

Opportunities for using the INPRO materials in initial training and continuing education

In order to incorporate an interprofessional approach in the initial training for those professions that are involved in the tasks of upbringing, care and education at children's daycare establishments, such as nursery teachers, it is essential that we take a serious look at the different disciplines and their self-concepts, and the ways in which the latter can develop through such training. The relevance of "interprofessionalism" as a theme tends to be perceived as marginal by the organisations involved in vocational training, and this indicates that these courses are designed and run in strict separation from one another. The methods developed here can provide the first impetus to create better coordination and connections, and take the first steps towards any cooperation in everyday practical life that might turn out to be necessary later.

The INPRO materials are mainly aligned with the requirements and infrastructures in further training and continuing education, but they can also be used almost in their entirety in situations during initial training, for instance in vocational schools. If they are used here, account must be taken of the structures and goals of the teaching situation. For this the INPRO materials offer a valuable collection of specialist texts (theory elements), suggested teaching methods (case studies and methodological or work techniques), and also further information on how to structure learning situations flexibly to encourage interprofessional skills. The teaching staff in teaching situations at vocational schools can thus introduce individual learning units on the basis of the theoretical principles (conveying specialist knowledge); they can also use case studies for illustration purposes or as the basis of exercises in learning by solving problems, and finally they can employ methods that are coordinated with these. This offers students at vocational schools learning situations in which the acquisition of key professional competencies is integral, and the confrontation with professional problems takes place in practice-related, self-learning phases. Actively dealing with these can increase the potential for acquiring the on-the-job skills required.

Against this background, the INPRO materials can be directly linked to the topics and training goals that are formulated in the syllabuses of vocational schools for the social and educational professions. As an example here, we can refer to the outline curriculum for vocational schools for the social and educational professions in the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia. The range of methods offered by INPRO can be integrated into the teaching in actual practice in the subject areas 1 to 4. An extract from the curriculum concerned is shown below (see Box 1), in which aspects which have a direct connection to INPRO have been emphasised (marked in bold).

Box 1: Extract from the outline curriculum for vocational schools for the social and educational professions in the Land of North Rhine-Westphalia
(Source: www.berufsbildung.schulministerium.nrw.de/cms/upload/_lehrplaene/e/sozialpaedagogik.pdf; emphasis the authors' own).

Subject area 1: Understanding children and adolescents in their living environment, and developing relationships with them

At the beginning of the training, it is assumed that students have an understanding of professional roles, which they will further develop and consolidate during the process of their training.

This subject area is about developing a differentiated perception of children (from 0 years) and adolescents, and analysing their behaviour in the context of their living environment as the basis for building a well thought through relationship with them.

Children and adolescents develop individually and in different ways. They grow up in multilingual, **multicultural and multi-religious** living environments. People's plans for their lives, gender roles and expectations and **family structures have become differentiated**. The patterns of interpretation which have been passed are often not appropriate. People who work as educators in establishments involved in working with children and young people have to develop educated **perceptual skills and an intercultural and interreligious sensitivity as the basis for education aligned with individual strengths**. This must involve knowledge of education and development processes.

Subject area 2: Encouraging group skills and social learning

In this subject area, the students' perspective is widened from the individual infant, child or adolescent to the group. The focus is on systematically supporting and encouraging social learning on the basis of **analysis of situations**. Teachers are encouraged to offer orientation and create social coexistence in their area of activity. Children and adolescents have to learn to find their bearings in complex social structures and frames of reference. This will happen by creating places for learning and experiences where **equality of opportunities, equal rights, working as partners** and freedom from violence reign, where social and ethnic discrimination are prevented, and social interaction and responsibility are practised and exercised. Teachers have to use **cultural, religious and individual diversity** and variety as enrichment for everyone. They work with children and adolescents as partners, involve them in planning, projects and programmes, and enable them to take part capably and responsibly in decision-making and structuring activities. In this way, the commitment of children and adolescents to organising issues that involve everyone is strengthened, and they learn to take responsibility for themselves and others. They experience democracy and put this into practice.

