



The Evaluation Report of Pride of Place Curriculum

Introduction

This report has been prepared in line with the results of the questionnaire responded to by the teachers. The study followed the testing phase of the Pride of Place the curriculum developed within the scope of the PoP project. During the testing phase, the partners in Italy, Portugal and Ireland ensured that the curriculum was implemented in four schools with students aged between 12 and 18 years old. All teachers received some kind of training to the use of the PoP curriculum prior to the start of the testing phase. The PoP curriculum was designed before the Covid-19 situation and while in the testing phase teachers had to adapt the PoP teaching to virtual teaching. As the situation in each school/country was unique and constantly changing, this adaptation was coordinated and guided by the national partner organization.

Upon having employed the PoP curriculum, the teachers responded the questionnaire drawn up by the project team. A total of 16 teachers employing the PoP curriculum participated in evaluation.

The evaluation questionnaire comprises three sections. The first section aims to determine teachers' general evaluations about the curriculum. The second part intends to reveal teachers' roles and the perceived difficulties during when they worked with the PoP curriculum and its Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) approach. The third part of the questionnaire attempts to specify the training needs of teachers who are to follow the PoP teacher training. Activities continue to be undertaken for the utilization of the PoP curriculum in schools in the near future. Exploring teachers' opinions on the content of the training, prepared to facilitate the employment of this curriculum for teachers who will encounter PoP and/or IBL for the first time, might help us increase the quality of training activities.

Aim

Within the scope of the project, a curriculum was developed that aims to increase the motivation of young people to increase their cognitive and affective bond with the place and to maintain their lives in rural areas when older or return after having been out of the place. This curriculum contains six phases and modules organized around 14 different school subjects. The designed PoP curriculum was implemented in classrooms using an adaptation of the IBL teaching method. This evaluation questionnaire was prepared to obtain feedback from the teachers about the applicability of the curriculum, its effects on students and its utilization by teachers.

This evaluation questionnaire designed by the project team aims to evaluate the content of the PoP curriculum developed and implemented within the scope of the project. Another aim is to discover teachers' experiences during the implementation of the PoP curriculum. This study further aims to determine the challenges teachers experienced during the implementation of the curriculum and their training needs prior to using the curriculum.



Findings

Section 1: General Quality of PoP Curriculum

The first part of the questionnaire conducted to evaluate the PoP curriculum was prepared to determine the general thoughts of the teachers and consists of 7 Likert-type statements and 5 open-ended questions. The teachers were asked to rate the following statements/ topics regarding the PoP curriculum and the syllabus with teacher instructions.

Statement	Very Poor		Poor		Neutral		Good		Very Good	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
General quality of the teaching methodology.					4	25	9	56,2	3	18,8
User-friendliness of the syllabus.			1	6,2	4	25	9	56,3	2	12,5
The fit of the curriculum with the learning experiences of your class.					1	6,2	11	68,8	4	25
The fit of the curriculum with the qualities of your place.							11	68,8	5	31,3
The extent to which the curriculum allows the students to learn new competences.					1	6,3	10	62,5	5	31,3
The extent to which the students reached their learning goals through working with the curriculum.					4	25,0	9	56,3	3	18,8
The extent to which the students enjoyed the learning approach used in the curriculum.			1	6,3	4	25,0	7	43,8	4	25,0

It was revealed that the teachers evaluated the PoP teaching/learning method used in the curriculum as good. 75% of the teachers stated that the PoP method was good and very good. The quality of the syllabus prepared in accordance with the curriculum was generally evaluated as good by the teachers. In addition, 93.8% of the teachers stated that the curriculum was fit for the learning experiences of the students. The teachers further stated that the PoP teaching/learning method was absolutely fit for their environment.

93.8% of the teachers stated that the curriculum encouraged students to ask meaningful questions that would lead them to productive ways of inquiry and largely enabled them to learn new competencies. In addition, 75.1% of the teachers stated that the extent to which the students reached their learning goals through this method was good and very good, and 68.8% of the students enjoyed the education they received through this method.



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In order to give more systematic answers to open-ended questions, the teachers having participated in the study were coded as P1, P2..... P16. In the first open-ended question, the teachers were asked "*What did you appreciate most about the curriculum?*" From the responses given to the question, it was determined that this method provided advantages in two different ways.

