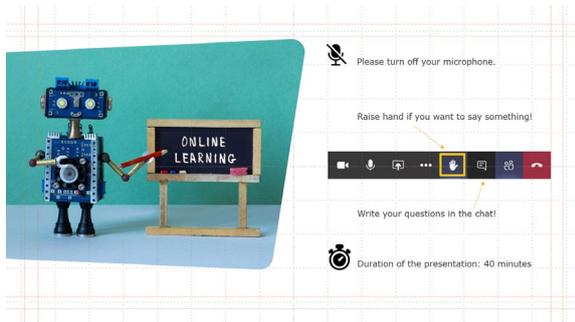


DIA 1



Welcome

Before turning to the content of the presentation, I would like to ask all participants to turn off their microphone and to keep it off during the presentation to avoid noise interference.

If, during the presentation, you have any questions, you can write them in the chat, and I will try to answer them during or after the presentation.

If you want to say something, use the hand to attract our attention.

DIA2



Welcome to the workshop Place- & community-based learning – connecting learning to communities and the world around us!

I based this workshop on books and articles I found on the topic or topics closely linked to place- and community-based learning.

To start, I can tell you that combined, all the research evidence available suggests that the adoption of place- and community-based learning holds the promise of enhancing student engagement and achievement. I think that's a good message to start off with.

DIA3

At the end of this workshop participants will ...

- be able to define community-based and place-based learning and understand how it works;
- be able to think of ways that these approaches to learning can be used in their schools;
- Understand why and how their schools can benefit from community-based and/or place-based learning;

GOLDEN CIRCLE

WHY? Do You Do WHAT You Do? WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

HOW? Do You Do WHAT You Do?

WHAT? Do You Do?

©2010 Simon Sinek

My goal is to provide you with more information about community-based learning and how it works. I believe that if we can get a better understanding of what community-based learning is, it will help us to implement it better in our teaching.

So, At the end of this workshop, you should all be able to

- explain what community-based and place-based learning is and how it works.
- You should be able to think about ways that these approaches to learning can be used in your schools and your communities.
- And finally, you should have some idea about how and why your schools can benefit from community-based or place-based learning.

Like Simon Sinek, we will start with the 'why?' before we move on to the 'how' and the 'what'.

Why should we be interested in community-based learning?

What's the purpose?

What do you think you will achieve by drawing on the community to learn?

You may place your short answers in the chat.

DIA 4



There are a number of reasons why we should embrace place- or community-based learning. One reason is that:

- **A lot of children today are nature- and community-deprived.**

In his book about the divide between children and the outdoors, Richard Louv directly links the lack of nature in the lives of today's children to some of the most disturbing childhood trends, such as the rises in obesity, attention disorders, and even depression.

- **Children become more engaged in learning when learning is connected to authentic, real-world experiences.**

Many of today's children do not really understand what or why they are learning. They ask: "Why do I need to know this? When will I ever use this?" There is no relevance for the materials the children are expected to learn.

Piaget, Gardner, Dewey and other specialists believe that the learner must be active to be engaged in real learning.

Learning becomes active when children can connect new knowledge with their prior understanding.

Constructivists take this notion a bit further stating that a meaningful context that interacts with the outside world is key to promoting learning.

- **To develop and practice 21st C. skills:**

Community-based learning is a great way to develop and practice 21st C. skills. Presented with projects requiring teamwork for instance, children become more collaborative and able to work effectively with their peers.

Or, confronted with real-life problems from their own communities for instance, children exhibit improved analytical and problem-solving skills.

- **To develop a sense of voice**

Given the opportunity to share their ideas with adults, children develop a sense of voice and gain in self-confidence.

- **To nurture a sense of pride about the community**

Attention to the local can nurture a sense of pride about the community and a deepening connection to the people there.

There are numerous reasons why we should embrace community-based learning and I can imagine that some of those reasons are the same for all of us and some are very specific for each partner or each place.

DIA 7



During the Utopia kick-off meeting in November 19, we decided on a definition of community-based learning.

This happened in the context of developing our framework.

