Operating principles of a transformed class

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This document summarizes the operating principles and practices of a collaborative class after transformation.

Summary

The principles identified here correspond to the response of the hundreds of visitors to the School for Dialogue in 2018 and 2019 when asked the following question:
What impressed you the most during your visit?

Autonomy
piloting, controllability by the student, implication (who wants to do this?)
objectives vs activities,
progressive effort training,
management of several tasks in parallel,
variable freedom according to his ability to manage it,

Organization
reassuring routines, habits, rituals,
notebooks rather than loose sheets or drafts,
automation of everything that can be,
optional teacher: the teacher has managed to make himself optional when he can leave the school all day without affecting learning.

Working climate
calm, sense of urgency, productive stress (student's formulation), timeboxing, excellence, smartphone excluded,
pace: drill, mini-course, autonomous and collaborative work, tests, sport, classroom meeting, cleaning, educational games, management tasks.
pleasure.

Differentiation
proximal development zone - taking each one back where they are, filling in the gaps,
starting a chapter again until mastery,
each one is encouraged to surpass themselves: the most behind takes years back to rebuild strong fundamentals, the fastest completes the curriculum in less than a year.
the differences in age and level reinforce the group's academic and relational performance.

Assimilation
the fundamentals are repeated, exercised regularly, until becoming automatic and no longer cluttering the working memory.

Immediate feedback
delegated on-site correction, validation by the teacher with the student, immediate oral catch-up

Instructive error
solutions provided in advance,
decontaminating the error from the fault,

recovery of confidence through small victories.
empowerment (vs victimization): "yes, I made a mistake",
growth mindset,
assessment expected and requested rather than feared.

Progress board
gamification (video game progress bar),
empowering objectification,
benevolent publicity, facilitation of mutual aid.

Mutual assistance
mutual teaching, mini-course from one student to others, study in groups of 2 or 3,
tutoring: an older student keeps a younger one at work near him,
A frequent response from the teacher: "find a student who understood".

Relationship
between the student and the teacher, and between the students,
kind & firm, positive discipline,
gratuity-privileges, classroom meeting,
mood tour, positive thinking, collective snack,

Co-ownership
the student is no longer consumer of his school but co-builder,
daily direct framed governance with voting decisions,
distribution of school management tasks: reception, IT, cleaning, ...

delegation
Pyramid of expertise, stable profession for assistants,
guarantors of work climate, subject assistants, correctors, school management ...

Versatile teacher
competent in education and not only in instruction,
eager to help the student in several of his subjects even without being a specialist.

Observer teacher
listens, analyzes how students work,
overview of the class with short individual interventions.

Involved parents
parental training in positive discipline,
close communication between school and parents.

Adapting premises
sitting and standing desk, sofa, blackboard, walking,
noise management, whisper, sound level meter, noise-cancelling headphones,
screens facing the center,

minimization of the number of neighbours, use of the corridor or the playground during lessons.

Meta-cognition
awareness of his student functioning, of his way of learning and of interacting with others.

Motivation
generated by all of the above.

Detail

Autonomy

Piloting
The student is pilot of his learning and he makes a lot of decisions himself: what subject to do now, which chapter, which learning method (reading, exercises, video, mutual aid, etc.)? This controllability over what he does increases his motivation.

Involvement
The student has many opportunities to volunteer to get involved in the school.

Objectives vs activities
The framework has moved: the student is less controlled over what he does, over how he learns. Contrariwise, the focused is on the objectives to be achieved, which strengthens his autonomy.
The document "Objectives vs activities" gives examples of school objectives, in contrast to the activities and exercises generally given in traditional schools.

Effort
Many students are not very autonomous. Many struggling students are unable to make an academic effort. This capacity to make an increasingly long effort is trained.

Several tasks
The student has several subjects and for each of them several chapters that he studies in parallel. For each chapter, it has several possible learning activities. If he is stuck in an activity, he can take care of another task while waiting for someone to unlock it.
In contrast, in many traditional classes, when a student is stuck he tends to wait as if he was dependent on the availability of the teacher.

