

Information about the action

Title of the action : dropouts classes in Forbach, apparatus « ESPOIRRR »

(Education et Soutien scolaire Pédagogique pour l'Orientation et l'Insertion par la Resocialisation, la Rescolarisation et la Remotivation)

Academy : Nancy-Metz

School name and address:

Classe Relais, 45 avenue saint Rémy 57600 FORBACH

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Classes involved : all classes in school

Subjects involved : all

Written in june 2004

Local education authority guide lines: Axe 3

Summary :

The dropouts class in Forbach is an apparatus which receives pupils from the training and education basin of the Coal Basin. These pupils are dropouts and usually desocialized.

Four main goals :

- Imbricating reeducation and resocialization.
- Maximizing school and educative demands.
- Reinstating pupils in a short period of time and in the best possible conditions.
- Bringing a significant support to the pupils and initiating a relationship of trust with them.

The educative and educational team works within a partnership (teachers, JPY¹ educators and career advisers...). Reeducation and resocialization aspects are not dissociated for it seems important these two concepts should be linked and should interact.

A permanent work on the respect and the appropriation of rules and regulations enables the person to reconstruct itself and to be reinstated inside the school system as an institution.

Key-words :

STRUCTURES	PRACTICAL DETAILS-DEVICES	THEMES	SUBJECTS
High school. ZEP-REP. Sensitive area Sensible. Dropouts class. JPY ¹ .	Relay devices. Educational Diversification. Individualization. Partnership.	Rupture behaviours. School difficulties. Guidance. Reeducation. Resocialization.	Mixed subjects.

Writing about the action

¹ Judicial protection of youth

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(Education and educational school support for guidance and insertion thanks to Resocialization, Reeducation and Remotivation)

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Description of the device

The dropouts class in Forbach is an apparatus which receives pupils from the training and education basin of the Coal Basin. These pupils are dropouts and usually desocialized. It works around four axis :

Imbricating reeducation and resocialization

For the educational team these two concepts mustn't be disconnected, reeducation implicates and involves resocialization and vice versa. School demands mirror social demands and prepare the children to face their future. For pupils, reeducation and resocialization are closely linked in behaviour and work.

Maximizing school and educative demands.

ESPOIRRR² maintains a high level of exigency, daily ; each pupil is pushed to his limits in terms of work, behaviour, in his evaluations and the proposed activities. The team makes him overcome steps regularly and gradually. Each pupil evaluates his work.

Reinstating pupils in a short period of time and in the best possible conditions.

One session lasts 6 to 8 weeks. The team works differently with each pupil of the group but the final goal is the same.

Indeed, each pupil is special and different (origins, social background, age, attended class, school level, behaviour, character, life, etc...) ; the group is very heterogeneous but has many similarities (school failure, rejection of the system, several problems, etc...), needs are linked and the goal is identical.

Thus, the team establishes common basis and limits but it proposes an individual appropriation, different methods and demands adapted to everyone.

The global tendency being the pupils reinstatement on the way to success in a short period of time.

Bringing a significant support to the pupils and initiating a relation of trust with them.

- Better guidance.
- Motivating and valorizing.

Furthermore, the educational team works within a partnership (teachers, JPY³ educators and career advisers, CIO⁴)

² Dispositif d'Education et de Soutien scolaire Pédagogique pour l'Orienteation et l'Insertion par la Resocialisation, la Rescolarisation et la Remotivation

³ Judicial protection of youth

⁴ Centre d'information et d'orientation (information and career guidance centre)

It chose the following directions :

- Reeducation and resocialization are not dissociated for it seems important these two concepts should be linked and should interact.

- School activities are predominant and strongly organized : developing work in autonomy, homework organization, using the supports available, active oral expression, effective management of space and time, surpassing oneself and valorization. The stress is put on the way they acquire knowledge and on their behavioural improvement with rigorous and frequent evaluations.

- Establishing a relationship of trust between the adults and the young is essential : individualized help, personalized following, mutual integrity, dialogue and respect.

- The concept of educative community including adults and pupils is deepened thanks to the many partners and contributors involved in the apparatus.

- The permanent work done on the respect and appropriation of rules and regulations enables the person to reconstruct itself and to be reinstated in the school system as an institution.

- Our main goal is therefore to « reformat » each young person in the most suitable and efficient way possible, in a short period of time.

- Finally, we try to optimize the reinstatement of young people and this effort must be widened outside the dropouts class and followed eir beh1dtn40.1942 Toparoung 6deepened thated 77 TwT

Three testimonies about the action :

- **Philippe Carrara**, Physical Sciences teacher and coordinator of the dropouts class.
- **Laurent Kessler**, education helper of the dropouts class.
- **Frédéric Guyot**, teaching French in the dropouts class.

Philippe Carrara, Physical Sciences teacher and coordinator of the dropouts class.

Situation : we must believe in the project !

I was a volunteer from the beginning to create and implement this action in the educative basin of the Coal Basin, I got involved in the dropouts class with assured convictions and ambitions.