We reached the following definition: Community-based learning is a strategy that builds reciprocal and mutually beneficial connections between communities and the wider world to help children gain real world experiences and look at the world from multiple perspectives.

As I wanted to research this topic further, I read some articles and books on community-based, place-based and outdoor learning and I came across multiple definitions.

As you will notice, from now on, I will use the terms community-based and place-based learning interchangeably. Despite minor differences, the two names are used for the same concept.

DIA 8

Community-based / Place-based learning ...

1 is an approach to learning that takes advantage of geography to create authentic, meaningful and engaging personalised learning for pupils. It is an immersive learning experience that "places pupils in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and uses these as a foundation for the study of language, arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum" (*Getting Smart in partnership with educationnovation & Teton Science Schools, 2016*)

2 "Place based education at its root is a humanizing practice that puts youth and community at the center. It is an immersive approach to learning that empowers students to act as environmental stewards, caring for themselves, their peers, and the land and community where they live." (*SEMIS Coalition*)

helps pupils acquire, practice, and apply subject matter knowledge and skills. At the same time, pupils develop the knowledge, skills, and attributes of effective citizenship by identifying and acting on issues and concerns that affect their own community. When implemented thoughtfully, these strategies create a pedagogy of engagement. Pupils invest time and attention and expend real effort because their learning has meaning and purpose. (*Community-based learning, engaging students for Success and Citizenship - Melaville, Berg, & Blank, 2006*)

3 Anytime, anywhere learning that leverages the power of place to personalise learning. (*The power of place - Authentic learning through place-based education, Vander Ark, Liebtog & Mc Clemmen, 2020*)

4 is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps pupils develop stronger ties to their community, enhances pupils' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. (*Place- and Community-based Education in Schools - David Sobel, 2016*)

Community-based learning is a strategy that builds **reciprocal and mutually beneficial** connections between communities and the wider world in order to help children gain real world experiences and look at the world from multiple perspectives. (*Wespa Framework, 2019*)

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

I included one definition of each book or article in this presentation.

I will give you a few minutes to read them for yourselves.

If it's too difficult to read them on this screen, you can find them as a PDF in the map so you can open the document individual if necessary.

Which definition do you prefer? **Place the number in the chat.**

Lieveke, We overlopen kort de antwoorden.

DIA 9



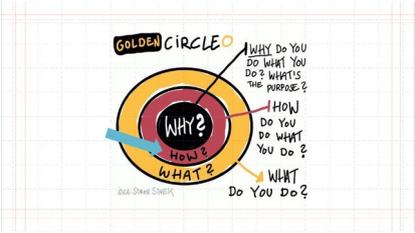
I think that we can conclude that place and community-based education:

- is a mindset or a way of thinking broadly about the school's relationship to the local community and environment and a way of thinking about the school's role in society.
- brings together all these other approaches like inquiry learning, outdoor learning and so on.
- that it engages students by using their own communities as the source and focus of learning.
- the community members are both resources and partners
- that place or the community can be drawn upon to teach any subject area across disciplines.
- that the promotion of citizenship is a key element in all the definitions presented.
- that, by its very nature, it cannot be a drag and drop approach because every community-based or place-based lesson or activity must reflect the unique circumstances encountered in specific schools and communities.

There is no recipe book or manual available that works for all schools. Here in Belgium for instance, we would love to copy the Greek place-based project of harvesting olives, but we simply do not have any olive trees.

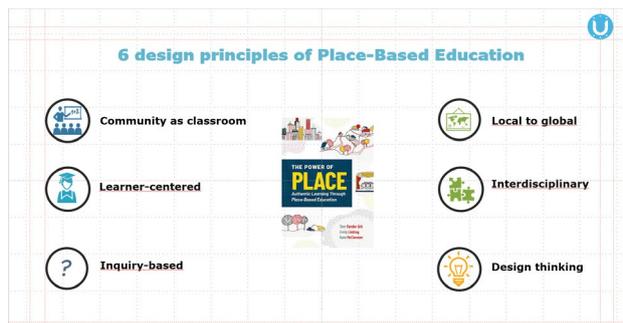
Before moving on to the 'How' part, I just want to check if everyone is still on board and whether there are any urgent questions that need answering.

