



The EDEN Porto Open Classroom Communication: *Creativity and Innovation in School Education*

Economic globalization and the emergence of what has been identified as the *Knowledge Society* go, hand-in-hand, with a gradually changing set of *Key Competences*, thus feeding in the dialogue about academic and policy implementation of what some thinkers and stakeholders already have named as the *Literacies of the 21st century*.

In this context, learning outcomes are increasingly associated with variables like motivation, self-beliefs and learning strategies, therefore they are likely to be linked to specific levels of social cohesion, the quality and relevance of the learning environment (learning opportunities) and the relationship with “life chances”!

Similar considerations give rise to ideas about the emerging *Knowledge building patterns*, whereby *exclusion* is being defined as *lack of access to opportunities to realize creativity and learning potential*, that are defining the process of knowledge formation. It seems that we are facing a “*Paradigm Shift*” in our education systems, which is further related to a re-orientation of *Lifelong Learning* to a more holistic view of *learning as a critical factor of social development*, both of the society at large and of the individual as a social actor.

In view of this, both the developed and the developing societies need to cope with the following questions:

- *What our children need to learn* in order to aspire to these emerging societal developments?
- *How can we change school education* in order to facilitate this orientation?

These questions abide to a demanding exercise of re-defining the *Literacies in a lifelong learning perspective*, from their starting definition (see the three *Rs*, *Reading, Writing and Arithmetics*) that corresponded to the Industrial Society’s massively comprehensive education model, to what today and for the coming years seems to prevail as the widely accepted *necessary set (and level) of Competencies in the worlds of the individuals’ “life” (personal and cultural development, citizenship, etc.) and her/his “work” (specific knowledge and skills)*.

At the same time, *Innovation* and *Creativity* are considered key drivers for the development in the years to come, and thus Knowledge-based societies need to place strong emphasis on establishing those flourishing conditions, which will make for the *Creation of Ideas and Knowledge* as well as for the better use of *Knowledge and Innovation*, in order to build value for their social systems.



It becomes necessary that *sustainable change in Knowledge Building and Curriculum Development* as well as it regards *the Pedagogies and the Teachers Professional Development*, could only be addressed by *motivation and incentives, leadership and quality upgrade*. In order to introduce this new *Learning Culture*, education authorities and institutions need to adopt changes in the fields of organization and governance and be reflective to emerging bottom-up initiatives, in a *new balance between top-down planning and grass-roots implementation and quality regulation*. Today's education systems have to cater for experimental innovation and tolerance of failure, thus encouraging innovative approaches and practice.

School Autonomy – whether formal or informal - provides with the grounds for releasing and developing Creativity and Innovation. So, it seems that the *enhancement of School Autonomy, Teachers professional development as well as of Networking among schools' communities*, constitute an effective way for moving towards the future, by serving *Excellence and Learning Efficiency* while catering for *Equity and Social Inclusion*.

In the emerging *School Education Paradigm for the 21st Century* (ref. to the European Commission consultation document: *Schools for the 21st Century*) we need to embrace a set of priorities in the following lines:

- *Curriculum planning and assessment* should be revisited to allow for the application of learner-centered methods addressing varying learning needs.
- The *immersive open educational resources, combined with social software* (Web 2.0 and 3.0!) are emerging as critical instruments for innovative (lifelong) learning, while *fostering new Knowledge building paradigms and collaborative forms of learning materials*.
- Furthermore, *schools should go into Partnerships and Networks*, among themselves - with a cross-cultural and inter-cultural character -, as well as with their social environment.

And, we certainly need to face the increasing *Policy inter-dependence between Education, Growth and Social Inclusion*. In other words, the *new Equity Challenge* implies that we have to re-engineer our school education systems, better than *delivering "massive" education* to the engagement of people in *"massive" knowledge experiences*, by up-grading their *Learning-to-learn Competence*!

The **Open Classroom** agenda for the **European School of this century** aims at offering the next consolidation step in the European dialogue on the importance of **Creativity and Innovation in School Education in a Knowledge Society**, and on the means to be deployed by stakeholders and policy makers in order to **cater for a sustainable Lifelong Learning perspective in the 21st Century Schooling**.