

Do you speak... music?

Facing the challenges of training teachers on integration

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ABSTRACT / Integrated work on different parts of the curriculum is a major challenge for teachers who have been trained within a system that views the different subjects in isolation. This article describes the characteristics and criteria underlying the Continuous Professional Development courses for European teachers (lasting 30 hours), designed within the framework of the European Music Portfolio: A Creative Way into Languages Comenius Project in order to teach music and foreign languages together. Specifically, these courses have been developed using the training models applied in Switzerland and Catalonia (Spain) during 2011 and 2012. At the same time, the results of some in-depth interviews (conducted with participants on a course) are presented, which were intended to gain a deeper insight into the different ways teachers (from kindergarten to secondary education) cope with the challenges of integrated music and language teaching. The discussion highlights the usefulness of the feedback provided by the interviews as an inspiration for new ideas to develop more effective and higher quality professional development.

Keywords: integration, music and language teaching, continuous professional development.

Integration is a complex concept with distinct connotations and it has been defined from various perspectives. In the educational curriculum, two main lines of thinking may be identified, which respond to different questions. On the one hand there is an approach derived from reflection and philosophy, based on the principles of Kant, with basic questions such as: "Why do we teach children? What is the reason of teaching?". On the other hand, the concept of integration can be treated from the standpoint of experience, observation and analysis in schools, more closely linked to questions such as: "How do we learn? What can be taught? How do we develop the schools and methods needed to support teaching and learning?" This article focuses on this latter group.

Generally, schools are geared to discipline-based programmes and therefore students often accumulate fragmented knowledge unrelated to real-life concerns. For this reason, teachers are mostly trained in specific subjects and interdisciplinary thinking is not developed in a systematic way (Bresler & Thompson, 2002). There are authors who claim that it is the structure of schooling – the logic basic to its organisation and design – that conditions thinking, actions, and methods, and that this is difficult to change (Künzli, in press). Nevertheless, there are more and more educational activities adopting an integrated approach. As is well known, educational praxis is not independent of the philosophies underlying teaching and learning, nor is it unaffected by social movements (Beane, 1997), and these now advocate an increasingly holistic and competence-based type of education (Delors et al. 1996; Morin, 1999), a type of education featuring sustainable development, which promotes and supports the complexity of integrated learning (United Nations, 2005-2014).

The authors of this article are of the opinion that an integrated approach promotes holistic education and cognitive gain (in the sense of Boix Mansilla, 2005), and we also agree with Barret (2001:27) when she suggests that a “deep understanding often depends upon the interactions and intersections between the disciplines”. However, the literature on the subject does not always mention “interactions and intersections between the disciplines” but instead describes other approaches to the concept of integration. For example, Burton (2001) defines three levels of curriculum integration, which range from the simplest to the most complex and challenging (in terms of classroom and school organisation). These are: *thematic integration*, *knowledge integration* and *learner-initiated integration*. Russell-Bowie presents another point of view in his proposal for three models of integration: “*service connections* (one subject servicing learning in another subject), *symmetric correlations* (two subjects using the same material to achieve their own outcomes) and *syntegration*, a created word which indicates that subjects are working together synergistically to explore a theme, concept or focus question while achieving their own subject-specific outcomes as well as generic outcomes” (Russell-Bowie, 2009:5). Then again, Beane (1997) takes a completely different stance, with no connection to traditional discipline-based approaches. This author considers that genuine integration takes place in educational programmes when a problem based on life experiences is used as a starting point, relying on situations that break down the boundaries between the different disciplines.

1. ARTS (AND MUSIC) IN AN INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

There are not many studies that discuss the integration of music exclusively; in general more has been written about the integration of the arts. This is due to the fact that in the majority of curriculums music is part of art education, despite its specificity.

