

A practical guide to self-evaluation

Prepared for the Commission by:

John MacBeath

Denis Meuret

Michael Schratz

Table of contents

• PART I: GETTING STARTED	2
Introduction	2
Creating a culture for self-evaluation	2
Using the self-evaluation profile	3
• PART II: SUGGESTED METHODS	6
Sub-project 1: Collecting and handling information	6
1 Academic Achievement	6
2 Personal and social development	8
3 Pupil destinations	10
4 Time as a resource for learning	11
5 Quality of learning and teaching	13
6 Support for learning difficulties	14
7 School as a learning place	15
8 School as a social place	16
9 School as a professional place	18
10 School and home	21
11 School and community	22
12 School and work	23
Sub-project 2: Monitoring the implementation of action	24
Planning action	25
Action phase	26
Evaluation of action	27

I. Part I: GETTING STARTED

1. Introduction

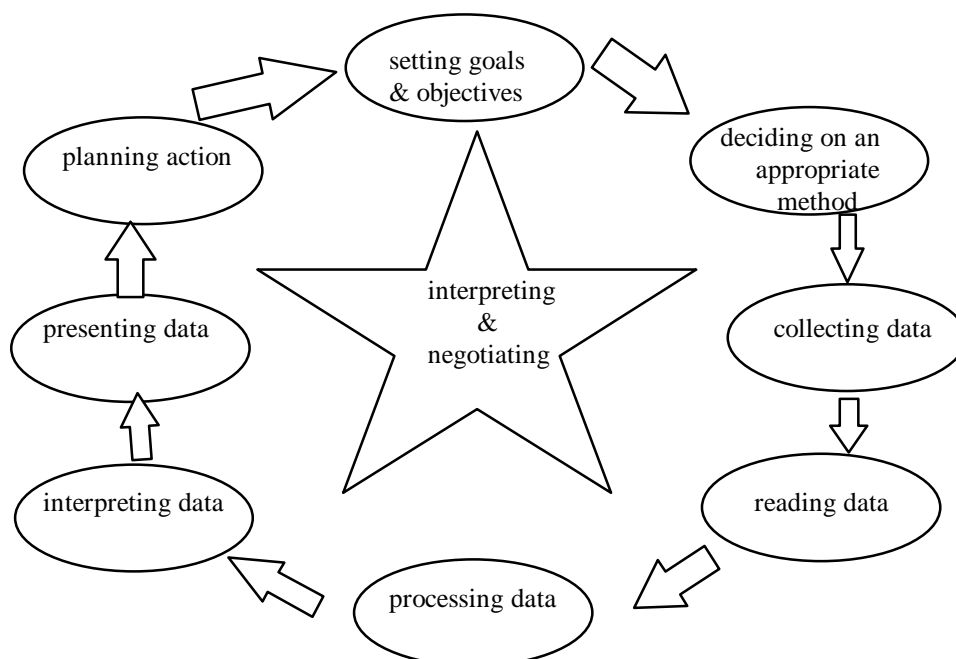
The practical guide to self-evaluation provides your school with methods of self-evaluation. This booklet and “Guidelines for participating institutions”, which you should have received by now, form the common core of the European pilot project on Quality Evaluation.

If you are a sub-project 1 school the way to proceed is: 1. complete the self-evaluation profile, 2. determine five areas for further investigation, and then 3. concentrate on the methods of self-evaluation suggested for these areas in this practical guide.

If you are a sub-project 2, you should also complete the self-evaluation profile. Hereafter only the last part of this practical guide is of immediate interest to you. Anyhow, we hope that you will find some methods of self-evaluation suggested in this guide inspiring for your ongoing work on improving your school.

2. Creating a culture for self-evaluation

Deciding on self-evaluation is a challenging step towards investigating into the quality of a school may be only evaluated externally previously. Care has to be taken therefore when setting out on the journey of self-evaluation. A self-evaluation exercise is not only a matter of working your way through a set of procedures (e.g. collecting data, interpreting data, presenting data) but is also a continuous process of interpretation and negotiation, as illustrated.



There is always an ethical aspect involved:

- (1) Whenever objectives are decided on, whenever data are collected and processed within a school, it is important to get the *consent* of the people involved.

For example: Deciding on tape-recording a staff meeting for the purpose of finding out what the pattern of interaction is like between male and female teachers requires the consent of the people present. In the presentation phase, interview data should only be made public with the interviewees' prior agreement.

- (2) If data have been interpreted and conclusions been drawn they have to be *validated* by the relevant stakeholders¹. Otherwise only one side of an issue is dealt with and the other perspectives are ignored. However, it is not a matter of simply balancing interests, but also of paying attention to the pluralistic values in (post)modern society.

The following points should therefore be considered in creating a favourable climate for self-evaluation:

Rules for creating a culture for self-evaluation

1. Involvement in the decision-making process of the project should be as wide as possible.
2. There is no right or wrong way of doing it, therefore self-evaluation must be sensitive to the different views involved.
3. Collecting and handling data must always be seen as a process of interpretation and negotiation.
4. Include as many views as possible when gathering data.
5. There should be discussion of the ownership of data so that individuals or groups are not compromised.
6. When action is taken keep everybody informed so that the process remains transparent.
7. Keep individual steps small, but bear in mind the grand design.

The following procedures are an example of how as many people as possible can be integrated in a discussion process. They are described here with a view to introducing the self-evaluation profile; however, they can be applied with other evaluation methods throughout the project if data from various people have to be aggregated in a short time.