Variable freedom
Not all students are autonomous and responsible. They are on their way. The freedom given to each student depends on their ability to manage it.

Organization

Routines
In an environment where the learner has a lot of responsibilities, the habits and rituals are reassuring: knowing that at such a time such activity is expected and how to participate. For example, the fact that the drills all have the same layout, the same convention for folding the sheet.

Notebooks

Loose sheets are lost by most children and teenagers. Only the most academic ones classify them usefully. On the other hand, paper notebooks facilitate the organization of learning and care. Even the draft sheets are replaced by a workbook. It becomes easier for the student, his teachers and his parents to assess the progress and the work accomplished.

Queue
A system where the names of the students who wait for the teacher's availability are noted, allows these students to return to work without fear of losing their turn.

Automation
Anything that can be automated or systematized, is. For example, assistants student are responsible for preparing the class every day.
The teacher has managed to make himself optional, to make the students collectively autonomous and responsible, when he can leave school for a whole day without harming with learning.

Work climate

Students work in a calm environment, with what they call "productive stress".
As they are very free in their learning, they naturally tend to slow themselves down to socialize and to avoid doing schoolwork at home. To counterbalance this, the framework establishes a feeling of urgency which manifests itself via:
- the encouragement of the teachers,
- the reminder of the commitments: every day the student reviews with the teacher his commitments from the previous day.
- timeboxing: the use of timers to limit each activity over time: self-study, an explanation by another student, drill, teacher's mini-course, etc.

This last point allows you to adjust the pace over time and not the other way around. The teacher is attentive to sinking, to the drop in speed. He paces the day to bounce multiple times: drill, mini-course, autonomous and collaborative work, tests, sport, classroom meeting, cleaning, educational games, tasks Management.

The notion of pleasure is injected into the desire for excellence, for the pupils to surpass themselves. Light and noisy mini-breaks allow you to regularly fill your attention tank.

Everything is in place to protect the focus of the students, such as the ban on the smartphone and its distracting messages, or the layout of the premises.

Accommodation

The posture of the pupils varies according to the people and the time: seated desk, standing tall desk, seated common table, armchair, blackboard, walking.

Students learn to manage noise themselves, for example with a sound level meter, and especially with the example of teachers who whisper. The use of ear protection is encouraged. The use of headphones for music is negotiated.

Computer screens should always be turned towards the center of the room to show everyone that there is schoolwork there. The teacher tries to lead by example although it is difficult to turn your back on the center of the room while monitoring the class.

The desks are arranged to minimize the number of neighbours and therefore distractions. We, therefore, avoid islets most of the time. Students are also trained to completely modify the classroom configuration in 30 seconds, for example, to position the desks in a circle for a classroom meeting.
The teacher does not hesitate to use the corridor, for example, to allow working in total silence. He can even suggest that the most independent students use the playground to work during lessons.

Differentiation

The teacher places the student in his proximal development zone, that is to say, a difficult and attainable level, just beyond his comfort zone. Everyone picks up from where he is regardless of their administrative level. A 15-year-old pupil who did not understand 2/3 = 4/6 must colour fractions as he should have done at 8 years old, or even at 4 years old by cutting the kindergarten cakes. The student with low scholar affinity finds small victories again. He fills the gaps necessary for learning the curriculum of his year, even if it means falling behind on this program.

For its part, the official curriculum followed by the student is rather learned during mini-courses and autonomous work. Each student starts his chapter again until the mastery. Not all students are in the same chapter. Everyone is encouraged to surpass themselves.

The differences in age and level reinforce the group's academic and relational performance, whereas in a traditional class with simultaneous teaching, such differences are problematic.

Assimilation

The basics are repeated, exercised regularly until they become automatic and no longer clutter the working memory.

