

School Safety Net

Virtual Meeting on the Case Scenario Entitled "Do not call him stupid"

Minutes

Participants

Lorenzo Martellini	Pixel	Italy
Spiros Simakessis	TEI of Messolongi	Greece
Julien Keutgen	Inforef	Belgium
Francis Maka	Inforef	Belgium
Jean Danis	Inforef	Belgium
Francis Mulder	Inforef	Belgium
Martine Prignon	Inforef	Belgium
Denis Niessen	Inforef	Belgium
Aliaoenei Sorin	Botosani	Romania
Adomnica Gabriela	Botosani	Romania
Sonia Saban	University of Seville	Spain
Rosario Del Rey	University of Seville	Spain

Minutes

Lorenzo Martellini welcomed everybody in the meeting and introduced the moderator of this meeting, Spiros Sirmakessis. Spiros Sirmakessis presented the agreed agenda of the virtual meeting with the following items:

1. Brief introduction to the thematic area and to the case scenario (TEI of Messolongi-Ebusiness)
2. Presentation of the discussion which took place on the Project Portal (TEI of Messolongi-Ebusiness)
3. Presentation of the identified strategy (TEI of Messolongi-Ebusiness)
4. Belgian teachers' feedback on the proposed strategy (spoke person for the Belgian teachers)
5. Greek teachers' feedback on the proposed strategy (spoke person for the Greek teachers)
6. Romanian teachers' feedback on the proposed strategy (spoke person for the Romanian teachers)
7. Spanish teachers' feedback on the proposed strategy (spoke person for the Spanish teachers)
8. Conclusion of the Virtual Meeting (TEI of Messolongi-Ebusiness)

At point 1 of the agenda Spiros Sirmakessis presented the case scenario that applies in the area of students with learning disabilities. The whole case scenario takes place for a whole academic year and involves John; a 10 years old child with social communication skills. During a reading exercise in the classroom, he faces problems in reading and the whole inter-classroom situation turns up in a disaster for John. From that point instead of laughing with him, everybody is laughing at him. As a reaction to this situation, John loses his self-esteem and starts to get in an isolated safe zone with no interaction to the rest of the classroom.

The discussion in the portal (point 2 in the agenda) presented some important remarks for the solution in the problem. A teacher from Spain suggested the John should be encouraged to get a little more self-esteem and dealing with all those who dabble with it. To do it, he would need the full support of their parents, who think that the child's problem is superficial because in the future everything will be solved. It is true that is a problem that can happen to many children but despite being common has a large impact on children mainly because they are not accepted by their peer group. So parents have to reinforce reading at home and teachers have to talk with the rest of the student to discuss about them and promote the values of friendship and respect. A teacher from Belgium suggested that the first step is to know, discussing with the child, whether he is aware of the "problem" and wants to progress. Implementing strategies will then be easier.



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The educational team must be informed and possibly propose solutions: inviting the child to reading sessions in lower classes, enrolling him in a library, remediation and adaptation to school language, ask help from a homework support program, a volunteer with some time to spare...Regarding the environment in the class, "We make fun of what we fear". A group work on respect and accepting differences must be set up. Pupils contributing to support of the pupil in difficulty could also be requested. About the parents attitude there was a very significant comment; their attitude: "Unfortunately, what can we require?" It is important to know their attitude to school and even to reading. If the parents are "takers", it is necessary to set feed-back steps in order to assess the progress made... or not made! The headteacher can also stress to the parents how important reading is.

In the point 4 of the agenda, Julien Keutgen summarized the key finding in every view of the scenario. On the students' guidelines, the Belgian teachers found the guidelines too difficult to follow. The protagonist should be supervised and the teachers should be proper trained in order to handle similar cases. The classmates should be taught to respect diversities. The parents should be guided to the proper service for guidelines. The policy makers should discuss with the teachers and develop proper measurements and actions for the students.

Spiros Sirmakessis at point 5 mentioned that the Greek feedback has been included in the strategy and suggested to move into point 6 of the agenda.

Aliaoeni Sorin from Romania after the introduction from Adomnica Gabriela (point 6) as a sociologist suggested making clear that there are difference intelligences in the student development. This kind of information should be inserted in the teaching practise. Special activities can be included in the classroom.

From the Spanish group (point 7 of the agenda) Sonia Saban and Rosario Del Rey suggested the implementation of proper academic programmes. The teacher will help him develop special activities in order to improve his skills and improve school support. The family should work close with the teachers. The teacher should give precise suggestions to the family on how to handle the current situation. It is crucial in any point of their interaction.

At the end of the meeting (point 8), Spiros Simakessis summarised the key elements of every feedback received from the different sources of information. Lorenzo Martellini thanked all participants for the time spent and the valuable comments received so far.