3. Using the self-evaluation profile

The self-evaluation profile document intends to support and enhance the process of discussion among the school stakeholders. The following is a recommended process.

The school selects a group of pupils, parents and teachers to participate in the use of the self-evaluation profile. Each group should have a minimum of 12 people but a school may wish to involve a larger number.

¹ A "stakeholder" is a person with vested interest in the school. In short, s(he) has something at stake, that is: the school and the results of schooling may affect the person in some way or another, such as practitioners, pupils, parents, support services, policy makers and others.

The choice of people to be in these groups may be done by random choice or by selecting people to represent a spectrum of views. This cannot be a scientific study but it can attempt to involve a cross-section of school stakeholders.

These 36 people are then divided into 6 groups of six. There are two possibilities here:

- 1. Having 2 pupil groups, 2 parent groups and 2 teacher groups.
- 2. Mixing the groups so as that each group comprises 2 teachers, 2 parents and 2 teachers.

The advantage of method 1 is that three distinct perspectives will emerge and of itself can provide interesting 'triangulated' information. The second method may provide for a richer dialogue and insights, as long as these are carefully documented.

Whatever method chosen the steps are the following:

Each participant carefully and thoughtfully goes through the profile on his/her own responding to each of the twelve items, paying attention to any information that is on hand on the school.

When everyone has completed the profile the group of 6 comes together to share what they have written. They go through the profile item by item trying to agree on a score which everyone accepts as valid. It is important at this stage that participants do not either give in too easily and agree to a group score nor that they fight stubbornly for their position. The value of the process is the quality of the dialogue, the listening, the presentation of evidence, the regard for evidence and reasoned argument in coming to a decision. The critical friend can advise here and may be invited to oversee the process.

Having come to an agreed score for the group as a whole, the group then chooses one of their members to be their representative at the second stage of the process.

The 'second level group' revisits the profile and goes through the same process as before trying to reach a final school level agreement on a profile.

It may be that an agreed ranking occurs which represents a thought through well-argued case. It is important, though, that the group does not try to reach a compromise between opposing views and so produce a profile which represent neither set of views. It may be, for example, that views are polarised and the group feels it has to enter two different sets of scores.

Where the group cannot agree it should enter two scores. Each of these should be the 'modal' score, that is the most commonly held scores within the group. For example:

<i>Person:</i>	<i>Mrs A</i>	<i>Mr. B</i>	<i>Miss C</i>	<i>Mr. D</i>	<i>Miss E</i>	<i>Mrs F</i>
score:	1	1	2	4	4	3

The two modal scores here are 1 and 4 and should be entered in the profile.

SELF-EVALUATION PROFILE

School Code

--	--

Date

--

Please evaluate the school's standing in relation to each area on the following scale²:

Area	Rating	Recent evolution ⁺
I. Outcomes		
1 Academic achievement	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
2 Personal and social development	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
3 Pupils destinations	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
II. Processes at classroom level		
4 Time as a resource for learning	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
5 Quality of learning and teaching	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
6 Support for learning difficulties	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
III. Processes at school level		
7 School as a learning place	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
8 School as a social place	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
9 School as a professional place	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
IV. Environment		
10 School and home	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
11 School and community	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
12 School and work	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
V. Other areas		
13	++ + - --	↑ → ↓
14	++ + - --	↑ → ↓

² Please refer to the description of the areas in the following part of the guidelines.

II. Part II: SUGGESTED METHODS

4. Sub-project 1: Collecting and handling information

In this part the 12 areas of self-evaluation are described in more detail and accompanied by indicators. For each area two or three examples are given of how they can be evaluated by the school.

5. 1 Academic Achievement

The academic achievement of pupils is one of the central purposes of the school and has been widely used as a measure of effectiveness. Academic achievement is not, however, simply an outcome measure taken as the endpoint of schooling, but is a year on year measure of how well the school is doing its job, and day-to-day vital sign of the quality of school life.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- What knowledge and skills are pupils acquiring at different stages of their school career?
- With reference to pupils' prior attainment is their rate of progress higher, lower or close to what might be expected?
- Are the inequalities of achievement between the least and most able pupils decreasing or increasing during their time in school?

1.1 PORTFOLIO OF PUPILS

In most educational systems the academic achievement of pupils is usually measured by their success rate in exams. This indicator, however, only mirrors the knowledge and skills pupils show in a particular area at a certain period of time, and does not reflect their academic achievement in general.

In order to find out more about the latter pupils can be asked to compile a portfolio recording their achievements. To do so, the pupils are asked to go through school work over a certain period of time (e.g. half a school year or one year) and put together evidence of learning in specific academic areas. This can be done in different ways: Either they only collect materials in the areas they feel competent in, which gives an insight into their personal strengths. Or they can be asked to differentiate between the areas: AREAS OF EXCELLENCE AREAS OF AVERAGE PERFORMANCE AND PROBLEM AREAS. The portfolios are discussed and used as an indicator of the pupils' self-assessment and of their individual academic achievement.

1.2 PREDICTION OF SUCCESS

Since schools usually deal with heterogeneous groups of pupils it is important to monitor the success rate for the individual pupil (cohorts) and pay attention to the value added (what is the actual progress of the pupils compared to their prior knowledge?).

1.2.1 Value added

So called "value added" indicators try to measure the "value" that the pupil has gained during his or her time in school, or perhaps over the course of one year. They usually compare pupil's attainment on leaving school (success rate in examinations for example) to an expected level of attainment. The expected level is assumed of by taking a baseline measure of attainment, pupil age and socio economic status, and making predictions based on the background factor.