The work done by Bresler (1995) can be considered pioneering in the sense that it describes types of integration of the arts (including music) through the analysis of classroom practice in different schools, not as an ideal construct. Her contribution is summarized by the following integration styles: *subservient*, *co-equal* and *cognitive*, *affective* and *social*. In the first, the subservient approach, the arts serve the basic academic curriculum in its contents, pedagogies, and structures. The second, the co-equal, cognitive style, brings in the arts as an equal partner, integrating the curriculum with arts-specific content, skills, expressions, and modes of thinking. The third, affective integration emphasizes feelings evoked by and attitudes towards art, as well as student-centred learning and initiative, and it incorporates ideals of creativity and self-expression that teachers and principals acknowledge are not

served by the academic curriculum. The fourth style emphasizes the social function of the school and its role as a community. As can be seen, each of these “reflect some fundamental differences in assumptions about the relationship of art and art instruction to larger curriculum and educational goals emphasizing different roles of the arts in school [...]. These values and goals shape the organization of learning resources and pedagogies” (Bresler, 1995:32).

As regards Bresler’s *subservient* concept, Wiggins argues that it is not integration “because one discipline is considered much less important and is relegated to a subservient position” (Wiggins, 2001:42). He calls it: *Level 1: teaching tool connections*. This author concerns himself with defining the boundaries between what integration is and what is not, as levels of “connections”. He suggests the following five levels: *1. teaching tool connections; 2. topic connections; 3. thematic or content connection; 4. conceptual connections, and 5. process connections*.

The last integration concept defined by Snyder in his continuum “*connection, correlation and integration*” is very similar in meaning to the one described in Wiggins’ last level (*process connections*). In an *integrated unit*, a broad theme or concept is chosen which cuts across disciplines, so each content area can explore the theme in a meaningful way. The integrity of each content area or discipline is maintained. Application and synthesis of ideas from one discipline to another is encouraged, leading students to develop deeper understanding and critical thinking by comparing and contrasting ideas (Snyder, 2001). On the other hand Krug & Cohen-Evron (2000) defend three categories of a different nature that do not constitute a continuum. They propose integration as “a new thing”, planning strategies and sharing concepts.

Lastly, a very recent chapter by Zulauf (in press) has proved very useful, which analyzes the literature on arts integration and provides a well structured overview. She groups the majority of authors who have written about this subject into three “families of experts”. While the “families” share some conceptual bases, the understanding of the issues sets them apart from each other.

2. MUSIC AND LANGUAGE LEARNING: EDUCATIONAL MEETING POINTS

Apart from the relationships known to exist at a neurological level between language and music (Patel 2008), these two fields of knowledge have a great deal in common. There are elements basic to every language and its effective use for communication, such as its melody and prosody (Font & Cantero, 2008), as well as other similar elements and structures shared by music and language (see Ludke & Weinmann 2012:30). Consequently, the development of listening and auditory discrimination skills and the memorization and mimetic reproduction of sounds and melodies are essential to both fields of learning. In fact, a direct relationship between musical and linguistic aptitudes has been identified (Gilleece 2006).

We would like to draw attention to the vision of integrated teaching of music and language in the classroom expressed in the paper *Rhyming the Rhythm and Measuring the Metre: Pooling Music and Language in the Classroom* (Casals & Viladot, in press), where inspiring and practical proposals for such integration are presented. To quote:

"According to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (Council of Europe, 2001), when individuals are both linguistically and audio-visually competent, they are able to cope with everyday life thanks to their correct interpretation of contextual messages and their ability to communicate not only through the linguistic code but also through multimodal forms of expression – body language and codes from other disciplines such as the arts. The union of music –as the expression of an intrinsically artistic discipline– and language –as the expression of linguistic communication–, both with great interactive potential, may result in the acquisition of the ability to cope in a wider range of cultural and interactional contexts than those that emerge in a traditional foreign language class. Furthermore, they facilitate a dialogic complementarity between the discovery of other traditions and cultures and the learning of other languages apart from those established by the curriculum. Thus, language and music become tools not only for learning, construction and communication of knowledge, but also for artistic creation, assimilation and orientation of one's actions in different contexts" (Casals & Viladot, in press).

We also think that music has a great deal of potential, through an integrated approach and from a broad perspective, to help teachers develop attitudes and ways of understanding both teaching as a whole and single learning processes, which complements the ideas expressed above.

3. INTEGRATION IN CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Several authors suggest a clear need to provide more creative initial teacher training (for example see Sawyer, 2004). This view needs further assessment, but what is known for sure is that in-service teachers – those who already have experience in coping with the everyday classroom – prove to be more creative when working with interdisciplinary material than students in their final year of teacher training (Casals & Viladot, 2010). Notwithstanding this link between teaching experience and creativity, we believe that continuous teacher training must contemplate and provide tools to boost teachers' creativity.