DIA 10



Ok, then we can move on to HOW with the six design principles of place-based education.

DIA 11



According to the book 'The power of place' Authentic Learning through place-based education, the core of rich place based experiences are these six design principles:

- community as classroom
- Learner-centered
- Inquiry-based
- Local to global
- interdisciplinary
- Design thinking

Although not all experiences include a full manifestation of each one, the principles are often present to some degree when experiences are high quality and lead to meaningful student outcomes.

Teachers that want to connect learning to their community might find them helpful in grounding the design and implementation of place-based learning.

We will go over them one by one.

DIA 12



- The first principle, community as classroom, allows learning to happen anytime and anywhere, and it expands the traditional definition of school.
- An important condition to place-based learning in schools is for teachers in the school to build a better understanding of the structure, challenges, and opportunities within the community. All communities have something worth exploring and to be proud of, even if, at the surface level, that doesn't seem to be the case. The more teachers understand their own place, the more possibilities will emerge. Also, tapping into community members who can facilitate learning about place is important.
- An important step in building belonging is getting to know your local community. Efforts such as reading local publications, hanging out at the coffee shop or the post office or wherever people gather, or offering to help with local projects as time allows, all nourish the development of personal relationships with a diversity of people and organisations.
- Investing in social capital. Social capital builds over time as individuals develop increasingly more webs of relationships. Through place-based learning and involving children in the tasks of reaching out to people, writing emails, contacting organisations, and so on, you invest in social capital.

DIA 13



Principle 2: Inquiry-based

Learning is grounded in observing, asking relevant questions, making predictions and collecting data to understand the economic, ecological, and socio-political world.

- Why inquiry?
- It fits
- Helps to build equity
- Authentic learning

The second principle is that place-based education should be inquiry-based.

Why inquiry?

- A commitment to inquiry within place-based education allows for a true exploration of novel and complex problems which leads to far more student engagement and curiosity.

- Inquiry-based learning fits because it is grounded in observing, asking relevant questions, making predictions, and collecting relevant data to understand the economic, ecological, social-political, and cultural elements of a community.

The principle inquiry-based helps to build equity.

- (equity = billijkheid – justness) Evidence suggests that children have a difficult time evaluating validity in the news and on the internet, inquiry learning can help them develop the skills necessary to understand an increasingly complex world.

- As the children become ‘truth-seekers’, asking their own questions, and collecting their own data, the learning becomes more and more authentic. Because their observations and questions vary based on their different background’s, environments, and cultures, each student can better seek his or her own truth through inquiry.

DIA 14



**Principle 3:
Learner - Centered**

Learning is personally relevant to pupils and enables pupils agency.

- Pupils need to feel connected to what they are learning.
- Pupils voice and interests matter.
- Personalised and authentic learning

The third principle is Learner Centered.

In 1907 John Dewey talked about 'The isolation of the school – its isolation from life'. He argues that the great waste in the schools comes from the inability of the child to use his or her experiences from outside the school in the school itself, while, on the other hand, the child is unable to apply in daily life what he or she is learning at school. So, as far back as Dewey, educators realised that students need to feel connected to what they were learning and that their voice and interests mattered.

On field trips or when we go outside to learn, we often ask all children to engage with a place in the same way. We must make the shift from delivering content to a cohort of pupils, with everyone engaging together and asking the same questions to providing opportunities for individual pupils to engage and apply what they learn in authentic scenarios and places.

With personalised learning, pupils have more control over the time, place, path, and pace of learning.

So the learner-centered principle points out the importance of personalised and authentic learning.

DIA 15



The fourth principle is about the transfer of thinking of or acting on local issues to global issues.

Many global issues are also present in a local context. What makes something real and important is the local aspect of the problem. It is the local experience that grounds pupils in an understanding of why something is important or why they might want to care. Unless they can connect to a tangible local version of something, it is hard for them to feel motivated enough to care.