Indeed, I'm convinced that dropout or desocialized pupils can possibly be reinstated into the school and/or the vocational system, if a motivated and willing team decides to "reformat" them with the support of the institutions. With the help of involved partners, it becomes possible to make this apparatus work like a network where confidence prevails and where all contributors use their personal skills.

Moreover, my ambition is to raise the exigency level so that it is as high as in the original system.

Therefore the stress is put on evaluation (work and behaviour are concerned). The reinstatement rate must be as high as possible with a long term following.

Finally this apparatus must react promptly to be efficient.

We must always keep the faith. It is a necessary condition for the success of all this action.

Analyses : dualities and paradoxes of the dropouts class !

In this system, different institutions, actors and staff interact ; there gravitate different partners, spectators and pupils from different social backgrounds, classes, schools, motivated by different perspectives. This system brings maximum heterogeneity in all possible fields, on an extremely reduced scale, that is a dropouts class where several dualities appear.

Thus, my work is really demanding in terms of concentration, thinking, and personal investment to daily integrate all parameters, this necessarily leads me to a lot of mixed feelings.

These feelings depend a lot on my downhill work (pupils' progress, evolution, evaluations and reinstatement) but also on my uphill work (the ability to prepare and anticipate, the cohesion and coherence of our team).

It is therefore logical that I should alternate between hopes and doubts, successes and defeats, prides and regrets, good and bad memories... but in all cases we must optimize what's positive, and turn what's negative into an asset.

All this richness can be used : a qualified and optimistic team which stands together, the efficient support of the hierarchy and many involved partners.

But, the center of this system is and will always be the pupil. He is the one who counts, who needs and who must be saved... Does he know it? Does he understand it? Does he feel it? The pupil engenders paradoxes, creates dualities and infiltrates the system : to me, he's the foundation as well as the summit of the « dropouts class » edifice.

His life is special, his situation unique, and his project very personal but, this pupil belongs to a larger and more complex system. Therefore, I do everything I can to put him back on tracks and resocialize him thanks to a relationship based on trust and by coordinating the work of the team, of the institution and of the partners around him.

Perspectives : It's tough but it has to last... !

The dropouts class implies a tough and consuming work but it's useful and captivating.

It must last, it must be followed on a long term scale, it must enrich its network, it must evaluate itself, it must improve, it must recruit, it must be useful, it must innovate, it must test new educative methods, it must enables all the partners to meet, to talk and support each other. It must reinstate a large number of pupils in the best possible conditions.

I think it's a perfect dynamic system on a small scale... !

Laurent Kessler , education helper.
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My previous job in the industry didn't predetermine my future job as an education helper for the dropouts class in Forbach. After 2 years study in plastic chemistry I worked in the cell phone industry in 2000. After the company liquidation, I decided to become an education helper as there was an opportunity in Robert Schuman School in Behren.

Indeed, M. Carrara, coordinator of the whole project, informed me there was a possibility to work there because he knew my profile. I entered the school on 5th January 2004.

I already did 2 sessions of 8 weeks and I'm starting my 3rd session until the end of 2004. You must know that a session lasts 6 weeks with the kids in the apparatus plus two extra weeks in their initial school where we follow them.

I was a complete stranger to the school environment and I was quite frightened when I started because I wasn't proposed any training to deal with the pupils. I was given a few advice and instructions by the teachers to be able to deal with these special needs classes.

Everything was new to me, the job itself, the relationships with the educational team and with the pupils. I had to integrate the team very quickly for the teachers not to suffer from my initial inefficiency.

The relationships with pupils are aleatory according to the individualities or the different groups. There are three different types of relationships :

- First, a pupil is different outside the group or within the group. He's less concerned by his image when with the others, his concentration and his listening skills are better. All the pupils don't react like this : Some totally refuse to work if they've been isolated from the group or scolded by the teacher or by me. On the contrary some just refuse to be helped; others ask to be isolated to work quietly and to have better results with or without the teacher's help ; we find these pupils in year 9 and 10.

- Then, there are subgroups. Indeed, we noticed that subgroups formed from the first days in the dropouts class according to the pupils' origins and social backgrounds. It's difficult to work with pre-formed groups because they stick together, and they are not very persevering ; din and amusement continue. To change such situations we split the groups when it doesn't work, we put pupils alone or with rivals to teach them how

to control themselves. The whole group is more or less manageable depending on the teachers and on the subjects. In certain sessions pupils are more diligent than in others. It depends on the affectation committee.

- Finally, the relationships between youngsters and adults are different depending on the pupils ; some adults have more empathy for one or another so we try to use this « vein » to settle conflicts or to valorize pupils when they worked well, but we never despise or abase pupils. In general, relationships are correct thanks to the small number of pupils per session, usually six. We have time to talk with them, to know them better and to listen to them. Their opinion on teachers changes and becomes much more positive.