Other issues considered key to quality lifelong training are those described in the literature by several authors as "effective" (Lipowsky, 2004; Reusser, 2011; Reusser & Tremp, 2008; Timperly, 2008). They can be summed up as the following qualities and factors (adapted from Marjanen & Cslovjcek, 2014):

- focusing on teaching in relation to the school context
- connecting to the classroom situation and the teaching experience of the CPD participants
- clear aims and defined methodological-pedagogical focus
- focusing on the curricular, subject content and the current experience of CPD participants
- focusing on pupils' learning issues and the understanding of content-specific processes
- co-constructive and dialogue-based framework and methods
- transfer-orientation in design, ideally a combination of phases of input, training, transfer, realization, reflection and assessment
- creating motivation for co-operation, collaboration and dissemination within and beyond the school

- offering the option of support services
- creating motivation for deep reflection on teacher's professional habits and pupils' learning processes

Furthermore, according to Marjanen & Cslovjecssek (2014) teachers' professional development must be supported by a rich professional culture. They also defend that transversal learning in integrated teaching methodology effects the reconstruction of comprehension.

Lastly, drawing an analogy with Kampilis (2010, in Kampilis et al. 2011) when he states that "creative thinking" can be taught, in our opinion "integration" is a creative activity that can also be taught and learnt. We think it important to follow the recommendations of Craft (2003) and decentralise control in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum, content and teaching strategies, and treat teachers as artists rather than technicians. Tied in with the idea of boosting teachers' creativity, we also consider that CPD courses should promote what Bresler defines as the *educational entrepreneur* (Bresler, 2011:11), because CPD provides a space for active and collaborative learning among professionals and this makes it possible to bring into play – additionally – the entrepreneurship skills that are so important today.

Having presented an overview of some of the work related to arts integration and explained the ideas behind our thinking on the integration of music and language, the following questions come to mind as trainers: How can we foster teachers' creativity and entrepreneurship through a continuous professional development course? What are the challenges of integrating music and language teaching from the teacher's point of view?

In order to answer these questions, we present, on the one hand, the characteristics and criteria used in the design of a thirty-hour CPD course that offered training in integrated work on music and foreign language for teachers from different educational levels and, on the other hand, a small qualitative study exploring participants' opinions and thoughts on the integration of the two disciplines in the classroom. These two parts of the study (Section I and II) are complementary. They required combined analysis to extract some conclusions and help the authors find ways of improving training in integration.

4. SECTION I: DO YOU SPEAK... MUSIC? THE EMP-L CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE

Within the framework of the EU Comenius Project "European Music Portfolio: A Creative way into Languages" (EMP-L), a consortium of partners from universities, schools and school authorities – with experts on languages and music from initial and continuous teacher education, and including generalist as well as specialist teachers – worked together from 2009 to 2012. The goal of the project was to integrate musical activities in foreign language education and to ascertain how the teaching and learning of the two subjects can provide mutual support and motivation (EU Comenius Life Long Learning Programme LLP No. 502895). The main products developed through this international collaboration were:

- a teacher's handbook explaining the theoretical framework
- hands-on classroom activities

- a pupil's portfolio
- a framework for planning continuing professional development (CPD) courses

CPD programmes were organised in the countries of the project partners as five-day (thirty-hour) courses funded by the European Union. In lectures and workshops international and local trainers and experts presented, explored and discussed the EMP-L materials with European in-service teachers (from the pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational, adult and special needs sectors). The goal of the courses was to encourage teachers to work more creatively while integrating language and music learning in their classrooms.

Below, we will refer specifically to the four *Do you speak...music?* CPD courses organised in 2011 and 2012 in Switzerland and Catalonia (Spain). Owing to the affinity existing between organizers and trainers in the two countries (in terms of concepts and teaching practices) all these courses shared the aspects detailed below and their development was quite similar. In this sense, and to facilitate the discourse, they will be treated as though they were a single course.