Firstly, it offered various advantages for students. P1 and P2 stated that the students were at the forefront more in this method and that they became the lead actors of their learning process. P5 voiced that the IBL method contributed to increasing general curiosity for students, improving their critical perception and ability to take responsibility. In addition, P5 stated that this method was efficient for the students' learning process. P4 expressed that the learning process that became more efficient might enable students to develop skills suitable for the 21st century. P10 and P14 stated that the students' tendency to discover the realities that had not attracted their attention thus far increased. This way, they explored the history of their region and their place in that society, and enabled them to be open and flexible. In addition, they stated that it enabled students to develop their creativity based on true/accurate information. P13 articulated that these opportunities provided by the curriculum truly brought the students closer to reaching the goals of the project and led them to different ways of acquiring information (e.g. interviews, experiments, photos, reading texts, etc.). P6 stated that this method provided an extensive area for students' ideas; P7 and P8 expressed that it allowed students to play an active role in all tasks, and P9 stated that students' taking an active role supported a role accompanying teachers.

Secondly, this method offered certain advantages for the teachers. P15 stated that encouraging teachers to ask meaningful questions that might direct students to productive ways of research, rather than providing information, might enable the relationship between teacher and student to become "mentoring".

In the second open-ended question, the teachers were asked "*What would you recommend us to change about the curriculum?*" P3, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11 and P13 stated that the curriculum was complete. P2 and P4 stated that some texts should be edited and made more understandable thus the curriculum could focus more on the country or region where it might be implemented. P5 expressed that it would be better to provide special training for teachers about IBL teaching method at the beginning of the project in order to achieve the goals of the project and the curriculum. P12 maintained that making changes in the curriculum and the timetable required for the completion of the tasks would be beneficial for the curriculum's improvement. P14, on the other hand, stated that s/he did not have difficulty in implementing the curriculum due to coronavirus.

In the third open-ended question, the teachers were asked "*What did you appreciate most about the syllabus?*" P5 stated that the instructions in the practical manual should be clear; P6 expressed that different steps should have sub-sections; P7, P8 and P9 voiced that various steps should be easy and have schematic nature; P10 uttered that the syllabus should offer opportunities to collaborate with other colleagues; and P15 stated that s/he appreciated the syllabus, which was prepared in



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accordance with the curriculum, to present many different materials. In addition to his/her positive opinions, however, P14 stated that it would be useful to shorten the documents to be filled. Similarly, P3 stated that the documents were copious.

In the fourth open-ended questions, the teachers were asked *“What would you recommend us to change about the syllabus and the annexes?”* P7, P9, P10 and P11 did not make any suggestions. P1, P2, P12 and P13 expressed that the available time was inadequate to carry out the tasks in depth. P5 and P8 coded people stated that understanding the annexes were a little complicated from time to time, and their simplification might be useful to understand the syllabus. P15 articulated that syllabus contained a lot of texts and materials, which was good, but it should contain more real-life examples. P4 voiced that s/he regretted not being able to carry out the project effectively due to the restrictions applied within the scope of combating coronavirus. S/he also stated that the fact that the activities were held online at distance and this was a very negative factor. P14 stated that the syllabus was probably too open and wide for middle school students. S/he emphasized, however, slightly narrowing the post-primary curriculum might give students more time to engage with the topic, as there were so many other school activities happening in the selected year group, it was difficult to try to address many different aspects.

In the fifth open-ended question, the teachers were asked *“Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your involvement in the piloting of the PoP curriculum?”* P13 emphasized that it was difficult to reach all targets such as guest speakers and visits to the local library or museum due to coronavirus. However, s/he also stated that s/he would very much like to reteach this module upon having the freedom to explore more details about this curriculum. Likewise, P5 and P15 expressed that the targets set were negatively affected by the coronavirus and they wanted to try this module again when face-to-face education started. Regarding the negative effects of the determined goals due to coronavirus, P13 stated that the students sometimes did not stick to what was agreed and planned in the previous session. S/he stated that the current pandemic made it impossible to recognize the biodiversity of the site as planned in the module, so students were left alone or with a close family to seek answers.