The student memorizes every day what should be, such as spelling or multiplication tables. He trains his mental procedures, such as grammar rules or the conversion of quantities, until these procedures are no longer conscious. The gaps and these automatisms are specially trained during the drills.

Immediate feedback

The student immediately checks whether the exercise he has just performed is correct. He often works with the solution book open on his desk. Students are systematically provided with the "teacher" version of their textbook, the one containing all the answers, preferably with development.

On the other hand, during the tests, the student is isolated, far from any answer, from any possibility of cheating. Then his test will be corrected in class, directly after having passed it, typically by another student provided with the solution, before express validation by the teacher.

Some exercises are open, without a fix. This is often the case in languages where you have to write a text. Students are provided with correction grids to know which items they need to be attentive during their writing. Assistant students, sometimes older, are trained in this type of correction. They pre-correct the exercise texts which the authors then improve, before presenting them almost correct to the teacher who corrects in a class by giving private oral feedback to the student. During this interaction, it is common for the teacher to verify orally whether a concept is well acquired.

Instructive error

The teacher frequently decontaminates the error from the fault. Making a mistake is pleasing if it is not repeated. Making mistakes is presented as a normal way to learn. The student is encouraged to step out of his comfort zone to make new, informative mistakes. And for them to be instructive, they must be detected: the solution to the exercises are provided in advance.

In his behaviour too, the pupil is invited to admit his mistakes, not to be ashamed of them before being encouraged to learn from them and change his actions. He is empowered while he tended to victimize himself.

The "fixed mindset" attitude is deconstructed in favour of a "growth mindset" (Carol Dweck).

In this context, assessments are expected, even requested rather than feared;

Progress board

The student's progress is objectified to help him realize that he is the pilot of his efforts and therefore of his progress.
A progress board enables the student to see the chapters mastered in relation to what remains to be done. It contributes to a gamification of learning, the table then corresponding

to the progress bar of a video game. Students love to put stamps on them and see themselves progressing.

The grade in the report card depends directly on this progression. Each student can predict their score at any time based on the amount of achievements.

This table is displayed publicly in the class with kindness, without any stake in the competition. It facilitates mutual aid.

Mutual aid

The adult almost no longer explains collectively. Nor will he run from student to student to give private lessons. But the student needs explanations, human interactions.

Each student becomes a potential teacher for another student. Pupils explain with great pleasure what they have understood. This strengthens their own learning. Some even hurry to understand by the sole motivation of being able to explain next. In mutual teaching, each pupil has the possibility of receiving as many small private lessons as he wishes, from other pupils.

The teacher promotes these mutual explanations by often answering students' questions with: "find a student who understands." He also organizes mini-lessons given by a student to the whole class. He can also authorize for a limited time (timeboxing) the study in groups of 2 or 3.

In terms of behaviour, attention, an older student is sometimes the tutor of a younger one whom he keeps with him to help him stay focused.

Relationship

The teacher builds a relationship of trust with each student and promotes good relationships between students. It embodies kindness and firmness as prescribed by positive discipline.

Teachers tend to avoid sanctions in favour of a reward system, for example of bonus points to be spent at auctions to buy temporary privileges.
Consequences are decided during the classroom meeting, either by the enactment of rules (what consequence for a delay, for example), or by the debate on particular cases (what consequence for Johnny who stole a smartphone from another student).

Link building activities are regularly organized, such as group snacks, or positive thinking tours where each student identifies a positive event that happened to him in the morning.

Co-ownership

In a traditional school, the student is often treated as a school consumer. In an empowering teaching environment, the student is involved in organizational decisions and in their execution. Maybe the decisions will be similar to what adults would have decided, but the feeling of belonging is not the same.

Co-decision is exercised in shared governance with voting (classroom meeting). Co-execution is exercised via management tasks distributed among the students: reception, IT, cleaning, ...