In general terms, experiential and creative teaching and learning were fostered by:

- exploring, sharing and reflecting on activities (movement, rhythms, rapping, poems, rhymes, melodies, songs, playing instruments) that can be used in language and music education
- learning about the theoretical background and philosophy of integrated language and music teaching and learning
- developing, enriching and empowering the participants' music and language teaching skills and personal competences (holistic learning approaches and skills development)
- instruction in the use of the EMP webpage (activities, pupil's portfolio, teacher's handbook, exchange functions)
- sharing ideas for teacher-initiated courses at the participants' schools and national CPD courses
- providing the opportunity for teachers from different countries to learn about other European cultures

The idea of providing practical hands-on learning experiences was explicitly intended to avoid repetitive recipes and, instead, to involve teachers and encourage input through critical reflection and by pooling ideas, as propounded by Schön (1983). To this end, participants were asked before the course to study some of the activities available on the website (www.emportfolio.eu), to apply them in the classroom and record new ideas, variations and follow-ups, as well explaining their own music-language activities, students' results, challenges, solutions and ideas that could be shared on the courses. Different types of sessions were organised to achieve these goals, structured into five categories with much common ground:

1) The first category comprised sessions that expressed the organizers' deep conviction that a good relationship and informal contact between participants and trainers is crucial to the success of a language and music course, i.e. an atmosphere of trust and friendship as the vital basis for taking risks during presentations and discussions, sharing undeveloped ideas and thinking at the edge. Joint music-making during activities and shared presentations also generated an atmosphere where it was possible

to speak in languages other than English as well as discussing the challenges of classroom management. Other factors important to this first level were good food and accommodation, working areas and places to relax, achieved by organising the following kinds of activities:

- breaking the ice and getting to know each other
- sightseeing excursions, social gatherings, concerts and informal exchange

2) The second category consisted of sessions dealing with basic disciplinary knowledge and skills and subject-specific teaching approaches and specific methods. These sessions were intended to present the actual state of the art in the field of language and music education in an easy and understandable way to teachers not trained or not feeling confident in one subject area or the other. In this respect, the course focussed on the following:

- introduction to activities aimed at language and music teaching and learning
- how to teach and develop language skills
- how to teach and develop musical skills
- how to frame learning processes within the possibilities of both disciplines

3) In the third type of sessions the practice and theory of integrated music and language teaching was presented and discussed. Here, as in the other categories, practical activities and simple materials provided a basis for reflection and theoretical input. The use of so-called core activities drawing on very basic, simple and easy-to-adapt ideas enabled participants to contribute ideas for optional procedures, subsequent steps and further learning. The following aspects were contemplated:

- best practise examples; examples of intercultural learning
- introduction of a 'grid' as a structuring and planning tool
- introduction to the teacher's handbook and theoretical framework
- introduction and discussion of the pupil's music portfolio

4) In the fourth category the participants were invited to be creative and develop their own examples of integrated activities, explain them to the other participants and share ideas for optional procedures, adaptations and further learning. These sessions also focussed on developing an attitude of openness and curiosity towards learners' ideas and discovering the enjoyment that comes with the challenge of creative teaching and risk-taking while following up childrens' ideas and proposals. The following activities were developed to this end:

- creating their own activities and presenting them to the other participants on the CPD course
- identifying individual possibilities of working with materials
- adapting materials to their own classes and school situations

5) Lastly, in the fifth set of sessions participants were encouraged to further collaborate within their schools and regions, to share ideas for integrated music and language teaching with their

HeJMEC Vol. 5 | Do you speak... music? Facing the challenges of training teachers on integration colleagues and to further develop a vision of education that contemplates teachers as learners too, and students as collaborators who generate questions, procedures and insights.

- introduction and use of the e-learning platform and possibilities for exchange between both participants and classrooms
- discussion of ideas on how to motivate teachers to initiate courses at the participants' schools and national CPD courses

Follow-up activities consisted of further contact with other teachers and their classes as well as communication on an e-learning platform and in the social media.

All the courses were evaluated by both the organizers and the European Union. There is also ongoing research in the field of integrated music and language education in CPD and initial teacher training.

5. SECTION II: TEACHERS' VOICES

Following the evaluation made by the European Commission at the CPD EMP-2012 held in Schiers (Switzerland), which provided general feedback to the organizers, we conducted in-depth interviews¹ about interdisciplinarity with five participants (European teachers) to gain a deeper insight into the different ways in which teachers deal with the challenges of integrated music and language teaching. As well as exploring their opinions on integration (results pending publication), we asked them about their expectations, perceptions and needs in the area of integrated music and language teaching in order to obtain ideas to foster more effective and higher-quality professional development.

