

# BRICKS

METHODOLOGIES FOR BUILDING TEACHING BRICKS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
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## PRESENTATION OF THE BRICKS PARTNERSHIP

### &LEARNING

&LEARNING is a social impact company founded in 2014 in Copenhagen, Denmark, with the aim to make teaching and learning in schools more creative, engaging, and meaningful. The company lead educational development projects, facilitate action learning programs, develops learning / teaching materials, and produce articles, publications, and videos to share good teaching practices. &LEARNING has completed tasks and assignments in Denmark, Greenland, The Nordic region, and East Africa.

### CSCI

CSCI is a regional training agency set up in 1999 in Novara with the aim of establishing connections and ongoing relations between schools, public administration, and corporate world. Consortium members include universities, secondary schools, companies, associations, private training organisations and municipalities in the province of Novara. We are moved by the desire to contribute to the growth of the cultural and economic reality of the territory.



A focus group with 8 teachers and the head master of Skorpeskolen, a private school in Denmark, was carried out to investigate the wishes and needs for flexible didactic bricks in the day-to-day teaching.

## BRICKS IN SHORT

BRICKS is a development project supported by Erasmus+. In the project, &LEARNING from Denmark and CSCI from Italy works together and involves teachers in developing so-called 'didactic bricks' - flexible learning activities that can be used by teachers to engage pupils in working creatively with the SDGs. The focus is on primary and middle school – and knowledge and knowhow from the school subjects at these levels will be included. We have chosen 'BRICKS' as the title to highlight that we will explore and gain insights on how to develop flexible and valuable learning activities that can be chosen, combined, and adapted according to the teachers' own didactic wishes and needs. The ambition is to develop an engaging and inclusive learning tool. In the project, we will identify and describe inspiring cases, conduct focus groups and a survey to include teacher's viewpoints - and not least involve teachers in developing and testing concrete learning activities. The BRICKS project is a preliminary study for a longer development work that has only just begun.

## GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Increase the skills of teaching staff in respect to the use of inclusive, differentiated and varied methodologies for learning;
- ❖ Increase the inclusion of pupils (6-13 years old), both those with special educational needs and all other pupils, through their active and explorative participation in their own learning pathway;
- ❖ Support teachers in using teaching activities, methods etc., where pupils are engaged in exploring and solving real world problems related to environment and climate (SDGs), while they apply and acquire knowledge from school subjects and grow their 21st Century Learning Skills (creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking).

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Support teachers in primary and lower secondary schools through easy access to and combined use of delimited, creative, and clear structured activities, methods etc. (didactic bricks) developed, gathered, composed, tested, and communicated by teachers;
- ❖ Increase pupils' engagement, co-determination, inclusion, and active involvement supported by didactic bricks;
- ❖ Increase the internationalization capacity of the partnership, thanks to comparisons and cooperatively constructed research, in order to achieve European result.

## FOCUS GROUPS IN DENMARK, ESTONIA, AND LATVIA

We have carried out 3 focus groups in 3 countries in May and June to explore if teachers in different countries express the same didactic needs and wishes. The focus groups were done at 3 schools with teachers volunteering. The focus group in Denmark were done at Skorpeskolen in the North of Zealand. 8 teachers and the headmaster of the school participated in this. The focus group in Estonia was held at Gaia Kool, and the focus group in Latvia was held at Ikšķiles Brīvā Skola. In these two, 5 teachers and a headmaster participated. Some of the main findings of the focus groups were:

- ❖ Many teachers don't see the point in changing anything – they need to be motivated for change. The wish for change has to come from the teachers themselves. They tend to use the same teaching methods again and again. Some teachers lack a gentle push to try something new.
- ❖ Many useful teaching methods already exist. Teachers are not aware of this, and they are scattered out on different platforms and in different formats that makes it less likely that teachers will find and use them.
- ❖ There will be much value in collecting, what good and creative teachers are doing, and making it accessible for other teachers. Access to other teacher's methods / practices is valuable.
- ❖ Most teachers are looking for 'ready to use' materials and ideas for teaching. The materials should include step by step guidance on how to carry it out.
- ❖ The main challenges seen from the teachers' perspective in trying new teaching/learning materials: Lack of time for preparation, insecurity and fear of losing control, lack of knowledge and know how (competence).
- ❖ Be aware of language issues - some teachers are not confident if they must read or communicate in other languages than their own native language. Thus, materials must be communicated in teacher's own language.
- ❖ Cooperative Learning (CL) is a good inspiration. Teachers who learned the CL structures years ago still use them many years later. They are flexible, easy to vary and adapt to support the didactic needs of the individual teacher.
- ❖ Make it clear and visible how the school subjects can be brought into play with the didactic bricks.
- ❖ It's important to ensure the ownership by the students. Over time, it would be ideal if the students themselves can choose which methods they will use in their learning projects.

## CO-CREATING THE BRICKS

The co-creation of the BRICKS is carried out by 4 Danish and 4 Italian teachers. The teachers have all experiences from teaching Primary and/or Secondary school kids and have been chosen because they are didactically creative and competent within the subjects they teach. The Danish teachers have chosen food waste as the thematic challenge, and the Italian teachers have chosen inequality between genders as their focus point. Each national group will develop minimum 8-10 didactic bricks. &LEARNING and CSCI facilitates the co-creation process as a mix of creative online meetings and individual development work, where each of the 8 teachers develop didactic bricks using a template that we have created. On June 14<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, we mixed the groups, so 2 Danish teachers met with 2 Italian teachers in order to present their bricks – and gain initial feedback from each other. Over the coming months, the 8 teachers will develop 3 didactic bricks each and prepare them for testing and further feedback.

## HOW TO FOLLOW THE PROJECT

If you want to follow the BRICKS project and stay connected, you can apply for membership of the project's Facebook Group using this link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2901103966853854>



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