Subject area 3: Support for education and development processes

Nursery teachers accompany and support infants, children and adolescents in their development and self-education processes. On the basis of a **value-oriented understanding of education and upbringing** they learn to plan, carry out, reflect on and document activities with children and adolescents by using specialist and methodological competencies. Education and development processes rely on the existence of a supportive environment. Children and adolescents need reliable relationships which give them the courage to try out new things; they need opportunities of experiencing their own strengths and skills and using their own development potential in as many

different ways as possible, along with incentives which challenge them to develop. Nursery teachers are an example to them, **reflect their own development process** and work on their personal development.

Education comprises not only knowledge and skills, but also in particular the willingness to responsibly structure the world in a self-determined way. Education is an activity you undertake yourself. You have to educate yourself. Nursery teachers provide the framework and space for children's and adolescents' own self-education potential. It is their task to **support the education and development of native and immigrant children and adolescents to an equal extent**. In particular, this includes valuing and supporting their skills in their first language as well as supporting skills in the German language.

Nursery teachers **work together with schools**. In particular, they take on shared responsibility for the children's educational development and their **transition into primary school**. Their **cooperation with parents** is essential and creates additional opportunities for advancing education and development processes.

Subject area 4: Working professionally in social and educational establishments

This subject area is about the **change of perspectives and roles from students to members of staff at social and educational establishments**, who act responsibly and with initiative, and evaluate and further develop the quality of their work.

Education, upbringing and providing care can only be achieved in interdisciplinary cooperation. When people work in teams, their strengths and experiences reinforce each other.

Teamwork is a stimulus to integrative and **cross-linked thinking and acting**. **Teamwork requires communication skills** and requires nursery teachers to actively think about their own idea of people, their approach to education, their conceptions and the social environment.

The institutions which provide services for children and young people regard themselves as a component of the social sphere.

In their work here, nursery teachers form part of the infrastructure of children and adolescents and they **design transitions to other educational institutions, especially to primary school**. They are **partners to the parents** in everything associated with the upbringing, education and care of children from 0 years up and adolescents.

These tasks require work in the establishments to be of an open, integrative, intercultural and interreligious character, with the **willingness to cooperate and exchange ideas**.

Nursery teachers are employees. They need to know their duties under employment law and defend their interests. The professional structure of their role at work includes an interest in continuing professional education and the willingness to pursue this.

Finally, Table 1 below shows the methods from the INPRO materials which are available free of charge on the website www.inpro-childcare.eu.

For each method, graphic symbols indicate in which area of education it should primarily be used – in the field of further training and continuing education, or that of initial training. It is thus evident that most of the methods can be used very well in initial training at vocational schools and that they can support the educational goals documented above.

Table 1: INPRO methods and opportunities of using these in initial training and continuing education

Method	Initial training	Further education
1. Introduction to Interprofessionalism		
M 1: Interprofessional team meeting		X
M 2: The magic wand – recognising the potential for INPRO		X
M 3: Experiencing teamdynamics – building a tower	X	X
M 4: Value orientations in the profession	X	X
M 5: Diversity of voices – team structures sculpture	X	X
M 6: Recognising personal strengths – START	X	X
2. Intercultural Opening		
M 1: Name game	X	X
M 2: Barnga – intercultural card game	X	X
M 3: Case studies		X
M 4: Best practice example (PIMEC)	X	X
M 5: My personal tour guide	X	X
3. Case Management		
M 1: SWOT analysis		X
M2: Team spider	X	X
M 3: Circle	X	X
M 4: Sociometrics	X	X
4. Health and Nutrition		
M 1: Themed quiz	X	X
M 2: CHOCA	X	X
M 3: CHOCA 2	X	X
M 4: Case study		X
M 5: Ideas basket		X
5. Recording Child's Personal and Educational Development		
M 1: Alter ego	X	X
M 2: Role play "Communication styles"	X	X
M 3: Assessing the current status of education and training documentation		X
M 4: The inner team		X