Here are two examples of "value added" indicators:

(a) Value added in relation to success rates in examinations:

Suppose that all pupils in the same region go through the same examination, or test, at the end of their schooling and that the regional authority is able to provide schools with regional success rates by age (and:or socio economic status SES).

- You may then calculate value added indicators for your school³.
- If you are unable to make such calculations (see footnote), then you may be able to compare rates of succes in your school with other schools with a similar age or socio economic profile.

Research has shown that this kind of measures may vary from one year to the other in most of the schools. Therefore it is better if such measures are available over a several years period.

(b) Value added with tests

If the attainment of pupils in a given subject is available at the beginning and at the end of a period, it is possible to draw a graph where the initial level of all pupils is on the horizontal axis and their final level is on the vertical axis (each pupil is represented by a point) . It is then possible to plot a relationship between initial and final level, which will be represented by a straight line (the regression line). If the pupils of the current year are above the line of last years pupils, it is likely that the effectiveness of teaching has increased in the school for that subject.

1.2.2 Cohort indicators

If the school has four grade levels, you may calculate how many, out of 100 pupils who entered the school in September 1993, reached some academic position(s) or standards, or level of attainment that you find valuable at the end of school year 1996/97.

³ Example: Suppose that at regional level 16 years old pupils have a success rate of .90 and 17 years old pupils have a rate of .70, then if 80% of the pupils in your school are 16 and 20% are 17 or more, then your expected rate of success is $(.80 \cdot .90) + (.20 \cdot .70) = .86$. If the observed success rate of the school is .75, which is inferior to .86 then the achievement of the school for pupils at this level is not as high as it should be.

1.3 PEER REVIEW

Since academic achievement plays a decisive role in pupils' advancement in school life and thereafter, the quality criteria for testing and marking should regularly be the subject of evaluation. Quality criteria can best be assessed by comparing and contrasting processes and results of testing and examining. There are several methods which may be used:

- within the school:
Teachers exchange their tests and examinations including the results and (if given) grading among the teachers of the same subject area (or across subjects) and discuss the differences.
- across schools:
Teachers (in a particular subject area) find a school (of the same or a similar type) and arrange a peer review arrangement, exchanging their tests and examinations including the results.
- across countries:
The same procedures can be used with schools in a different countries giving the review process a *European perspective*. (For setting up a review with another country contact the home page or use e-mail to get in touch with other schools. (If you have problems contact a member of the national committee in your country.)

6. 2 Personal and social development

Personal and social development is both an end purpose of school education and the context within which academic achievement makes sense to the individual pupil. While personal and social development is often seen as synonymous with a course or programme, it is a much broader concept than that, referring to the attitudes, values and skills which young people acquire and test out as an integral part of their experience within and outside school.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- How successful is the school in enhancing pupil qualities such as self-respect? civic attitudes? consideration for others? teamwork, initiative and ability to meet the future positively and creatively?
- To what extent does this take account of social class, gender, disabilities and other issues of inequality and injustice?
- To what extent are the values and purposes of personal and social development discussed and agreed among staff?

What evidence do we use to assess personal and social development, and what do pupils themselves do to evaluate themselves?

2.1 ASSESSING CIVIC ATTITUDES

There are different approaches to assessing pupils' civic attitudes.

(a) QUESTIONNAIRE

Design a questionnaire which asks the pupils to react to certain statements, such as:

- Laws may be disobeyed. The important thing is not to be caught.
- Women can be as good airline pilots as men.
- People may demonstrate in the street if they disagree with government policy.
- Suppose you earned some money by washing cars with friends. How would you decide how to use or share this money?
- To injure another pupil or steal his coat: Which of these actions should be punished more than the other?

(b) ROLE PLAY

Prepare role play situations with critical incidents which ask for a certain behaviour and assess the pupils' civic attitudes.

Examples: Witness of bullying, Finding a sum of money, sexual harassment, racial name calling, ...

(c) Q SORT

Specific (imaginary) characters are given to pupils (example: Tim blamed his friend Peter when they had done something wrong). Each statement is written on a card. The pupil is given a set of cards and is asked to sort them into four categories.

Is exactly like me	Is somehow like me	Is not really like me	Is not at all like me
--------------------	--------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

2.2 FOCUS GROUPS

Staff in small inter-departmental focus groups get together at a certain time of the year and discuss the personal and social development of their pupils. The exchange among the teachers involved should help in getting different views on the pupils' personal and social development. (A checklist or questionnaire on certain areas can be helpful here.)

A more targeted way of monitoring can be achieved if the teachers (across the departments) agree on and nominate pupils with personal/social problems and collect data inside and outside the classroom on those pupils during a certain period. They then discuss their findings.

2.3 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Material which pupils have produced during a certain time in the school year are collected and analysed against criteria of civic attitudes. This may be material produced in school. It may also be the outcome of a project work in a community or something similar.

Guiding questions for the analysis might be: How does the pupil present himself or herself in the material? What is his or her attitude towards others? Is there a consistent attitude across teachers and subjects? What kind of personal profile does the data suggest?

7. 3 Pupil destinations

The value of a school education is frequently judged by information on where pupils go when they leave and what they do, and whether or not the school has contributed to giving them a successful career or fulfilling vocation. It may only be possible to make judgements about the appropriateness and value of destinations, however, by seeking information from school leavers, or from their employers, on their preparedness for work or their commitment to continued lifelong learning.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- What are destinations of pupils who are leaving, or have left, school?
- To what extent are these destinations the most appropriate for their level of academic skill and personal development?
- How far did the school prepare pupils for these destinations?
- Are there any disparities in gender, social class, ethnic background in the pupils' destination?

