

YEAR

CENTRAL

LOCAL



Ten year cycle of implementation of new syllabuses/pedagogical-didactical innovations