Section 2: Inquiry Based Learning (IBL) and the Pride of Place Curriculum

This part of the questionnaire was prepared to determine the general views of teachers regarding the IBL and The Pride of Place curriculum. It consists of 14 Likert-type statements and 2 open-ended questions. The teachers were asked to what extent they found the following teacher roles in the testing of the PoP curriculum challenging



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Teacher IBL roles ¹	Not challenging at all		Quite challenging		Very Challenging		I haven't used this role	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Focusing on thinking skills	1	6,3	6	37,5	5	31,3	4	25,0
Focusing on 21 st century skills development.	2	12,5	7	43,8	7	43,8		
Promoting a culture of inquiry in the classroom.	2	12,5	7	43,8	7	43,8		
Guiding students' information research process.	1	6,3	12	75,0	3	18,8		
Making students familiar with the nature of science.	1	6,3	7	43,8	2	12,5	6	37,5
Bridging the gap between high and low achievers.	2	12,5	8	50,0	5	31,3	1	6,3
Organizing student learning in groups.	3	18,8	6	37,5	3	18,8	4	25,0
Focusing on collaboration processes.	5	31,3	7	43,8	3	18,8	1	6,3
Providing information on the research topic.	2	12,5	10	62,5	3	18,8	1	6,3
Guiding students' self-reflection time.	2	12,5	7	43,8	6	37,5	1	6,2
Guiding students' group reflection processes.	1	6,8	7	43,8	4	25,0	4	25,0
Focusing on linking new information from the inquiry project to students' prior knowledge.	3	18,8	13	81,3				
Providing a suitable environment to students for presenting their research.	4	25,0	7	43,8	5	31,3		
Assessing the students' competence development rather than just the results of the project.	2	12,5	6	37,5	7	43,8	1	6,2

It was determined that more than 50% of teachers found it challenging to focus on students' thinking skills and 21st century skill development using the IBL and PoP method used in the curriculum, while 25% did not use these roles at all. Almost all of the teachers considered that guiding students' information research process and promoting a culture of inquiry in the classroom were quite challenging. It was determined that 56.3% of the teachers thought making students familiar with the nature of science was challenging, while 37.5% did not use this role at all. It was discovered that 81.3% of the teachers found it very challenging to bridge the gap between high- and low achievers by using these methods. While 56.3% of teachers found it challenging to organize student learning in groups and 68.8% of them generally had difficulties in guiding students' group reflection processes, it was found that 31.3% of them did not have difficulty in collaboration processes with students. It was determined that 81.3% of the teachers generally had difficulty in providing information to the students on the research topic and focusing on linking new information from the inquiry project to students' prior knowledge. It was observed that 75% of teachers found it challenging to provide a suitable environment to students for presenting their research. In addition,

¹ IBL roles were based on:

Dobber, M., Zwart, R., Tanis, M., & van Oers, B. (2017). Literature review: The role of the teacher in inquiry-based education. *Educational Research Review*, 22, 194-214. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2017.09.002>



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it was determined that 81.3% of the teachers generally had difficulties in assessing the students' competence development rather than just the results of the project.

Open-ended questions

The first open-ended question in this part of the questionnaire was *"When compared to the way you teach in other classes before Pride of Place curriculum, do you see any change in your role as the teacher in guiding your students through the subject and modules?"* P3, P4, P7, P10, P11, P14 and P15 stated that there was no change. P6, on the other hand, stated that there was no change since s/he actively used this method in previous classes. P1, P2, P5, P6, P8, P9, P12 and P13 expressed that there were changes. P1 and P2 stated that they tried to devote more time to students to motivate and ensure their self-esteem and personal inquiry. P5 stated that s/he appreciated the fact that the curriculum enabled the students to increase their ability to act independently and competently, and P6 voiced that it helped the students to encourage collaboration and the ability to think correctly on a certain topic. P8, P9 and P15 articulated that their roles in the classroom turned into an accompanying and supporting role rather than guiding. P14 stated that the curriculum enabled facilitator, organizer and mediator roles to emerge.

In the second open-ended question, the teachers were asked *"Is there anything else you would like to share regarding your role and competencies used during the testing of the pride of place curriculum?"* P1, P2, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11 and P15 did not share anything. P3 and P4 expressed their satisfaction with the people they met and interacted with as well as trying out the curriculum. P5 stated that it was very interesting to use and improve the skills that were already acquired and discover new skills, especially with regard to technological tools. In addition, s/he emphasized that she believed that this project taught both children and teachers the positive aspects of their region and that this was definitely an added value. P12 stated that this curriculum was a challenge for the teachers who had to use skills that were quite different from the normal skills regarding the role of mediator and facilitator in the classroom and the assessment of students, and this might make teachers' job a little more complicated. P13 stated that the teacher had a guiding role in this curriculum, and P14, as a history teacher, thought the curriculum was very useful as an introduction to the skills students would use if they chose to study History for the Leaving Certificate.

Section 3: Training needs

This part of the questionnaire was prepared to determine to what extent teachers agreed with the statements regarding IBL and The Pride of Place Curriculum. It comprises 4 Likert-type statements and 1 open-ended question.