3.1 SURVEY OF PUPILS' DESTINATIONS

The school does a survey of where its former pupils went to after the past three years (types of schools, universities, professional areas ...). There are two aspects involved:

- Where do the schools "send" the pupils after they leave?
- Where are they one, two, three ... years after leaving school?

The findings of the survey are analysed and discussed with a view to comparing the school's expectations and the actual paths former pupils take. If problem areas occur, further information has to be gathered to get deeper insights and data for further action.

3.2 INTERVIEWING FORMER PUPILS

The class teacher(s) of the (a) former final year class gets in contact with its pupils and

- (a) invite them to a meeting with the present (final year) pupils in the school. They interview them: Asking them how they rate the quality of school experience relative to their present personal and professional situation?
- (b) prepare a questionnaire about the relevant value of school education to their present situation (at work or continuing education ...).

3.3 FINDING OUT ABOUT SCHOOL/WORK REQUIREMENTS

It is important for the school, and pupils, to make connections between expectations of future destinations and the quality of education and training. To find out more about quality criteria

- (a) the school can develop a questionnaire which it sends to the pupils' future educational institutions or employers. If distances allow, representatives can be invited to the school to discuss the issue on a face-to-face basis;
- (b) pupils themselves are asked to gather information on their own professional expectations (from educational institutions or employers) and discuss the findings with their teachers in class.

8. 4 Time as a resource for learning

One of the most valuable resources for learning is time. Time in school is a limited commodity and has to be used well. Examination of teaching and timetabled time is, of itself, a partial measure since it is not synonymous with pupil 'time on task', or as researchers call it 'opportunity to learn'. As well as trying to maximise time within the classroom, schools rely on pupils using their own time outside school for learning, for homework and study. Monitoring the use of time out of school, as well as in school, is useful for pupils themselves to gauge the efficiency of their learning time.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- How many teaching hours cannot take place for whatever reason (lack of resources, absences of teachers, school closed for examinations or else)?
- How much of classroom time is spent on learning tasks as opposed to administration, discipline, settling in/packing up?
- How much time do pupils spend on homework? is it productive time?
- How much time is lost through truancy?
- How large are the inequalities of learning time between most and least able?

4.1 CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

Observations on the use of time as a resource can be carried out by the *pupils*, the *teacher* or an *external observer*. Areas of observation may be

- pupil time on task
- distribution of time in class for different activities
- time from when the bell rings until when the lesson actually starts

4.2 HOMEWORK LOG

Asking a sample of pupils to keep a log for a week can provide a valuable source of information on the time and work patterns spent on homework by the pupils. The following grid suggests some ways as to how the log can be structured. Pupils are asked to keep record of each episode of study, recording what they did and when (for example 3.26-3.42 Mathematics, 4.05-4.37 French).

Time started	Time finished	Time spent	Subject or topic	When was it given out	When has it to be done?	Difficulties?	Help given by?	Did you enjoy it?	Was it useful?

The completed logs are compared and analysed (not by pupils' own teachers) according to the distribution of work at different stages or by different ability groups.

Alternative: The pupils make a pie chart of the distribution of time for classwork or homework.

4.3 TIME LOSS ANALYSIS

Analysis of time lost in classes or courses with the help of questions like:

- How much time for learning is lost when teachers are absent?
- How much time do pupils lose by truancy?
- How much time as a resource for learning is lost when classes or courses do not take place?
- What are the percentages of lost time in relation to that allocated for each subject?

9. 5 Quality of learning and teaching

It should surprise no one that school effectiveness researchers have identified 'a focus on learning' as a key consistent feature of effective schools world-wide. This is likely to be associated with good teaching but the two are not synonymous. Good teaching is generally characterised by the existence of clear criteria, formative feedback, effective assessment, teacher responsiveness, pace and variety. None of these of themselves, however, guarantee that pupils will learn, since some pupils learn well without teaching and others fail to learn despite considerable instruction and individual help. In evaluating the quality of teaching and learning we must, therefore treat these two things in some way as separate.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- Are learning goals and criteria for achievement clear and understood by pupils and teachers?
- How effective is learning?
- How effective is teaching?
- What procedures are used in the school to monitor or enhance the quality of teaching, to ensure good conditions for teaching, to help teachers who may be in difficulty.
- Do all pupils enjoy equal quality of learning?

5.1 PUPILS' OPINION SHEET

The pupils are asked about their opinion on certain aspects of learning and teaching in class by means of a simple questionnaire. Suggestions for:

I can ask my teacher for help when I don't understand things all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> never <input type="checkbox"/>	I understand my teacher's instructions all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> never <input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher knows when I don't understand my work all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> never <input type="checkbox"/>
I can ask my teacher to explain the programme: all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> never <input type="checkbox"/>	The teacher helps me straight away when s(he) knows that I don't understand my work: all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> never <input type="checkbox"/>	I know the reason for doing each activity: all of the time <input type="checkbox"/> most of the time <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> never <input type="checkbox"/>

5.2 PEER VISITS

Teachers individually decide on ten aspects which are important for their teaching. (Examples: classroom management, clear tasks, control ...). From time to time they ask a colleague or person from outside to visit their class as a 'critical friend' and observe the teacher in one or more of these ten aspects.