Relationships between adults are strong. I integrated quickly into the team which helped me to find my landmarks. All adults are at the same level (partners from the judicial protection of youth, teachers and myself). Indeed, we make them understand that an adult remains an adult whoever he is, for most of the pupils in this class don't make any differences between a classmate and an adult. We show them where the limits are so as to respect the teachers and respect themselves.

It's rather positive, if I look at the relationships within the class, but not everything is perfect. If it works, it's only thanks to the will of the teachers and the investment towards a common goal for the class. This goal being to put the pupils back on track in the school system in a short period of time ; they have to be reinstated in their initial school with new perspectives and new foundations. Moreover, we need a relief team, and this is a big issue. The biology teacher is leaving and he must be replaced for the apparatus to function properly. This teacher must be motivated and must understand the principles of such a project.

Frédéric Guyot, French teacher, working in the dropouts class

First contacts...

Two years ago, I didn't know such classes existed. I was contacted by Mr Chéa, my deputy head, who asked me if I was interested to work in this structure as a French and a communication teacher (this structure was going to be created in the Coal Basin). Therefore, I met Mr Carrara who explained me the whole project.

First, I wasn't too sure about my ability to react properly and work with these special needs children. But the project seemed really interesting and I can say now, after 6 sessions, that it is indeed ; I was also eager to work differently and to question my teaching: Jean Moulin was quite a "select" school. M. Carrara's faith was contagious and we got on well immediately. I also noticed I already knew other members from the staff, which helped the implementation of this project.

The Team

I'm deeply convinced that the cohesion between teachers, partners and all the contributors is fundamental for the class to work properly. There is no artificial cleavage due to the people's office. We are just a group and every person inside this group has its ways to help the pupils.

During difficult phases, when the pupils are « tough » and hardly manageable, being a team really means something : We share the same problems, we can talk to each other and as

we live the same events at the same time, we understand each other. This enabled us to get over difficult sessions when working with serenity was really demanding and trying.

The framing rate is quite high, usually one adult for three pupils. This is necessary to deal with conflicts. They often occur as these young people always want to stand in front. The most tiring part is not to teach but to deal with this latent violence ready to burst !

The public

I started this job with a rather negative opinion about the kids sent to this kind of structures. Apart from a few exceptions, all these kids are suffering. They carry their past like a burden. Mainly disruptive in their previous schools, their real personalities are revealed in these classes. The image they build of themselves is sometimes shaken and sometimes confirmed.

No matter the session, pupils quickly and implicitly build a hierarchy which leads to « profiles » : the leader, his allies, the « underdog »... It is quite amazing to see how fast these alliances, these « non-aggression treaties » radically change.

This class is not what they consider as a dream ! When they arrive, their opinion is very negative and they think they are sent to some kind of jail. It's not easy to be surrounded by two adults watching all your doings seven hours a day. This is not the case in a "normal school". The first contact is therefore complex because of the false and often negative image they have of their future class.

However, when we get on well, we must fight against the opposite tendency which leads the pupils to come back to the dropouts class, as they liked the activities better than in their own school and they were more framed. It is therefore important for them to understand the meaning of relay. We are a stopover which allows them to start off again. Their foundations are different and often sounder.

Our goal is not to transform the pupils into angels but the contacts we had with most of them were enriching. Affinities can develop between pupils and teachers. These can help in difficult situation or to solve crises. It is infrequent that pupils remain completely closed to adults, even the most difficult pupils, there are some periods of rest we can use to make them think about their condition.

Difficulties linked to studying French.

One of my major problems when I arrived was to find a practical approach to teach French. Indeed, the pupils who arrive in this structure have a problem with « traditional teaching » and French is a subject with a strong negative connotation for them.

The most difficult thing to deal with is heterogeneity. We can have up to 4 different levels in one session. If this heterogeneity is easy to deal with during certain activities (reading, respecting instructions) it can become much more tricky when you try to build a common writing project,(example: on a detective story).

However, I was nicely surprised by the pupils' work. If we grab their interest, they are able to produce quality work, even if we need to put some pressure on them. Concerning their work, these dropout kids surprisingly ask for more evaluations and more marks to help them progress.

This participation in the project helped me change and renew my views on how I teach French. Our public is different, not always ready to learn. We have to adapt and test new strategies everyday without knowing if they will work; for what worked in one session with one group will not necessarily work with other pupils in the next session. If we are unsuccessful, we must be able to change strategy immediately, for they will quickly profit by your weaknesses.

Conclusion

In 2003/2004 the dropouts class in Forbach welcomed 19 pupils from 9 schools in the Coal Basin. These pupils came from all different levels from sixième to troisième.(year seven to year eleven)

As a result 31% of the pupils did not succeed in reintegrating their previous schools and for some of them deviant behaviours were noticed. However, for 61% of them, the evolution was positive in terms of reinstatement, career guidance and behaviour.

Filmed interviews on the action are available on the PASI website :

http://www3.ac-nancy-metz.fr/pasi/article.php3?id_article=4