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Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
To use the PoP curriculum, teachers must have prior PoP training.			2	12,5	2	12,5	10	62,5	2	12,5
Before using IBL, teachers should be trained on this methodology.					1	6,3	10	62,5	5	31,2
The training course should offer teachers a good guide for bringing inquiry-based learning into practice.					1	6,3	11	68,7	4	25,0
During the workshop/training teachers should encounter new contents/approaches that they did not know yet.					1	6,3	10	62,5	5	31,2

75% of the teachers thought that teachers must have prior PoP training to use the PoP curriculum, and 93.7% think that teachers should be trained on this methodology before using the IBL. 93.7% of the teachers agreed with the idea that teachers should be offered a good guide to bring inquiry-based learning into practice in the trainings to be given to teachers, and during the workshop/training, teachers should encounter new content/approaches that they did not know yet.

General Conclusion

Teachers' evaluations have shown that the IBL method could be used as an appropriate method for the implementation of the PoP curriculum. The curriculum developed in our project aims to enable students to access information through their own research. Students' collect information personally through their research enables students to internalize the information. The purpose of implementing the curriculum in schools is to enable young people to get to know better the place they live in and strengthen their ties with this place. It is seen that the developed PoP curriculum based on the IBL method served the purpose of our project for the exploration and internalization of knowledge and feelings.

The PoP curriculum implemented in the testing phase made a significant contribution to students' getting to know the places they live in. Additionally, that students played an active role in the research and information acquisition processes was very efficient.

The teachers stated that they moved from the role of information provider to the role of advisor and guide in information research.



PRIDE of PLACE Content of PoP Curriculum Documents

It was suggested that the time given for education in the curriculum and modules was not sufficient. The fact that the teachers had to perform the testing phase in Covid-19 times, restricted how they could pilot the curriculum as it was originally designed. Teachers had to adapt to virtual and distance learning/teaching methods which the curriculum was not designed for. This adaptation and the virtual teaching required extra time resources.

The time of training used in the modules might be extended a little more. Furthermore, it might be more difficult for teachers who work with the IBL and PoP curriculum for the first time to use their time efficiently. The time experienced teachers will use for a module in IBL might be shorter. Since the teachers who utilize the PoP curriculum for the second time are to be more experienced than their first time, they can manage their time better.

It may be useful to adapt the PoP curriculum to virtual teaching, in a future follow-up project.

There are modules and background articles in IO2 documents. Some participants stated that they had difficulty in understanding these annexes. The training given prior to PoP curriculum might eliminate this difficulty.

Some participants stated that 14 modules were many and that fewer modules might be used. A total of 14 different modules were prepared so that this curriculum, which would be applied in different regions, could be tailored to the existing resources of the region and the appropriate ones could be selected. For instance, the architecture module can be used in one of the old residential areas of Germany. Architectural styles and buildings from the past might enable the utilization of this module. However, a school recently established in a residential area might not opt for the architecture module when using the PoP curriculum. The local events module might be preferred in case of a popular event organized here.

PoP curriculum employs IBL learning technique with an innovative approach. It might however be challenging for some schools to use without proper training since this technique is a new approach. The training to be prepared within the scope of the project aims to provide teachers who are to use the PoP curriculum with knowledge and skills to facilitate the adoption and implementation of this curriculum in their schools.

In the courses conducted within the scope of the PoP curriculum, it is aimed to develop students' 21st century skills competence. The teachers found the evaluation of these competences that were tried to be developed challenging. The necessity to address the subject of evaluation in the training of teachers was understood.



Teaching Pride of Place, Training Course for Teachers/Trainer That Will Work with Pride of Place Curriculum

Numerous participants considered that teachers must definitely receive training prior to the implementation of the PoP curriculum. It was understood once again how necessary the training was for the users of the PoP curriculum prepared within the scope of the project.

In this training to be implemented, the teachers stated that they especially needed real-life information and applications. From this point of view, there should be sessions in which IBL method is used in some part of the training. In these sessions, teachers should role-play student/learner in an educational environment where IBL technique is employed. The opportunities to experience might thus be more efficient and effective.

A module in the training to be held will include a section where teachers using the PoP curriculum share their experiences. The teachers trained to utilize the PoP curriculum for the first time might ask questions to the teachers who have already used it.

About the Evaluation Study

The questionnaire was designed by the Akdeniz University and the Anatta Foundation as coordinators of the development of Intellectual Output 2 and 3. The Sapienza University of Rome provided feedback on the study design.

The Akdeniz University was responsible for the data analysis and evaluation report.