Variation: The 'critical friend' has to focus on the *learning* that takes place in the classroom, rather than the teaching.

See also 1.3 Peer Review.

5.3 STORIES ABOUT LEARNING

Pupils form groups of three or four. Each group member tells his or her story about learning: *Tell the others a story about when you really learnt something* (in class or outside class)! Finally, the pupils of each group find out what was common in the various *learning stories* they have heard. Data from groups are collected and form the basis for further investigation and discussion.

10.6 Support for learning difficulties

All pupils at some time experience difficulties with learning. Some experience more acute and more sustained difficulties. All require support but in different ways, at different times and at different levels of intensity. A school's ability to know and respond to that range of problems is a critical factor of a school's quality.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- Who receives support and who doesn't?
- How are learning difficulties detected?
- What policies are there at school and classroom level and how effective are they?
- How effective is the system from the point of view of parents, pupils and teachers?
- To what extent are difficulties with learning a result of individual inadequacy or a consequence of inadequate teaching or ineffective organisation at school level?

6.1 SUPPORT FOR LEARNING QUESTIONNAIRE

The following items can be used for a questionnaire asking pupils about the support for learning difficulties

- teachers walk round the classroom helping pupils in need
- teachers explain things very clearly and carefully when they go over topics
- pupils feel they are achieving something
- class work is at the individual pupil's level of ability
- there is a high standard of work for each lesson
- there is a suitable amount of time to complete and go over work

6.2 RECORD OF NEEDS

In order to identify the special needs of individual, or groups of, pupils the school sets up a system to assess how such needs are identified. Anyone who identifies a child with some special need (teacher, social worker, psychologist ...) opens a record of needs, which is available for all staff and discussed among the teachers from time to time, with a view to identifying the most appropriate form of support. (Sometimes it may be helpful to 'shadow' a particular pupil or group of pupils for a certain time to find out more about the particular difficulties and needs respectively.) In addition, interviews with parents can help to identify particular problems of pupils.

6.3 HOME-SCHOOL DIARY

Pupils are asked to keep a home-school diary, in which they write down specific information on difficulties they have in managing certain tasks, problems with teachers, difficulty with work both at school and at home. It is important, however, that they give specific information about their difficulties, such as: when exactly did the problem occur?, what was the obstacle to doing the job successfully? what (information) was missing to complete the task? what have you tried so far in order to solve the problem? who and what could have helped? etc.

The (class) teacher regularly looks at the home-school diaries and discusses the findings with the people involved (pupil, teacher concerned, parent ...)

11.7 School as a learning place

School is a place for learning. That seems self-evident, but it is less obvious that it is a place in which everyone learns, and that pupil will learn best when their teachers are also good lifetime learners. At the heart of a learning place is a belief system which is concerned with success for all, which knows how to achieve that goal, and is committed to raising standards and to continuous improvement. There are wide differences in what children learn in school. Some learn little and some make rapid progress. Even high achievers might learn more with better communication, more consistent monitoring, higher expectations, or with a different form of organisation, and a commitment by the school to continually explore alternative ways of managing learning.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- Are pupils organised and grouped in ways that maximise their opportunities to learn?
- Are teachers committed to reviewing and ensuring progress of all pupils?
- Are their systems and procedures to ensure quality, and to support effective teaching?
- Is the curriculum adapted to meet pupil needs?
- Do the pupils think that their teachers are helpful?

7.1 THE FORCE FIELD

The 'force field' analysis helps in analysing the pros and cons which make or do not make the school a learning place. A form is given to the pupils asking to write things

that make and things that do not make the school a learning place. The following is an example:

Things in school that help you to learn	Things in school that hinder you to learn
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers who treat me as a person	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils who disturb me in my work
<input type="checkbox"/> Pupil who explain things to me	<input type="checkbox"/> Pupils who do not help me
<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers who worry about bad results	<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers who only care for the best pupils
<input type="checkbox"/> I am allowed to make mistakes	<input type="checkbox"/> Teachers who treat me unfairly

7.2 QUESTIONNAIRE ON LEARNING CLIMATE

The following kinds of questions/statements have been associated with a good learning climate; this again has been found favourable to the pupils' progress in learning.

a) Learning climate

Would you say that			
MOST	SOME	VERY FEW	NONE
of your teachers ...			

- ... worry when their pupils get bad results.
- ... do all that is possible to make children learn, even the weakest.
- ... are often unfair.
- ... are able to get respect from pupils.
- ... know how to be obeyed.
- ... give special attention to the brightest pupils.

b) Pupils' well-being

Do you			
fully agree	mostly agree	mostly disagree	fully disagree
to the following statements:			

- School is a place where...
- ... I feel depressed.
 - ... I feel happy.
 - ... I feel lonely.
 - ... people trust me.
 - ... teachers give me the marks I deserve.
 - ... I know I can reach a satisfactory standard in my work.
 - ... I can cope with my work
 - ... I have learnt things that will be useful to me.
 - ... I can talk with teachers about the way they mark my work.

12.8 School as a social place

School is a social place, and for many young people it is an important part of their social life in their growing years. In school they meet and make friends, some of which last for a lifetime. In school they test out their social selves, their relationships with the same and the opposite sex. They learn about authority, independence and

inter-dependence through the day-to-day routine and informal life of the school. Their success and progress as learners is closely related to the social climate and relationships in which they undertake their work. Evaluating the quality of social life is perhaps one of the most difficult things to do, but it is no less valuable or significant for that.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- Are rules clear, accepted and are rewards and sanctions applied with equity and justice?
- Is there a climate of mutual respect between pupils and between staff members (rather than bullying and disrespect)?
- Does the school provide opportunities for pupils to exercise decision-making and responsibility for others and for the school community as a whole?
- What is the quality of relationships between pupils and staff?
- Do pupils have opportunities to take an active part in the social life of the school?