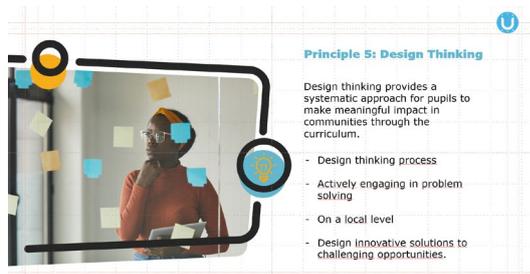
I recently did an inquiry-based lesson with our 11-year-olds about plastic. It started out with a discussion about Mc. Donalds and the fact that Mc. Donalds replaced the plastic straws with paper ones. The children were angry because the new straws didn't taste so good and became pulp. They felt it was an injustice until I told them about the European ban on disposable plastics and the reason why plastic was being banned.

It's very hard for them to see the connection between using plastic straws to drink a soda and the problem of fish dying in the ocean because of the plastic they get tangled up in. At the end of the lesson we ended up conducting experiments where we tried out all kinds of more ecological straws.

Another way to connect issues globally is by using tools like for instance the eTwinning platform. By involving children in eTwinning projects (and Erasmus projects) they can get a better understanding of the world and of the people and places in it.

I have to admit that it's quite a challenge, especially for the younger children.

DIA 16



The infographic features a central image of a person in a red shirt sitting at a table with sticky notes, framed by a thick black border. To the right of the image, the text reads: 'Principle 5: Design Thinking' followed by a paragraph: 'Design thinking provides a systematic approach for pupils to make meaningful impact in communities through the curriculum.' Below this is a bulleted list: '- Design thinking process', '- Actively engaging in problem solving', '- On a local level', and '- Design innovative solutions to challenging opportunities.' The entire graphic is set against a light grid background with a small blue 'U' icon in the top right corner.

Principle 5: Design Thinking

Design thinking provides a systematic approach for pupils to make meaningful impact in communities through the curriculum.

- Design thinking process
- Actively engaging in problem solving
- On a local level
- Design innovative solutions to challenging opportunities.

The 5th principle is design thinking.

The design thinking process includes several steps, all focused on creative problem solving that is rooted in empathy for a cause, an issue, or a group of people.

The design thinking process begins with the design phase, defining the challenge or problem, followed by a phase of generating ideas or solutions. Then the process moves on to the creative phase where children build prototypes and in the evaluation phase, children reflect on how the potential user experiences the solution.

So, Place-based education prioritizes design thinking as a systematic process to design innovative solutions to challenging opportunities. It is not enough to passively observe. Pupils must learn how to create and innovate around novel and complex challenges.

DIA 17



Principle 6: Interdisciplinary

The curriculum matches the real world where the traditional subject area content, skills and dispositions are taught through an integrated, interdisciplinary and frequently project-based approach.

- Cross-curricular teaching

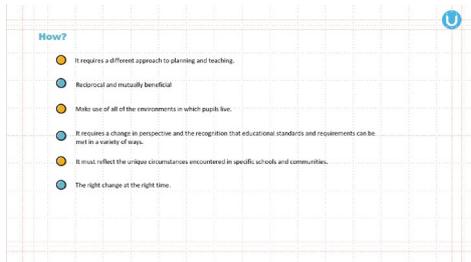
The sixth and last principle is interdisciplinary teaching

The world is interdisciplinary, but learning is traditionally isolated in subject areas. Math happens at this time, science next, and so on.

Yet, the idea that you could teach about the solar system like the Bulgarian school did, or about jobs and professions like the Spanish school, without embedding literacy skills, or St. Vincents project where the children examined the question how different types of activity affect the heart rate, without getting in to mathematics at some point is hard to imagine. I really loved all those stories and photo's on eTwinning by the way.

Although the overlap of most core content areas is readily apparent to many educators, many are not encouraged to explore these intersections and teach in an interdisciplinary way. Yet, most lessons and projects require content and skills from various disciplines.

DIA 18



To conclude I think we all agree that place-based learning requires a different approach to planning and teaching: teachers and pupils become coinvestigators of challenges and problems, teachers don't prepare all of the content but instead they assemble materials, human resources, and inside and outside of classroom experiences that serve as the foundation for learning.

