

Joint staff training mobility

Intermediate report

Based on <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Germany:Overview> and your own experience during the 2-week job shadowing mobility, you must have a good understanding of the German educational system in general and the one at Einsteingymnasium in particular.

1. Please compare the German system in general and the Einsteingymnasium organization in particular to the situation in your country and your school.

2. Please describe what your staff training mobility consisted of. Which activities did you do?

Comparison of school systems

Germany is a federal state, which means that each „state“ (Land) has its own laws. Potsdam is in Brandenburg and in this state pupils start school at 6 and arrive at 6th grade, while in other states they may finish at grade 4. This part of the school system is called Grundschule. At 6th grade they can go to Oberschule, which is regional, or Gymnasium, which is similar to the Italian „Liceo“. The schools select students according to their grades and the recommendations given by the previous teachers. After 10th grade, the class is split, because students decide what courses to follow, even if there are core subjects which cannot be changed (i.e. German, English, Maths). Students must study 5 core subjects, two advanced subjects and two basic subjects. Classes are divided in levels (beginners, advanced) but students can move from one to another if they don't fit to the level. The optional subjects depend on the teachers available in the school and the students' requests.

Teachers are chosen by the headmaster, but the subjects are chosen by the Ministry. Until grade 10 there is a teacher who is the class coordinator and takes more money for that job, and from grade 11 there is a tutor. There is also a teacher who specializes in what optional courses students can choose; it is a very complicated system and even teachers ask for clarifications. At 11 and 12 grade marks go from 0 to 15 (which means worst to best), while in the previous grades they go from 6 to 1. If you have 0 or 6 in one subject you fail, but it never happens to have such marks for a student.

Italy has a national school system, but school can vary their subjects according to the requests (for example they can include Spanish instead of French as a second language). Pupils attend primary school (from 6 to 11); „Scuola Media“ (from 11 to 14) and they have a final exam; Secondary school (from 14 to 19) with the final State exam. They choose what kind of school they want to attend (there are many variations, called „indirizzi“). Marks go from 1 to 10 (worst to best). If there are bad marks a student may fail (but it depends very much on the teachers) or he/she may give exams in the subjects with bad marks and if he/she passes them, he/she attends the following year.

Teachers choose the school they want to teach in, but it is a very complicated system and they don't always succeed. There are class coordinators in Italy as well.

Strip to Identity

Your activities

Monday 7th March: Comparison with the Norwegian and Italian school system. State of the art of the project.

Tuesday 8th March: Presentation of the German school system and Einstein Gymnasium. Meeting with the Slovenian and Irish colleagues. Visit of the city of Potsdam (the Parliament, Sanssouci Park).

Wednesday 9th March: Workshop on the Potsdam conference, the division of Germany and the Berlin wall. Visit to Cecilienhof, where the Potsdam conference was held, and Glienicke Bridge (the "Bridge of Spies").

Thursday 10th March: Visit to Berlin: the Reichstag, the Holocaust memorial, the Berlin Wall.

Friday 11th March: Morning - Presentation of „Students' voice“, an international pedagogical movement to slow drop outs in certain areas and backgrounds (rural areas, poor economic backgrounds). Afternoon - Workshop on Office 365 - OneNote.

Saturday 12th March: Visit to Berlin: Alexanderplatz, Checkpoint Charlie.

Monday 14th March: Work at the report. Classroom observation (history class). Einstein Gymnasium school show.

Tuesday 15th March: Classroom observation (morning), visit to Potsdam Stasi Museum and Potsdamer Museum.

Wednesday 16th March: Presentation of Italy. Job shadowing activity: exploring the notion of identity.

Thursday 17th March: Classroom observation (English lessons).

Friday 18th March: Classroom observation (morning), visit of Neues Palais, Potsdam.

3. Which activities did you find most useful and why?

Most useful activities

I found the presentation of "Students' voice" very stimulating. I would like to introduce this methodology in my school.

Moreover, I loved the cultural insight given during the project because I have now a much better understanding of the history of East Germany.

Strip to Identity

4. Which activities did you find least useful and why?



Least useful activities

All the activities were useful in different ways.

5. Which recommendations would you make to improve your school's infrastructure and organization?



Recommendations

I liked a lot the idea of having screens on each floor to show the students all the information they need for they day (such as their teachers' absence). I loved the school canteen and aula; and I loved the fact that the teachers have big rooms where they can work and eat. It gives the idea of a community and not a work place.

6. What obstacles have you met during your mobility and how have they been solved?



Obstacles and solutions

I didn't find any obstacle, except that I discovered that I have a terrible sense of direction. It is the first time it happens to me, because I usually study maps before I go, but this time I didn't because I knew I wasn't alone. The solution? If I took the longer way, I walked more... in Italy we say "People who don't have a good memory have good legs"! No big deal.

Strip to Identity

7. *To what extent did the training mobility correspond with your expectations? Have you been able to take initiative, which contributed to reach the aims of the mobility?*

Your activities

I expected to find inspiration for my lessons and I did, both in my subject and in teaching in general. In Italy, most of the lessons are teacher-centered and we tend to “pass” knowledge to our students more than developing their skills and this is something to be changed. Yet, I think our students work harder at school, because they have 60-minutes lessons with no breaks until one; moreover, we prefer them to accomplish tasks like writing an-email at home, while they tend to do this kind of activities at school. So, I would say that generally speaking maybe Italian students are more passive at school but perhaps they must work harder at home individually.

8. *Did you get a good look at the different project levels (comic book creation - use of SharePoint - learning and teaching mobilities - special educational needs teaching)? How will you inform your colleagues at your school about these levels?*

Link with different project levels

It was a very satisfactory mobility. I think the Microsoft presentation has been very useful and I would definitely use OneNote in the future, though I would have understood much more if it was in English.

Although we didn't have many formal meetings about methodologies, we continuously shared experiences and points of view about teaching.

I particularly liked the presentation given by the Irish colleague because it can be used for all the students, even for those with special needs.

I will try to organize a presentation at my school to summarize what I have learnt.

Strip to Identity

9. How would you assess your training mobility? Think of the combination pedagogical / social activities - communication - information - work load - timing etc.



Personal assessment

The work load cannot even be considered; in fact it was more about social activities than working, but this created a wonderful atmosphere. I really would like to work with the colleagues I met in Potsdam.

10. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improvement of future staff training mobilities?



Comments and suggestions

I think the success of all activities depends a lot on the people who work for it, but the fact that the first week the project coordinator was present was important. So, I believe that in any joint staff mobility the coordinator should be present at least during the first week to give a sense of direction to the following weeks.