The five participants (four women and one man) came from different European countries. Three were music teachers and two were language teachers. Two of the three music teachers worked at primary schools and the other at a secondary school. One of the language teachers worked at a combined primary/secondary school, and the other at a pre-school.

Each interview was treated as a case study, using a bottom-up analytical process based on emergent data and with no pre-established categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It should be pointed out that although the interviews were carried out in English – because this is the lingua franca of the CPD – it is not the mother tongue of any of the participants.

The analytical process involved several steps and procedures. The first step was to highlight each participant's most significant ideas on interdisciplinarity. Second, a concept map of the discourse was drawn up to link each participant's opinions. This step was followed by the conceptualization of each opinion. At this point of the analysis, a list of all the concepts identified in the interviews was made. It is important to point out that some concepts emerged in all the interviews and some were the fruit of isolated and idiosyncratic insights expressed by the different participants. Following this process of conceptualization the concepts were arranged hierarchically in order to group them into a reduced list of categories. The reasoning behind this step was to find out which concepts were most repeated and appeared in every interview and which concepts were less relevant in each interview. An observer

¹ The interviews were conducted by Dagmar Witorski, Chair for Education Theories and Interdisciplinary Teaching, University of Applied Sciences and arts North-western Switzerland.

external to the research reviewed this process and helped the researchers to reach a consensus on the formulation and identification of the following five categories:

1. Teacher's educational approach

For these teachers, education is the process that results from the interaction of both the teacher and students in a classroom, where the teacher has the role of guiding the students. In this process, the teacher brings the world to the student as it is, i.e. in a way adjusted to the students' natural holistic way of learning. Tanja (a preschool teacher) says: "You have to show things to children. You see this is a tree, try to sense the tree, try to explain what colour it is."

2. Teacher's attitude

It is important that teachers are open to both their own reality and the specific conditions of the class in order to relate to their students as individuals with their own interests and particularities. As Oana (primary school second language teacher) points out: "It's very important to have conversations, to be open to ideas, to share ideas."

3. Methodology

The methodology takes a critical approach to the traditional curriculum and language textbooks in the sense that these teachers, with the aim of raising motivation in the classroom and improving interaction between themselves and the students, adapt the methodology to their own teaching preferences and interests and also to the students' motivations and spontaneous suggestions, instead of implementing it as an instruction manual. More specifically, they use music as a strategy to introduce and work on language content. As Silvia (a secondary school music teacher) admits: "We have a textbook; sometimes I use it all the time, sometimes I use it a little bit and I add my own material." Anna adds: "I can assure you that if you give pupils the opportunity they come up with all sorts of things."

4. Requirements and Needs

In order to promote projects for content integration in the classroom, centers need to allocate time slots to teachers inside their school timetables, where they can work together, discuss and plan projects. As Tanja (a pre-school teacher) points out: "You have to be able to work in a group. It's better because there are more ideas."

5. Teacher's conception of music

Music is regarded as an essential tool for social interaction between the teacher and students in the classroom. It is understood as the vehicle for sharing, expressing and offering. Anna (primary school music and English teacher): "It's so many things. It's communication, feelings, being free. It's sharing and doing something together. And it's also a way to express oneself and give."

In addition, the teachers cited four factors linked to their expectations of being able to implement integrated teaching of music and a (foreign) language after received training in EMP-L CPD. These were: *content learning; methodologies in the class; pupils' behaviour; and the teacher's own wellbeing.*

As can be seen, their expectations are linked to the hope that using an integrated teaching approach promotes music and language learning, and also to the implementation of new

methodologies to achieve this goal. Regarding pupils' conduct, teachers expect higher participation, motivation, awareness and engagement in their classes when working through integrated music and language. All this would benefit their own wellbeing, as well as the fact of having fun and working with two subjects appreciated by the interviewed teachers. These results concur with different models included in the work of Richter (1999) where he explains perspectives for understanding music education: from the standpoint of content, behaviour, or as an impulse to solve key problems. The integrated teaching approach can also be viewed from the standpoint of relaxation, enjoyment and involvement in a cultural activity.