Delegation

The teacher has changed the execution posture. He was the one who did. He becomes the one who organizes. He delegates to the students everything that can be, starting with the tasks where he has the least added value, such as clearing the board or distributing sheets.

When students are experts in these low-level tasks, these are less profitable. The teacher can give them more complex tasks, such as monitoring the work environment or correcting questions. Released from these tasks, the teacher can also increase his level of expertise to spend more time on his real added value: how to learn math or languages.

This delegation is more satisfactory for the students when it is stable. A student must learn a job, sometimes complex, such as corrector. The teacher will spend time teaching it. To experience the satisfaction of being effective, the student must remain in his profession for at least several weeks, or even several months depending on the complexity of it.

Versatile teacher

The teacher works as much on the education of the pupil as on his instruction. Embodying the desired psychosocial skills is fundamental to developing students.

In the later years, the teacher is no longer the specialist of a single subject. It can help the student in several disciplines without being a specialist in these disciplines. He even sometimes enjoys learning from a student.

Observing teacher

The teacher listens and observes his students a lot, while in the traditional posture he was more often focused on teaching them and maintaining their attention.

Here, his students work independently and he often has time to watch them, analyze their way of learning and advise them on their learning methods.

If the teacher is sometimes busy on short individual interventions, he mostly keeps an overview of the class, as a conductor.

Involved parents

Parents are trained in the "family" version of positive discipline. This gives them a vocabulary and techniques common with teachers who have followed the "class" version of positive discipline.

The teacher takes care of the school-parent communication that too many students tend to hinder. The autonomy of his class frees him from time to contact parents on several channels, such as the telephone or electronic messages.

Meta-cognition

The student becomes aware of how he works. He can describe how he learns and interacts with others. He knows his difficulties better and better, and how to improve them or get around them. He becomes aware of his automatisms and can create new ones.

Daily activities are organized to learn to express his emotions, such as the mood tour where each student indicates his emotion in the morning.

The way in which learning is organized directs the student towards better learning strategies. The teacher spends time explaining the effective strategies and reframing the student who deviates from them.

Motivation

Each element above contributes to the motivation of the students. The pivots are:
- working at the right level of difficulty,
- piloting your learning,
- having immediate feedback,
- interacting with other students,
- being in a caring and stimulating environment.

DIFFERENTIATION *IS*

AN IDEA AS **OLD** AS EFFECTIVE TEACHING	Lessons designed around **PATTERNS OF STUDENT NEED**	USE OF **WHOLE-GROUP, SMALL-GROUP & INDIVIDUAL TASKS** **BASED ON CONTENT AND STUDENT NEEDS**
VALUING *and* **PLANNING** *for* **DIVERSITY** *in* **HETEROGENEOUS SETTINGS**	*Necessary for success with standards for a* **broad range of learners**	**PURPOSEFUL USE OF FLEXIBLE GROUPING**
A **STUDENT-FOCUSED** WAY OF THINKING ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING	**TEACHING UP**	**AT THE CORE OF QUALITY TEACHING**
ASCD LEARN. TEACH. LEAD.	Designed to **ADDRESS LEARNING & AFFECTIVE NEEDS** that *all* students have	

→ → → Learn more about the book at www.ascd.org/differentiatedclassroom.
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DIFFERENTIATION *IS NOT*

TRACKING OR GROUPING STUDENTS INTO CLASSES BY "ABILITY"	**INCOMPATIBLE** *with* **STANDARDS**
BLUEBIRDS, BUZZARDS & WOMBATS (ability grouping within a classroom)	**DUMBING DOWN** teaching for some students	Something *extra* on top of good teaching
Mostly for students identified as **GIFTED**	A SET OF **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**	MOSTLY FOR STUDENTS WITH IDENTIFIED **LEARNING CHALLENGES**
INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION	**IEPs FOR ALL**
ASCD LEARN. TEACH. LEAD.	>>>>>> A SYNONYM FOR <<<<<< **GROUP WORK**	

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