8.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The following items can be criteria for evaluation in a questionnaire:

- an agreeable social context (*other pupils, adults*)
 - a non-disruptive environment
 - no discrimination, or favouritism
 - the opportunity to speak and be listened to
- material conditions (*time and space*)
 - a suitable amount of time for each lesson
 - acceptable standards of equipment
 - not too many pupils so 'you are all crammed up'

8.2 PHOTO EVALUATION

Photo-evaluation is a powerful evaluation method to find out more about the pupils' impressions of school as a social place. They are given the question "Where in school do you feel good, where not and why (not)?" and are asked to take pictures with a camera accordingly. The following procedure can be applied:

- Self-selected groups of four or five pupils are formed into teams.
- First each team discusses the places in school where they feel good and where not, then they agree on three or four places in every category to photograph.
- The teams decide on the details of what they want to photograph (e.g. people 'in sight' or not).
- The teams go and take the photographs as planned.

- When the pictures have been developed, each team produces a poster presenting their photos in the two categories (positive/negative) and writes comments, giving reasons for their choices.
- Each group presents their poster to the class. (At this point, pupils usually get involved in heated discussions about how they see their school)
- A possible next step: Teams organise themselves with a view to changing those things that they think need be changed and those things that are possible to change.

8.3 PERSONAL JOURNAL

Pupils are asked to each keep a personal journal (diary), in which they write down relevant information about their social well-being in school. The diary allows for information of a more personal kind, written down privately by each pupil (e.g. how they experience a day in school, how they are treated outside class, how they deal with conflict situations, bullying or violence for example.)

From time to time pupils have the opportunity to get together and talk about certain issues in their diaries and exchange their views with their teacher (or another person, such as social worker or psychologist). Keeping a diary has a strong self-reflexive element, therefore its main aim is the private record of the pupils' experiences. Nonetheless general aspects can be used for monitoring their personal and social development in such sessions.

13.9 School as a professional place

School is a professional place if:

- it has some system of data gathering and some decision-making procedures. This is important in order to deal in a professional way with changes taking place within and outside school and to set goals through planned and concerted action.
-
- it enhances attitudes of staff and provides for its professional development. The quality of school as a professional learning organisation may be judged by the extent to which it supports teachers, challenges them, helps them to grow and extend their range of skills.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- How does the school respond to changes in its environment, which may affect its pupils body, or other parts of school functioning??
- Is the school able to move in planned directions?
- What is the quality of internal discussions and decision-making procedures within the school? Who is involved in these discussions?
- Which kind of in-service training is provided for the staff? How is it organised? (amount, objectives, relation to the school situation)
- Are there other methods to support staff development? (to help staff members who meet difficulties with pupils, to help staff in evaluating the effects of their work etc.)

9.1 STAFF DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

Indicators to be used in a survey:

- Number of teachers taking part in in-service training.
- Time teachers spend in school outside lessons.
- Amount of time devoted to planning tasks.
- Time spent on decision-making on whole school issues.

- Policies on transfer of in-service training activities.
- Time spent with stakeholders.
- Amount of time devoted to external agencies (social services, police ...)

9.2 MANAGEMENT TASKS

Often heads of schools are insufficiently aware of how school management is related to other management tasks within and outside school. The following grid gives an overview of management tasks from different perspectives.

Evaluation grid for management tasks

task dimensions	administrative- organisational tasks (organisational culture/ infrastructure/ provisions/financial resources, ...)	leadership tasks (philosophy of school/ objectives/stand- ards/social architecture, ...)	(social) pedagog- ical tasks (curriculum/teaching and learning culture/ self-activity/integration, ...)
people affected			
head of school			
teachers			
pupils			
parents			
people outside school (community)			
inspectorate			

Similar to the home-school diaries kept by pupils (cf. 6.3), teachers can keep a time diary over a period of a week from getting up in the morning to going to bed at night. These provide a very rich source for analysis of a teacher's working week and how time is distributed.

14.10 School and home

Home and school are the two prime sites for learning and development. Learning is at its most effective when these two work together to the same end and are underpinned by the same values. What takes place in school can be extended and enriched in the home, and what is learned at home may be built on in the classroom. There are clearly responsibilities for both parents and teachers, but there is an onus on schools to inform parents about their children's progress and help them to provide the most encouraging and supportive environment for pupils' learning out of school.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- How does the school communicate with parents about their children's learning and progress?
- Is the information provided what parents want and what meets their needs?
- What do teachers learn from parents and what mechanisms are there for such learning to take place?
- Do parents feel welcome in the school?
- Are they equally treated?
- Do parents support their children's learning? What is the policy of the school in order to improve this support?

10.1 SCHOOL HOME SURVEY

Indicators for a school home survey:

- Percent of parents that the (head) teachers see individually in a year. Nature of meetings.
- Time devoted by (head) teachers to relations with parents.
- Information parents have about school decisions.
- Information teachers have about the home situation of pupils.
- Percent of letters home over the course of a month. Percentage of letters positive and negative.
- Percent of phone calls initiated by school or home. Nature of phone calls.