Regarding the difficulties perceived by teachers when putting into practice the integrated teaching of music and a (foreign) language after receiving training through the EMP-L CPD, teachers specified the following constraints: *those dependent on the teacher (intrinsic/personal) and non-dependent (extrinsic/environmental) ones.*

On the one hand the teachers mention self-imposed constraints. These refer to intrinsic personal issues related, for example, to musical practice, attitudes, language, and what they know or feel capable of doing. On the other hand, there are also extrinsic or environmental factors such as the structure of schooling, the pressure of the curriculum, and the degree of acceptance by other teachers or parents, which may limit the interest in integrated work and its implementation. Although the constraints described by the teachers may seem contradictory, they sometimes exist simultaneously.

6. DISCUSSION

We have described the characteristics of a continuous professional development course and collected together the participants' opinions. Thus, this paper presents a real experience that evolved over a period of two years and which constitutes a contribution to the literature on music and language integration in the field of in-service teacher training. As explained in Section 1, the courses lasted thirty hours and the teachers took part in practical activities to encourage them to work more creatively while integrating language and music learning. Despite the time constraints associated with this type of course, we want to highlight the efforts made by the training team to balance the content and offer a wide range of activities.

This proposal for CPD includes virtually all the "recommendations" listed by Marjanen & Cslovjceksek (2014.) In relation to the strategy of "transfer-orientation in design, ideally a combination of phases of input, training, transfer, realization, reflection and assessment", we attempted to promote it through the "introduction and use of the e-learning platform and possibilities for exchange between both participants and classrooms" (fifth set of sessions, Section 1), which was successful in some cases involving an exchange of experiences between teachers and students from different countries and joint classroom activities. The difficulty of real and effective follow-up when the participants come from all over Europe should be kept in mind. However, given the importance of transfer and assessment to ensure on-going training, we plan – in future CPD courses – to design and incorporate more effective strategies to support the teachers, once back at their schools, despite the difficulties posed by the physical and cultural divide.

On the other hand, it should be pointed out that the course *Do you speak... music?* offers original approaches for effective training as yet not discussed in the literature: a) approaches intended

to develop a good working atmosphere and build up trust among participants and trainers (see the strategies listed in the first category in Section 1); b) approaches seeking training continuity, whether by adapting materials and knowledge to the reality of the classroom or disseminating it to other colleagues (see the strategies outlined in the fifth categories, Section 1).

Thanks to the opinions offered by some teachers, we have been able to identify which factors and challenges of music integration they consider most important. This is essential information in the sense that it provides a deeper insight into both their understanding of integration as the framework supporting their teaching and their expectations and the constraints affecting its implementation in the classroom. They seem to think music integration is a useful tool for encouraging language learning. In their own words, “(integration) is the natural way children learn”, “(music) makes for a good atmosphere” and “builds a good relationship”, and “singing and moving is fun”. These opinions express what teachers assimilated during the thirty-hour CPD course in accordance with their own understanding and experience, and generically indicate an understanding of music as either a teaching tool (Wiggins, 2001), a subservient type in an integration framework (Bresler, 1995) or as service connections (Russell-Bowie, 2009). On the other hand, other approaches to integration, by way of thematic, content-driven, conceptual or procedural stratagems, receive much less attention. When planning future courses we intend to take advantage of these considerations in order to provide teachers with a more explicit theoretical framework.

The course *Do you speak... music?* provides what is known as a Transformative Practice Zone (TPZ) (Bresler, 2003), i.e. spaces of exchange and collaborative dialogue. From the standpoint of the successful functioning of the course, we wish to highlight that trainers must concern themselves with other teachers and ways of thinking in the context of international CPD. Apart from personal enrichment, learning from abroad (favoured by exchange) may help to spread different approaches and develop tools and strategies to cope with new teaching challenges. At the same time, it is important to be willing to change old attitudes, adopt new ideas, and take risks if necessary. All this contributes to fostering teachers’ creativity and entrepreneurship. On the other hand, the difficulties entailed by the situation of some teachers working in isolation must also be taken into account when it comes to setting up new TPZs with colleagues in their schools or educational settings. In this respect, teachers from the same centres should be encouraged to attend the course.

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