

THE TEN HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NEW CROSS-THEMATIC CURRICULUM FOR COMPULSORY EDUCATION

1. Cross-thematic Approach to Curriculum

Although in the new curriculum for compulsory education (K-Grade 9) the traditional school subjects are maintained, a holistic approach to content learning is followed, whereby cross-disciplinary connections and relationships rather than delineations between academic disciplines are promoted.

Moreover, emphasis is placed on the processes through which academic knowledge can be acquired as well as on the values and attitudes associated with academic learning and thinking.

All these can help pupils to formulate a more comprehensive view of the world, using their knowledge and skills to understand the available facts.

2. Updating Core Knowledge and Skills

In the new cross-thematic curriculum the content is updated and emphasis is placed on core knowledge and skills necessary for understanding the basic concepts and structures of each knowledge domain/subject area.

Therefore, a spiral approach to core knowledge and skills is utilized, according to which core knowledge is first introduced at a basic level and then reintroduced at a middle and at a high level of abstraction, all the while building on pupils' prior knowledge.

In order that high levels of internal cohesion of school knowledge are achieved, the content in the new curriculum is organized around disciplinary and cross-disciplinary concepts. These help the curriculum to overcome fragmentation of content.

3. Eliminating Overlapping and Duplications

Eliminating overlapping and minimizing duplications saves time, which can be allocated to the in depth study of core knowledge and skills. Thus, pupils are better prepared to understand the interrelations between the different areas of knowledge/content areas.

4. A 'Flexible Zone' of Time for Student Projects

In the cross-thematic curriculum a period of 2-4 hours per week is established within which pupils implement collective projects on topics of their interest. Thus, it is expected that pupils will discover connections between school knowledge and their everyday experiences and that school in general will open its doors to the outside world.

5. Cross-thematic Projects within Each School Subject

Besides the projects of the 'Flexible Zone', at the end of each semester pupils are expected to work within each school subject on topics related to the content covered. These activities aim to deepen their understanding of school knowledge and develop their cognitive and social skills and attitudes, necessary for their active involvement in future life.

6. Pedagogical Enrichment of the School Context

The principles and the activities introduced in the new curriculum aim to develop critical and creative thinking abilities, imagination and positive attitudes towards learning through exploration and discovery. All these are necessary for individuals in order to become creative and contributing members of multicultural societies in times of dramatic changes.

7. New Technologies as a Means for Learning

New Information and Communication Technologies are introduced in the primary school curriculum as a means for learning and not as a separate subject.

8. New Approaches to Evaluation and Learning

Evaluation is seen as an organic part of teaching and learning and thus, many different approaches are suggested. All of them include self-evaluation procedures, which can improve dramatically metacognitive skills and meta-knowledge.

9. A Broad Spectrum of Literacies

Successful living in post-modern times presupposes that one is fully literate in many areas, such as reading, science, technology and mathematics.

10. New Educational Materials

The implementation of the main principles of the cross-thematic curriculum presupposes a variety of educational materials, such as school books, educational CD-ROMs, maps, posters etc. The main characteristics of the materials and the criteria for their selection are described in great detail.