10.2 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS: PTA (SCHOOL BOARD) MEETINGS

The relationship between home and school is usually regulated by parent teacher association meetings. Analyse the protocols of the meetings of the past year and analyse them according to criteria such as:

- Influence of the parents on the decisions taken.
- Suggestions brought in by parents and how they were dealt with.
- Topics dealt with in view of importance for school/parents/....
- Percentage of issues raised by parents, teachers, pupils, head teacher.
- Percentage of parent concerns responded to by actions taken by the school.

15.11 School and community

Schools exist within communities and draw their life from those communities. They receive support from the community and benefit from its resources and opportunities for learning. They also have to respond to its social and economic problems - poverty, unemployment, vandalism, crime. The school may be the largest employer and the most significant resource centre within a community but may not exploit fully its resource richness or its capacity as a centre for a social and academic learning.

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- What does the school offer to the community?
- What does the school do to enhance school-community relations?
- Are there opportunities and forums for the school to consult with the community about issues of concern?
- Do the conditions of life in the community (wealth, employment, cohesiveness, confidence towards the future, expectations of school) create a supportive environment for the school?

11.1 CONTEXT ANALYSIS

School life always reflects other social systems which surround the school. Relationships with these are important to the effective working of the school. A context analysis offers a visual overview of how these interrelates, and help in developing differentiated developmental strategies.

- (a) Make a list of all the relevant contexts of your school (agencies, groups of people, individuals ...)
- (b) Differentiation of the relevant environments according to
 - their importance for the school
 - distance to the school
- (c) Description of the relation between the environments and the school from the external perspectives: expectations and fears (+ positive, - negative, ± ambivalent, --- particularity in the relationship)

11.2 MEDIA ANALYSIS

Find out how the school is referenced in local and regional media. When and what do papers and other media report about the school? How favourably? (Collect press clippings about the school and analyse them)

11.3 PUBLIC OPINION ANALYSIS

Conduct interviews in shops and other places where people of the community regularly go to. Find out how the school is talked about.

16.12 School and work

The relationship between the world of work and the world of the school has long been a focus for policy and research in many countries. The interface between education and the economy is a priority concern for the OECD. This is seen as a policy priority because of the importance of achieving a greater coherence and flow of information between the two sites. It is common in many countries for young people to spend more time in commerce and industry during their school years, in work experience or work shadowing for example, and for employers to spend more time in schools. Are such initiatives evaluated and how effective are they?

The questions to which a school might seek answers are:

- Is the school helping young people to develop the skills and qualities which employers want?
- Do employers provide information, support and resourcing for schools which helps them to do their job more effectively?
- What new forms of relationship between the workplace and the school place might make help to make learning and teaching more effective?

12.1 FINDING OUT WORK REQUIREMENTS

It is important for the school and pupils respectively to know what the expectations of the possible employers are. To find out more about those

- (a) the school can develop a questionnaire which it sends to the employers in the region. If distance allow for it, representatives can be invited to the school to discuss the issue on a more intimate basis;
- (b) pupils themselves are asked to gather information on their own career expectations from possible employers and discuss the findings with their teachers.

12.2 FOCUS GROUPS

The school wants to find out about the expectations of school from businesses in the area. The staff is divided into small (inter-departmental) focus groups which each concentrate on one employment area for their pupils, after they have been identified by the whole school (the method of analysis from 11.1 can be used here as well). They interview representatives of that employment area and write down a report of the area.

The findings of all groups are collected and put together to give an overview of the expectations.

III. Sub-project 2: Monitoring the implementation of action

A school taking part in sub-project 2 starts more or less where sub-project 1 should end: By virtue of self-evaluation or external evaluation prior to this project, a school will already have identified its strengths and weaknesses, and will use this as a starting point for further school development. Sub-project 2 deals with the implementation of this action, and will monitor it throughout the pilot project.

It is not possible to prescribe just *one* way of carrying out the action because this very much depends on what any individual school decides and the particular situation of the school (size, experience, environment etc.). However, an important ongoing aspect of monitoring is the creation of one action group for each action chosen. The action group should enjoy some autonomy in pursuing tasks and meet regularly. The action groups may also include one or two representatives of the people who are the "target" of the action (for instance, parents in the case of an action concerned with the improvement of the information flow between school and home).

The action group should have a clear idea of the objectives of the action in order to approach implementation in a flexible way. As experience has repeatedly shown whatever the action is and in whatever domain it is situated almost nothing happens exactly as it has been anticipated. Unexpected changes may take place and unexpected effects may occur, so affecting the development and direction of the action.

The implementation of action consists of three phases:

- Planning action
- Action phase
- Evaluation of action

- Planning action

The planning phase includes the agreement on the area or areas in which actions take place in the school. It also deals with the identification of resources, the setting up of one or more action groups and the design of follow-up documents. The documents should be "light" and easy to handle. Two kinds of documents may be suggested:

- (a) a (short) list of context indicators, what action was taken, and the immediate effects of the action(s);
- (b) a journal which is kept by each member of staff (and other people) involved in the action(s), in which (s)he writes whatever seems important to him or her. The discussion of journal entries may show unanticipated effects and suggest the introduction of a new indicator.

Based on the findings of previous self-evaluation and the Self-Evaluation Profile, the school project group works out the specific priorities which will form its future development taking account of strengths and weaknesses. It is important to make sure that the picture given of the school through the evaluation and the interpretation of data is as accurate as possible. It is helpful, therefore to include as many stakeholders as possible in the discussion and setting of aims. The nominal group technique is a method which can help in pooling judgements of individuals for a whole group or school.

Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

In a group of 5 to 9 members, NGT takes about 70 minutes and includes the following four steps:

1. *Individual generation of ideas in writing*: Everybody writes down their own ideas to the question "**Which development area should our school give priority in the implementation phase during the school year 1997/98?**" [4-8 minutes]
2. *Round-robin recording of ideas*: Each member gives one contribution from his or her list when called on by the moderator. The contributions are recorded on a large flip-chart. (Discussions should not take place in this phase.) [15-25 minutes]
3. *Serial discussion of the list of ideas*: Once all the contributions have been collected on the flip-chart, the group members discuss the meaning of the items listed. [2 minutes/item]
4. *Ranking*: Each group member decides on a priority of the items which will eventually lead to a ranking of the 3-5 most important items.[15 minutes].

Any group larger than 12 or 13 should be subdivided. With a large group (whole school), a plenary session is needed to introduce the four steps, then the group is divided into subgroups of about 10 persons who conduct simultaneous NGT sessions. In this case it will be helpful to consolidate the lists of each subgroup for the final plenary session, where the rankings of the individual groups are presented. The final list which combines duplicate items into new categories or descriptions and is likely to have between 15 and 25 items. The meaning of each item should be clarified for the whole group before step 4.

The vote is tabulated and displayed to the group. The items agreed on then become the target areas for implementation during the pilot project. The school decides on

whether it will concentrate on one or more areas, according to interests or size of school.

The areas agreed on form the basis for the action plan in each of the respective areas. It is important that the action plan includes a realistic number of initiatives and is based on activities which can be dealt with reasonably within the time frame given of the pilot project.

It is important that a chairperson is responsible for each action group. He or she reports to the school project group. The school project group co-ordinates and monitors the overall school development process all the way through the pilot phase, whereas the action groups steer and monitor the what goes on in the particular action.

- Action phase

The action is accompanied by monthly meetings of the action group(s). The meetings draw on the support of the two kinds of documents defined in planning phase (list of indicators and personal journal). The following questions can help in monitoring the action:

- Is the action developing well?
- What are its direct effects on the initial goal?
- Are there unanticipated effects (positive or negative)?

What is the difference between direct and indirect effects?

An action may be taken because it is expected to bring about an improvement at school level. The effects of the action on the process are the direct ones. The effects on the outcome are the indirect effects.

Here is an example:

Action is taken against bullying in order to improve the self-respect of pupils and to enhance their academic achievement through an improvement in social and learning climate of the school. Let us suppose that three things happen: there are more staff in the school playground and in the corridors; encouragement is given to victims to claim for redress; punishment is grounded on restitution rather than on exclusion; condemnation of acts of violence.

In this case, these are the three levels of monitoring of actions and three questions to answer:

- Have we really succeeded in increasing staff presence in the school playground? How many pupils came to meetings where the new policy was explained? Are victims of bullying now more likely to make a complaint? (implementation)
- Has the number of violent acts decreased? Have we improved the social and learning climate of the school? (direct effects)
- Have we succeeded in improving the pupils' academic achievement and their self-respect? (indirect effects)

In order to make sure that the action group works on the tasks set, it may be helpful to use the following framework, in which the further steps are decided on the basis of the following questions: WHAT? WHO? WHEN?

WHAT? tasks to be done	WHO? responsible persons	(until) WHEN? time frame (obligatory)

This frame can help in setting an agenda for the action.

It is often argued that any action taken by a school takes a long time to show tangible results. However, there are strong arguments to suggest that early effects are good predictors of the final outcomes of an action, because early positive effects, if they are made visible for the actors, enhance their motivation⁴.

- Evaluation of action

The final evaluation should not only address direct effects but also indirect ones, both the anticipated and unanticipated effects. Whatever action is taken, unanticipated effects may occur in almost each of the twelve areas of which the list can therefore be used as a memorandum. There you will also find evaluation methods to apply.

If you need support in this work, do not hesitate to contact your critical friend or the chairperson of the national committee.

⁴ See "The Memphis Restructuring Initiative", in *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, vol. 8, n° 1, March 1997. In this initiative, about 30 primary or secondary schools in the Memphis (Mississippi) area experimented with a new design for schooling. It was found out that "fast starter" schools had some common characteristics: "strong administrative leadership, strong commitment to achievable aspects of their chosen design. They made aggressive use of professional development opportunities, and found ways to meld the design with pre-existing initiatives"(p 159).

Acknowledgements

The questions in 2.1 have been taken from a questionnaire on civic attitudes which was used in France for a research on middle schools. Reports of this research are *Le fonctionnement des collèges et ses effets sur les élèves de 6ème et 5ème*, Ministère de l'Education Nationale, Dossiers Education et Formations, n°32, 1993, and *Evolution des acquis cognitifs et socio-affectifs des élèves au cours des années de collège*, à paraître in Ministère de l'Education Nationale, Dossiers Education et Formations.

4.2, 5.1 have been adopted from *The homework file* by the Quality in Education Centre for Research and Consultancy for the Scottish Office.

8.2 has been adopted from Ulrike Steiner-Löffler. *Taking Photographs as a Medium of Self-evaluation*. Dundee: Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum/CIDREE, 1996.

9.2 has been taken from Michael Schratz. *Initiating change through self-evaluation: Methodological implications for school development*. Dundee: Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum/CIDREE, 1997.

The description of NGT (p. 25) is based on Carl M. Moore, *Group Techniques for Idea Building*, Thousand Oaks/London: Sage, 1994.