We should always keep in mind the reciprocal and mutually beneficial aspect of community-based learning. While many schools reach out to community partners for resources, services, and support, far fewer take advantage of opportunities for pupils to actually learn outside the classroom walls or to actually contribute to the community.

It involves using all the environments in which pupils live (the natural, social, cultural, economic) as starting points to teach subjects across the curriculum.

Adopting this approach requires, more than anything else, a change in perspective and the recognition that educational standards and requirements can be met in a variety of ways. It embraces a teaching approach based upon inquiry and action.

By its very nature, it cannot be standardized or centralized; it must instead reflect the unique circumstances encountered in specific schools and communities.

DIA 19

Place- and community-based education does not always have to be earth-shaking.

It is certainly about local places and the environment, but it's also about history, the arts, cultural diversity, social justice, and more.

It's about literacy emerging from reading neighbourhood street signs;

it's about supermarket math;

it's about learning history in the cemetery;

it's about learning to sail as part of the science curriculum;

it can be as simple and uneventful as giving pupils an hour each week to write poetry in the school garden."

Can we say that place-based learning is the same as outdoor learning?

To me, a place-responsive approach moves the focus from viewing outdoor education as a set of activities to outdoor education as a way to view relationships; both with people and place(s).

These are issues and questions we need to debate or think about further.

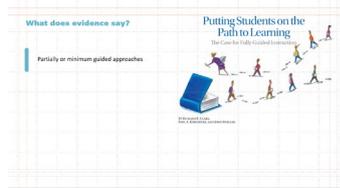
DIA 20

references:

- Vander Ark, T., Liebttag, E., Mc Clennen, N. (2020). The power of place: authentic learning through place-based education. ASCD BOOKS, Virginia USA
- Smith, G., Sobel, D. (2010). Place- and community-based education in schools. Routledge New York and London.
- Sherrington, T. (2017). The learning rainforest. John Catt Educational Limited.
- Marzano, R. (2003). What works in schools: translating research into action. ASCD BOOKS, Virginia USA
- Hendrick, C., Macpherson, R. (2019). John Catt Educational Limited.
- Last child in the woods – Richard Louv (2016)
- Melaville, A., Berg, A., Blank, M. (?). Community-based learning: engaging students for success and citizenship. Coalition for Community Schools
- Clark, R., Kirschner, P., Sweller, J. (2012). Putting students on the path to learning: the case for fully guided instruction. American educator.
- Quick start guide to implementing place-based education. Getting Smart in partnership with [edulnnovation](#) & [Teton Science Schools](#).
- Smith, G. (2002). Place-based education: learning to be where we are. PHI DELTA KAPPAN

Link to map on sharepoint.

DIA 21



In the first slide of this presentation, I told you that this workshop is based on research evidence available on the topic or topics closely allied with place- and community-based learning. And that combined, all this research suggests that the adoption of place- and community-based learning does in fact hold the promise of enhancing student engagement and achievement. There is however one important aspect that we should investigate.

Partially or minimum guided approaches.

In the article: "Putting Students on the Path to Learning, the case for fully Guided Instruction", the authors, Richard Clark, Paul Kirschner and John Sweller demonstrate that direct, explicit instruction is more effective and more efficient than partial guidance. So, when teaching new content and skills, teachers are more effective when they provide explicit guidance accompanied by practice and feedback.

You might argue that community-based learning is an example of a partially guided approach. The ability to self-regulate one's own learning and thinking is an important part of community-based learning. Children must be actively involved in the learning process and given a degree of control over what and how they are learning.

Two bodies of research reveal the weakness of partially and minimally guided approaches: research comparing pedagogies, and research on how people learn. The conclusion of the article is that there is a lot of evidence that shows that, when dealing with novel information, learners should be explicitly shown all relevant information, including what to do and how to do it.

In order to find out what this means for our project and the practices that we develop in this project; maybe we can all read this article so we can discuss it the next time we meet online. Thank you